

Traffic Signs and Signals

St. Joseph County Road Commission staff proactively monitors and collects traffic volume data regularly on nearly all of our county and local roads.

To safely manage traffic and to permit the smooth flow of vehicles, both along major roads and from side roads, additional traffic signs and signals maybe necessary. Such signs and signals are installed, however, only after careful analysis of traffic pattern, accidents and volumes to determine if they are warranted. Inappropriate placement can compound a problem and even increase the risk of accident.

If you are concerned about traffic problems at a specific location on a county-maintained road, please call, fax or email us. Our staff will be happy to review the circumstances, rules, and regulations and respond with our findings.

For more information

This brochure has been prepared to provide information about traffic signs and signals.

If you have further questions or concerns about count-road traffic issues, we invite you to call us or visit our offices.

Hours:

Monday – Thursday
6:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

All programs, activities and services are provided equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin or handicap.



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TRAFFIC SIGNS AND SIGNALS

along
**St. Joseph
County Roads**



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Road Commission**

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Traffic Signs

Traffic signs come in a variety of shapes and designs. But their purpose is singular – to make driving as safe and efficient as possible for you, the motorist.

There are three types of traffic signs.

Regulatory signs

❖ *Speed limit signs*

These signs are based on what is the reasonable and prudent speed for a given road. A traffic and engineering study is often conducted to determine the properly posted speed limit. In addition, a prima facie speed limit may be established based on the number of vehicular access points on a road segment.

❖ *Yield signs*

❖ *Stop signs*

❖ *Parking signs*

❖ *Weight limit signs*

❖ *Turn prohibition signs*

❖ *Lane-use control signs*

Warning signs

These generally diamond-shaped warning signs are necessary to alert motorists to existing or potential conditions on, ahead or adjacent to the roadway that may require increased awareness or caution on the motorist's part. Typical situations that may warrant the use of these signs include:

❖ *Curve ahead*

❖ *Stop or signal ahead*

❖ *Pedestrian or railroad crossing*

❖ *Construction zone*

Guidance signs

These signs are purely informational – road-name signs, route-marker signs and signs that provide advance notice of the name of a side road.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals interrupt vehicle traffic flow at intersections to permit orderly pedestrian and vehicle movement. They also are installed to help avoid certain types of accidents – such as right-angle collisions.

Although it is commonly believed that traffic signals can solve all traffic problems at intersections, unwarranted signals can lead to excessive delay, disobedience of signal indications, increased accident frequency – especially the rear-end type, and the use of less adequate routes to try to avoid signals.

The State of Michigan has developed a set of eight guidelines, called warrants, for use in determining whether a traffic signal is needed.

The most closely reviewed warrants include:

❖ *Minimum vehicular volume*

Is sufficient traffic coming from the side road to require a signal?

❖ *Interruption of continuous traffic*

Is the main road's traffic flow so constant that side-road traffic cannot enter or cross the main road?

❖ *Accident experience*

Has a significant number of right-angle accidents occurred at this intersection? Other warrants address pedestrian crossings, peak traffic periods and delays. During certain hours of the day or night, some traffic signals are timed to change to flashing signals because of decreased traffic volume. Flashers sometimes are used with four-way stop signs as a motorist alert. Most of us are frustrated at one time or another when trying to enter a main road. But traffic signals are not magic cures. An

uncoordinated, whimsical approach to traffic signal placement can create traffic-flow disruption, leading to a higher number of accidents.

SJCRC role in traffic signs, signals, and speed limits

The *Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* is the St. Joseph County Road Commission's definitive reference on traffic signs and signals. This joint publication of the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Michigan Department of State Police clearly indicates under what circumstances signals and signs are warranted.

The Road Commission also enjoys a cooperative relationship with the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department, which offers traffic-control recommendations. The responsibility for setting speed limits on county-maintained roads is shared by the Road Commission, your local township and the Michigan State Police, with the local police and the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department providing the vital role of enforcement.

The Road Commission purchases ready-made traffic signs and maintains all traffic signs on county roads. Traffic signs and signals are routinely checked to determine maintenance needs. Vandalism of traffic signs is a constant, costly problem, consuming dollars that could be used for other road needs.