



# CITY OF PALMDALE

## **Neighborhood Traffic Safety**

### **How Can We Improve Traffic Safety in Our Neighborhood?**

Neighborhood traffic concerns may arise from drivers speeding or disregarding other safe-driving practices. Safety of children is a primary concern. The solution to such concerns often lies primarily in the hands of the neighborhood residents.

Residents and frequent guests in an area are often the source of most poor driving. This is simply because residents make up the vast majority of the drivers on local streets, and residents are familiar with the streets and assume they know what conditions will be present as they drive in the area. Drivers unfamiliar with an area often drive more slowly in order to read house numbers and street name signs and to identify turns needed to reach their destination.

### **What Can Residents Do to Improve Traffic Safety?**

- Pay attention and drive carefully.
- Obey laws.
- Set a good example and remind your guests and neighbors to do the same.
- Remind residents at your **Neighborhood Watch** meetings to use caution when driving through the neighborhood.
- Residents may also assist in promoting traffic safety by reporting stolen or vandalized signs, potholes, debris in the street or other concerns.

Another extremely important effort of area residents is to educate children regarding proper traffic safety. In particular, children should not be allowed to play in or near the street.

Residents may also assist in improving traffic safety by reducing the potential for restriction of the vision of drivers. For example,

- Bushes and trees near intersections should be kept trimmed in order that cars approaching the intersection can be seen by other drivers.
- Fences and other objects should also be located so that the vision of drivers is not unreasonably restricted.
- Vans or other vehicles should be parked so that they do not restrict visibility.

### **Should Stop Signs, Children at Play Signs or Other Traffic Devices Be Used to Control Speeding?**



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Traffic devices have been used for many decades to control traffic flow. This has provided engineers the opportunity to study their positive and negative impacts. National and state standards have been developed in order to provide uniformity and maximum public benefits.

The use of some traffic devices may actually cause the opposite result of what you would expect. For example:

1. Installation of stop signs is often requested to control speeding on local residential streets. However, in such attempts it has been found that the effect on speeds is only within approximately 200 to 300 feet. Many drivers will only slow down slightly at the intersection. Beyond the 200 to 300-foot distance, average speeds will often actually increase, as aggravated drivers attempt to make up the lost time at the "unnecessary" stop sign. Stop signs are typically used on minor street approaches to major roadways or at heavily traveled intersections. Stop signs are ineffective as speed control devices and installing unjustified stop signs will cause more problems than they solve.
2. Children at Play signs are also requested as a means to deal with speeding concerns on residential streets. Such signs actually have a negative effect on safety. Children at Play signs do not have a significant impact on the speeds at which drivers travel. In most cases, the sign does not give the driver any information that was not already known. Most excessive speeding in neighborhoods is by residents who have seen the streets many times and already know that children may be present. However, since parents believe such signs have an effect on drivers, they tend to be much less cautious about keeping children out of the street. Some parents may even misinterpret the sign to indicate that the street is now a safe place to play.
3. Speed bumps and humps are also sometimes requested to control speeds in neighborhoods. However, the concerns for causing a vehicle (especially a motorcycle) to lose control, noise, attracting skateboarders to the street, drainage impacts, aesthetics and other concerns generally result in far more negatives from such devices than positives.

## **Neighborhood Planning**

In 1992, the City of Palmdale adopted guidelines for design of neighborhoods to address concerns related to speeding, connection of neighborhoods, improved circulation and reduced confusion.

Related policies were also included in the City's General Plan. For example, long, straight streets



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with direct residential driveways are avoided. Collector streets are used to provide a transition between local streets and arterials and avoid high traffic volumes on streets with residential driveways.

Residential streets are designed so that housing tracts are connected to one another, the street layout is less confusing and residents have more convenient routes to shopping centers and parks. It is recognized that poor designs are often impractical to change once built. This planning provides safer and more convenient design of neighborhoods.