



# Traffic Safety Fact Sheet

## **“SOME COMMUNITIES USE ‘SPEED BUMPS’, WHY CAN’T WE?”**

There are two types of devices speed bumps and speed humps. A speed bump is a bump of asphalt about a foot wide, 3 to 4 inches high, and placed laterally across the traveled portion of the road. It is not appropriate for public streets and only used in private lots (i.e. banks, schools).

A speed hump is gentler vertical device which can be based a 25 mph design and suitable for a public street. It is a 3 to 4 inch high rise with a transition of 6-7 feet at each side (12-14 feet total width). Speed humps are devices that are a part of traffic calming, which offer promise if properly applied to curb speeding and some forms of aggressive driving. Pedestrians especially benefit from traffic calming. Traffic calming employs physical changes to the roadway, signage or operation changes, and can be thought of as a "silent policeman" enforcing speed limits where no law enforcement are present.

The purpose of a speed hump is to make the ride over it uncomfortable for drivers, thus encouraging them to reduce their speed. The driver of a softsprung sedan can experience a more comfortable ride over a speed hump at a low or high speed, because of the vehicles' suspension system. On the other hand, a vehicle with tighter suspension (school bus, fire engine, moving van, etc.) must slow considerably before going over a speed bump.

The usage of speed humps do pose challenges. They can cause an undesirable increase in noise with slowing / braking and possible acceleration by vehicles after traversing them. Travel times for emergency vehicles will increase and snow removal equipment will need to use care. The installation of traffic calming requires the community to have a process for public involvement and authorization from the governing body.

If speeding is the perceived problem, studies must be conducted to determine the extent of the problem. Municipalities will have thresholds that must be met before consideration of such devices. If “through” traffic is the problem, it is often the symptom of a traffic related problem on a nearby major street. The real problem should be determined, analyzed and corrected. The control of speeding in residential neighborhoods is a widespread concern which requires resident compliance and patience, and persistent law enforcement efforts. These efforts should be undertaken prior to other physical measures.