



Traffic Safety Fact Sheet

“WHAT ARE ‘WARRANTS’ FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES?”

A "warrant" for any traffic control device (sign, signal or pavement marking) is the minimum criteria that must be met before such a device can be installed. Meeting a warrant does not mean a traffic control device must be installed. The **Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD)** spells out these warrants to ensure that each device:

- 1) fulfills a need,
- 2) commands attention,
- 3) conveys a clear, simple meaning,
- 4) commands respect, and
- 5) gives adequate time for proper response.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS have nine (9) Warrants, at least one of which must be met before a signal can be installed. These Warrants state the number of vehicles, pedestrians, crashes or combination of these that must exist before a signal can be installed.

STOP SIGNS have their own set of criteria:

- 1) Intersection of a less important road with a main road where the normal right-of-way rule is unduly hazardous,
- 2) Street entering a through highway or street,
- 3) Unsignalized intersection in a signalized area, or
- 4) Other intersections where a combination of high speed, restricted view, and serious crash record indicates a need for control by the Stop sign.

Prior to the application of these Stop sign warrants, consideration should be given to less restrictive measures, such as a Yield sign. There are also specific Warrants for warning signs (Curve Ahead, School Crossing, Construction Zone, etc.), paint markings (crosswalks, lane lines, pavement edge markings, etc.)

Any traffic control devices that are not in the MMUTCD are not valid devices and cannot be used (experimental devices with permission from FHWA being an exception). These include “Slow Children” and “Slow” signs. In addition to being warranted, regulatory signs (Stop, Speed Limits, Parking, etc.) must also have an official Traffic Control Order signed by the authoritative body and filed with the local clerk to be enforceable

The decision to install a traffic control device should be made on the basis of an engineering study, the appropriate criteria and engineering judgment by a qualified traffic engineer. Effective and safe traffic control depends on the uniform application of traffic control devices and reasonable law enforcement.