

COMMON TRAFFIC & PEDESTRIAN QUESTIONS

Schools often have questions regarding traffic around their school. Mark Ridley, Senior Technologist/ Transportation Division for the City of London, has provided answers to some common questions. For schools outside of London, please contact your local transportation department to answer these, and other, questions for your city or municipality.

From the Desk of the Senior Technologist - Transportation Division

How does parking on both sides of the street help control the speed?

- Drivers drive at a speed they feel comfortable
- The narrower a road is the slower you will drive
- Parked cars are one of the best ways to narrow a road and slow traffic down
- Removing the on street parking widens the road and increases the average speed of traffic

Mark Ridley, C.Tech
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Who are often the culprits of speeding around the school?

The City of London has been reviewing traffic issues around schools for over 20 years. In every case, the parents who drive their children to school are a significant part of the problem. Too many parents are focused on their own child and their own time frame not thinking about the risk they are putting other children and parents at by the way they drive to and from the school. Over the years, the City has seen a number of parents create unsafe situations around school just to make the pick-up and drop off of their own children convenient for themselves.

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Why speed bumps on streets are not the best choice to control speed?

Vehicles cut through residential areas to save travel time. If you traffic calm a road in an area, you have to be very careful there isn't a similar parallel road the traffic will be deflected too.

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Why not put stop signs to slow down traffic?

Neighbourhood residents often request all-way stop control to deal with concerns about traffic speeds and pedestrian safety. It may seem reasonable that requiring drivers to stop along a residential street would reduce traffic speeds and improve conditions for pedestrians. However in practice, a number of problems have occurred when all-way stop is used at unsuitable locations, including:

- More frequent rear-end collisions;
- Higher traffic speeds between stop signs, especially if drivers are frustrated by having to stop even though there are no pedestrians or other vehicles;
- Poor compliance with stop signs due to driver frustration as low as 1% in some studies in the City
- Frequent requests for police enforcement which resources may not be available to provide
- **Potential risks to pedestrians especially children and seniors** crossing the intersection and drivers approaching from the minor street, because they assume all drivers will stop.

For these reasons, stop signs should not be used to attempt to reduce the speed of traffic. There are established criteria for all-way stop control based upon the numbers of pedestrians and vehicles sharing an intersection, the collision history and visibility. When these criteria are followed, risks are minimized and traffic moves efficiently and predictably

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How does a pedestrian signal work?

At intersections where pushbuttons are provided, pedestrians must push the button and wait for the WALKING PERSON to appear. The traffic signal is programmed to respond to a pedestrian pushing the button. Pushing the button extends the green time so pedestrians have more time to cross the road.

At intersections that don't have a pedestrian pushbutton, the pedestrian sequence is pre-programmed and will automatically appear at the beginning of the car green signal in each direction. Wait for the WALKING PERSON light to appear then start crossing.

Depending on how big or complicated the intersection is, the time for the WALKING PERSON light to appear will vary by location and traffic conditions. During busy times, the time you have to wait may be longer than in off-peak times.

At intersections that don't have pedestrian signals, pedestrians must follow the green, yellow and red car signals to cross.

For your own safety, always be attentive and watch for drivers turning in front or behind you. Make eye contact with the driver and be certain that it is safe before continuing.

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How come the light changes before I have gotten across the street?

The WALKING PERSON is usually programmed to be on for seven seconds. The WALKING PERSON will not stay on during your entire crossing. At some intersections where there are many pedestrians crossing, the WALKING PERSON is pre-programmed to be on for longer than 7 seconds.

Pedestrians should not begin crossing on the FLASHING HAND signal. The FLASHING HAND means to continue crossing if you are already in the crosswalk, but do not begin to cross if you have not entered the crosswalk. The STEADY HAND signal means that a pedestrian should NOT enter or cross the street because you won't have enough time to complete the crossing.

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Did you know that pushing the pedestrian button will extend the green signal to give you enough time to cross the intersection? And pushing it more than once doesn't make it turn on any faster. Who do I call if the pedestrian signal or push button doesn't work?

To report a pedestrian signal outage or push button malfunction please call 519 661-2641 and press 2 when prompted. This will connect you directly to the City's traffic signal maintenance contractor.

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I am a slow walker and do not have enough time to get across. What should I do?

Always push the PEDESTRIAN BUTTON and wait for a fresh WALKING PERSON indication. Begin your crossing immediately after the WALKING PERSON light comes on. Pedestrian crossing times are calculated using provincial guidelines set out by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation which specify a walking speed of 1 to 1.2 meters per second. This is a very comfortable walking speed for the average person including children and seniors. The duration of the FLASHING HAND indication is the time needed to cross the entire distance from one side to the other.

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