



## TRAFFIC SIGNS + SIGNALS

There are numerous traffic control measures in the traffic engineering toolbox with safety always being the primary goal. Two (2) we receive the most requests for at the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) include traffic signs and signals. As a result of population and economic growth, Kalamazoo County continues to experience increased traffic volume on county roads.

To safely manage this growth and to permit the smooth flow of vehicles both along major roads and from side roads, additional traffic signs and signals have become necessary. Such signs and signals are installed after careful analysis of traffic patterns, accidents, and volumes to determine if they are warranted. Inappropriate placement can compound a problem and even increase risks of accidents.

LAST REVISED JULY 2021

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## KALAMAZOO COUNTY TRAFFIC CONTROL



YOUR LOCAL ROAD  
PROFESSIONALS SINCE 1909

# 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. The three most common types of traffic signs are:

## Regulatory Signs

These signs inform the user of traffic or regulations concerning vehicle operation on the road. Not following these signs could lead to a civil infraction. These signs typically include:

- Speed Limit Signs
- Yield Signs
- Stop Signs
- Parking Signs
- Weight Limit Signs
- Turn Prohibition Signs
- Lane-use Control Signs

## Warning Signs

These signs advise the user of unexpected road conditions which require extra care and attention. These signs are generally black on yellow and may include:

- Curve Ahead
- Chevrons
- Stop or Signal Ahead
- Intersection Ahead
- Railroad Ahead
- Pedestrian or Trail Crossing Ahead

## Guidance Signs

These signs are informational to guide and identify routes a user may follow. These signs are primarily street name signs.

# TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Traffic signals interrupt vehicle traffic flow at intersections to permit orderly pedestrian and vehicle movement. They also may be 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 intersection, unwarranted signals can lead to excessive delay, increased disobedience of signal indications, increased accident frequency – especially rear-end type, and the use of less adequate routes to avoid signals.

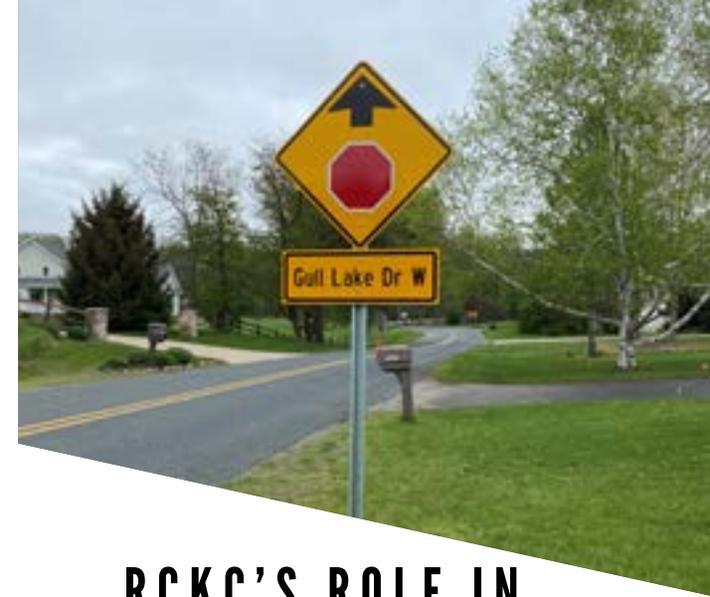
[The Federal Highway Administration](#) has developed a set of eight guidelines, called warrants, for use in determining whether a traffic signal is needed. The most commonly reviewed warrants include:

- **Minimum Vehicular Volume**—Is sufficient traffic coming from the side road to require a signal?
- **Interruption of Continuous Traffic**—Is the main roads traffic flow so constant that side-road traffic cannot enter or cross the main road?
- **Accident Experience**—Has a significant number of correctable accidents occurred at this intersection?

Other warrants address pedestrian crossings, peak traffic periods and delays.

A malfunctioning traffic signal will flash red in all directions. Please be patient and cautious when entering the intersection in these circumstances. Making the signal operational again may take some time as we diagnose the issue.

Most of us have been 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.



## RCKC'S ROLE IN TRAFFIC SIGNS AND SIGNALS

The Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices is the RCKC's definitive reference on traffic signs and signals. Only signs within the manual are allowed in the public right-of-way. This joint publication of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Michigan State Police (MSP) clearly indicates the circumstances when signals and signs are necessary. The RCKC has established a Sign Policy to bring further clarity and uniformity to the installation and maintenance of signs.

Traffic signs and signals are routinely checked to determine maintenance needs. Vandalism of traffic signs is a constant, costly problem that consumes dollars that could be used for other road needs. RCKC also relies on road users like yourself to inform us of signs and signals requiring maintenance. Call our office or submit a service request online if you observe a damaged or missing sign, or a malfunctioning traffic signal.