
Citizen Concerns

The City of St. John's takes its role in solving traffic problems very seriously, yet the ultimate burden of safety rests with the residents of St. John's.

The Traffic Division receives many requests every year from residents. We do our best to evaluate each request and to respond in as timely a manner as conditions permit. We have prepared a series of traffic brochures in addition to this one to help answer some of the more frequently asked questions about traffic safety.

Other brochures available include:

Pedestrian Signals
Crosswalks
Crossing Guards
School Zone Safety
Speed Limits

**For more information
contact the
Traffic Division**

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St. John's, Newfoundland
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What you need to know about.....

Children At Play Signs



**Department of Engineering and Planning
Traffic Division**

Safety Factors Related to Children At Play

The City of St. John's often receives requests to install signs to warn drivers of the possible presence of children. Concerned citizens fail to realize that these signs are deceiving and ineffective. Drivers already expect the presence of children in residential areas, especially at certain times, and studies show that signs attempting to warn motorists of normal conditions, or conditions that are not always present, fail to achieve the desired response.

False Sense of Security

"Children At Play" signs also tend to create a false sense of security for parents and children who believe the signs provide an added degree of protection when motorists, especially local ones, actually pay little attention to them. The use of these and similar signs such as "Slow" or "Caution" signs has long been discouraged, since these signs suggest to small children that it is acceptable to play on or beside the roadway. Parents also seem to believe that such signs may help to reduce speeds. There is no evidence that these signs prevent accidents or reduce the speed of vehicles. Speeding is an enforcement issue that should be dealt with by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

Lower Speed Limits

Citizens frequently request 30 km/hr or lower speed signs for residential streets where children are playing. The unposted speed limit on a residential street is automatically 50 km/hr and can be enforced by the RNC. Studies have shown that lowering the posted limit does not have an effect on driver behavior and instead increases the range of speeds. A wider speed differential promotes tailgating and unsafe passing maneuvers and increases the potential for collisions.

City Policy on "Children At Play" Signs

"Children At Play" and other similar signs are not recognized by the Transportation Association of Canada in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The City of St. John's, therefore, does not install such signs.



Children At Play signs simply do not work.....

Addressing the Safety of Young Children

Unnecessary signs confuse and annoy drivers and foster a disrespect for all signs. However, signs should be posted in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices with respect to school zones, pedestrian crossings, playgrounds and other recreational areas where a need exists. The most important thing parents can do is to teach children the dangers of playing in or near roadways and strongly discourage them from doing so. The City provides neighborhood parks where children can play safely. Many school sites also have playground facilities for children that may be utilized out of school hours.

The Traffic Division and Royal Newfoundland Constabulary can also provide additional information on safe roadway practices for children.


