



FACT SHEET

IMPACT OF TRAFFIC-CALMING MEASURES ON FIRE-RESCUE RESPONSE

For communities contemplating the installation of traffic-calming measures on primary and secondary residential roads within their neighborhoods, the following impacts on the delivery of fire, rescue and emergency medical services should be considered:

- Parabolic (rounded) speed humps and traffic circles cause response time delays of approximately 3-7 seconds per hump or circle depending upon the size Fire-Rescue vehicle(s) traversing these devices while en route to an emergency event¹.
- Flat-top speed humps cause less response time delays than parabolic humps and traffic circles.
- Seconds count when Fire-Rescue vehicles are responding to life-threatening events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory distress, choking, anaphylactic shock, and electrocution, as well as fires in occupied structures.
- Response time delays due to traffic-calming measures are experienced both en route to emergency events as well as during transport of patients to hospitals.
- Patients being transported by ambulance may experience adverse effects that exacerbate their injuries/illnesses while the ambulance traverses speed humps.
- Lane width-reducing measures such as chicanes, chokers, and road diets do not cause appreciable response time delays for Fire-Rescue vehicles.

While the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) endorses efforts to prevent and minimize traffic and pedestrian-related fatalities and injuries, the department believes it is important to bring to the attention of communities considering traffic-calming measures the above facts so that educated decisions can be made. Questions can be directed to: MCFRS.planningsection@montgomerycountymd.gov.

¹ Report titled: "The Effects of Speed Humps and Traffic Circles on Responding Fire-Rescue Apparatus in Montgomery County, Maryland," August 1997, based upon field tests conducted jointly by the Fire & Rescue Commission and Department of Public Works & Transportation in 1997.