



TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

FACT SHEETS

“CAN I PUT ROCKS ACROSS MY LAWN TO KEEP CARS OFF OF MY GRASS?”

Sometimes residents place rocks along the roadway in front of their homes to keep vehicles off their lawns. This is done primarily on residential streets that don't have curbs.

These rocks can be real safety hazards. If a vehicle leaves the roadway, rocks won't stop these out-of-control vehicles, just damage them and possibly injure the occupants. A rock could be hit by a vehicle and become an uncontrollable missile, possibly injuring residents. Pedestrians, including children, can trip on rocks and possibly fall into the street.

This area is usually not private property; it is within the public right-of-way. The property line is usually between 17 and 20 feet from the roadway.

Generally, a permit is required to install anything within the public right-of-way. The agency that has jurisdiction over the road (City, County or State) is obligated to maintain safe public roads, including the right-of-way outside the paved portion. The road agency can seek legal relief for damages from persons responsible for hazards placed within the right-of-way.

Vehicles tear up the lawn, but rocks are hazards and life has a greater value than grass and landscaping. A safe recovery area is needed. A roadside clear of obstructions and hazards allows drivers to regain control of their vehicles.

In addition to rocks in the right-of-way, other items can pose serious traffic safety hazards: solid flower garden borders of decorative timbers, mail boxes (especially those installed in large brick, concrete, or steel posts), sign posts and poles, fences, trees, bushes, etc. In addition to the physical hazard of something in or near the right-of-way line, these items can cause a sight distance problem, especially at intersections and driveways.

Property owners should review their plans with city or township authorities before anything is put in or near the public right-of-way.

The perception of insufficient traffic law enforcement is not a good reason to create a serious traffic safety hazard for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and residents by placing rocks in places where they could be a traffic safety hazard. Another solution is to report speeders and reckless drivers to the local police authority.