

School and Playground Areas and Zones - Transportation Association of Canada Guidelines

A national guidebook, *School and Playground Areas and Zones: Guidelines for Application and Implementation*, was published in October 2006 by the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC). This document outlines best practices around the application and implementation of school areas and zones and playground areas and zones and includes the following descriptions:

- Area – A section of roadway adjacent to a school or playground that is denoted by school area or playground area signing only.
- Zone – A section of roadway adjacent to a school or playground that is denoted by school area or playground area signing and a reduced speed limit sign.

1. The TAC guideline provides the following guidance on signing for school area and zones and playground areas and zones:

- In addition to the appropriate area warning sign, all school zones and playground zones are to be marked with:
 - A sign denoting:
 - Reduced speed limit
 - Effective times and applicable days
 - A sign denoting the end of the zone:
 - For local roads in residential areas only, an “End School Zone” or “End Playground Zone” sign may be provided. This should be considered where there is a greater risk of vehicles accelerating to an unsafe speed at the end of the zone.
 - Alternatively, a maximum speed sign reinstating the original speed limit may be used (COS current practice)
- Length of School Zones and Playground Zones:
 - The length of a school zone or playground zone should generally be no less than 100 metres in an urban environment.
- Guidelines for adjacent School Areas and Zones and Playground Areas and Zones:
 - Schools and playgrounds are frequently located adjacent to one another. If a school zone and a playground zone are necessary for adjacent sections of the same roadway, a single zone should be provided.
 - In general, it is suggested that a playground zone be installed to provide coverage over a longer period of the school day as well as on non-school days.
 - For playgrounds for which the utilization and access is closely tied to the school operation, a school zone can be considered to cover both the school and the playground.
 - Where two schools are located adjacent to one another and both require school zones, then it is suggested that a single zone be provided.

2. The TAC guideline outlines the following for school areas and zones:

- School areas can be considered for roadways near elementary and middle schools, where there is a possibility of children entering the roadway.

- School areas are generally discouraged for high schools due to the student's ability to understand traffic and to control their own movements.
- School zones are generally discouraged along "walk-to-school routes" away from the school vicinity, and on roadways where any of the following conditions exist:
 - School is located on an arterial road or freeway;
 - School grounds are fully fenced;
 - School is located an appreciable distance (e.g. greater than 50 metres) from an intersecting roadway;
 - The candidate roadway does not have a school entrance; and
 - The length of the school frontage is minimal (e.g. less than 50 metres).
- School zones or areas are unnecessary at post-secondary institutions.