

General Speed Limits and Requirements

Statutory speed limits. State law sets Minnesota speed limits based on the type of roadway; a limit can be modified in various cases (as discussed below). The statutory speed limits are: 65 m.p.h. or 70 m.p.h. for Interstate highways (depending on whether the road is, respectively, within or outside of an urbanized area of at least 50,000); 65 m.p.h. on divided highways with controlled access; 30 m.p.h. in an “urban district,” which is any segment of a city street or town road with structures spaced less than 100 feet apart for a minimum distance of a quarter-mile; 10 m.p.h. for alleys, manufactured home parks, and campgrounds; and a general default of 55 m.p.h. on other roads. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.011; 169.14; 327.27.](#)

Other limits. The speed limit is increased by 10 m.p.h. when passing on two-lane highways posted at 55 m.p.h. or higher. Some limits apply for specific vehicles. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14](#), subd. 2a; [169.801.](#)

Due care. State law also prohibits a person from driving “at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions” and directs drivers to “use due care.” [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 1. The provision can obligate a motorist to reduce speed to below the posted limit in dangerous conditions. Similarly, a mandate to “drive at an appropriate reduced speed” applies in specific circumstances, such as when passing emergency vehicles and with hazards like other traffic. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 3.

Adjusted Speed Limits

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is authorized to adjust a speed limit higher or lower than the statutory limits outlined above. To determine the appropriate speed limit, MnDOT conducts an engineering and traffic study, which analyzes a variety of factors such as: roadway design and characteristics; traffic volume; crash history; and observed speeds, with a particular focus on the 85th percentile (that is, the speed at or below which 85 percent of vehicles are measured as traveling).

MnDOT can alter the speed limit on trunk highways as well as on roads under the jurisdiction of local government (e.g., counties for county roads). With local roads, the local authority requests MnDOT to conduct an engineering and traffic study. Based on the study, MnDOT—not the local authority—then determines whether to establish or revise an adjusted speed limit. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subds. 4 and 5.

Limited Local Authority

Cities, counties, and towns have some limited power to set or to request adjusted speed limits on roads that are under their respective jurisdictions. Several distinct provisions govern the adjustments.

- Cities can set speed limits on city streets without a MnDOT engineering and traffic study but following other requirements, including that the changes are in a “consistent...manner” and based on the city’s engineering and analysis procedures. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5h.
- Under a 2023 provision, local units of government can request MnDOT to designate safe road zones for various focused traffic safety efforts. This can include speed limit alterations following an engineering and traffic study. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.065; 169.14](#), subd. 5i.
- A local road authority may reduce the speed limit to 25 m.p.h. on a “residential roadway,” which is a city street or town road that (1) has a total length of up to a half-mile, or (2) is in an area zoned exclusively for housing and is not a collector or arterial road. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.011](#), subd. 64; [169.14](#), subd. 2.

- The road authority may reduce the speed limit to 35 m.p.h. in a “rural residential district,” which is a city street or town road segment with residential houses spaced less than 300 feet apart for at least a quarter-mile. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.011](#), subd. 69a; [169.14](#), subd. 2.
- A city or town can lower the speed limit to 30 m.p.h. when MnDOT has set a higher limit in an “urban district” (as previously defined) that is at least a quarter-mile long.
- In school zones, a local road authority may, based on its own engineering and traffic study, prescribe a speed limit that is as low as 15 m.p.h. and no more than 30 m.p.h. below the surrounding limit. Minn. [Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5a.
- Subject to various requirements, speed limits can also be adjusted on other roadways. This includes: (1) on streets that have a designated bicycle lane; (2) on park roads; (3) in manufactured home parks; (4) in alleys; and (5) on roads within Minneapolis parks. [Minn. Stat. §§ 160.263](#), subd. 4; [169.14](#), subds. 5c and 5e; [327.27](#); [Laws 2021, 1st spec. sess., ch. 5](#).

Work Zones

There are a couple of ways in which speed limits can get adjusted in road construction or maintenance areas (known as “work zones”). While there are exceptions, a posted speed limit of 50 m.p.h. or higher is lowered to 45 m.p.h. when at least one lane of traffic is closed and workers are present. With restrictions, both MnDOT and local road authorities can also reduce the speed limits when workers are present, without performing an engineering and traffic study. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5d.

Penalties

Fines. Speeding is generally a petty misdemeanor, which carries a base fine that normally ranges from \$40 to \$150 (depending on speed) and no prison sentence. In addition to the base fine, there is a \$75 court surcharge and a law library fee that might be imposed. [Minn. Stat. § 357.021](#), subd. 6.

Enhancements. The penalty is enhanced in various circumstances. The base fine is doubled if a speeding violation: (1) occurs in a school zone; (2) is for speeds of 20 m.p.h. or more above the limit, in most circumstances; or (3) takes place when passing a parked emergency vehicle with flashing lights. The fine is \$300 for a violation in a work zone. A speeding violation becomes a misdemeanor in some situations, such as when committed in a manner that endangers people or property. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14](#); [169.89](#).

Loss of driving privileges. For driving over 100 m.p.h., a driver’s license will be revoked for at least six months. Minnesota does not use a point system, but habitual traffic violations, including speeding, cause removal of driving privileges. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14](#), subd. 1a; [171.17](#).

Violations on a Driver’s Record

Speeding violations are not recorded on the motorist’s driving record maintained by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) if the driver did not exceed: (1) 10 m.p.h. over the speed limit in a 55 m.p.h. zone; or (2) 5 m.p.h. over the limit in a 60 m.p.h. zone. Violations are still recorded if the posted speed limit is below 55 m.p.h., the posted speed limit is above 60 m.p.h., the violation occurred in a commercial motor vehicle, or the driver holds a commercial driver’s license or permit. [Minn. Stat. § 171.12](#), subd. 6. Insurance companies and data vendors can access DPS driving records for a fee. The courts keep separate records.



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