

## Basic Speed Limits and Requirements

**Statutory speed limits.** The default Minnesota speed limits are set by state statute, and they can be modified by a local road authority under various circumstances. The statutory speed limits are: 65 m.p.h. or 70 m.p.h. for interstates (depending on whether the road is, respectively, within or outside 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, mobile home parks, and campgrounds; and a 55 m.p.h. default on other roads. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.011; 169.14](#), subd. 2; [327.27](#).

**Other speed limits.** The limit increases 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 (e.g., 30 m.p.h. for implements of husbandry). [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14](#), subd. 2a; [169.801](#). A 40-m.p.h. minimum speed applies on interstates.

**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 traveling speed to below the limit in dangerous conditions.

## Adjusted Speed Limit Zones

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has authority to establish speed zones in which the speed limit is higher or lower than those set in statute. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5. Zones can be established after MnDOT conducts an engineering and traffic investigation, which analyzes factors like roadway design and characteristics, traffic volume, crash history, and observed speeds. While accounting for other road conditions, MnDOT’s approach is normally to set the limit near the 85th percentile of vehicle speeds (that is, the speed at or below which 85 percent of vehicles travel).

## Restricted Local Authority

Cities, counties, and towns have some limited power to set or to seek adjustments to speed limits on roads that are under their jurisdiction. Several provisions govern adjusting the statutory speed limits under a variety of circumstances.

- A local road authority can request MnDOT to perform an engineering and traffic investigation of a road. However, MnDOT—not the local authority—determines whether to establish a speed zone as well as the safe and reasonable speed limit.
- If MnDOT sets a speed zone for a city street or town road in an “urban district” (defined above) that is at least a quarter-mile long, the city or town can lower the limit to 30 m.p.h.
- On a residential roadway, a local road authority may reduce the speed limit to 25 m.p.h. Following a 2019 change, a “residential roadway” is a city street or town road that (1) has a total length of up to a half-mile, or (2) is not a collector or arterial road and is in an area zoned exclusively for housing. [Minn. Stat. § 169.011](#), subd. 64.
- A local 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.

- 2019 legislation permits cities to set speed limits on city streets without a MnDOT traffic study but following various process requirements. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5h.
- 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, including: (1) park roads (at no less than 15 m.p.h. and no more than 20 m.p.h. below the surrounding limit, and subject to a MnDOT engineering and traffic study); (2) on streets that have a designated bicycle lane (at no less than 25 m.p.h.); (3) in alleys; and (4) in mobile home parks (at over 10 m.p.h. but no more than 30 m.p.h.). [Minn. Stat. §§ 160.263](#), subd. 4; [169.14](#), subds. 5c and 5e; [327.27](#).

## Workers Present Speed Limits

Speed limits are adjusted in work zones. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5d. An existing speed limit of 50 m.p.h. or higher is adjusted down to 45 m.p.h. when a least one lane of traffic is closed and workers are present, although there are various exceptions to the provision. Also, without an engineering and traffic study, both MnDOT and local road authorities can reduce the limits when workers are present, with restrictions on the extent of a reduction that depend on the existing limit.

## Penalties for Violations

**Fines.** Speeding is generally a petty misdemeanor, carrying 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 might be imposed.

**Penalty enhancements.** The base fine is \$300 for a violation in a work zone, and is doubled if the violation: (1) occurs in a school zone; (2) involves speeds of 20 m.p.h. or more above the limit; or (3) occurs when passing a parked emergency vehicle with flashing lights. If a speeding violation is committed in a manner that endangers persons or property, it can be charged as a misdemeanor. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14](#); [169.89](#), subd. 1; [357.021](#), subd. 6.

**Loss of privileges.** A driver's license will be revoked for at least six months for driving over 100 m.p.h. Minnesota does not use a point system to trigger removal of driving privileges. However, multiple traffic violations within a year can lead to loss of a license. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14](#), subd. 1a; [169.89](#); [171.17](#).

## Violations on a Driver's Record

Some speeding violations are not recorded on the motorist's driving record maintained by the Department of Public Safety (DPS). [Minn. Stat. § 171.12](#), subd. 6. DPS driving records are accessible to insurance companies. The courts keep records separately.

Speeding violations stay off of a DPS driving record if the driver did not exceed 10 m.p.h. over the speed limit in a 55 m.p.h. zone, or 5 m.p.h. over the limit in a 60 m.p.h. zone. However, speeding violations are still recorded if: (1) the speed limit is below 55 m.p.h., or is 65 m.p.h. or higher; (2) the violation occurred in a commercial motor vehicle; or (3) the driver holds a commercial driver's license or permit.



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