

Basic Speed Limits and Requirements

Statutory speed limits. State statute sets Minnesota speed limits based on the type of roadway (which can be modified in some 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 if 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](#). There is a 40-m.p.h. minimum speed on Interstate highways.

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. Similarly, a requirement to “drive at an appropriate reduced speed” applies in specified circumstances, such as when passing emergency vehicles or at a rail crossing. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 3.

Adjusted Speed Limit Zones

MnDOT has the authority to establish speed zones that adjust the speed limit higher or lower than what is set in statute. MnDOT can establish a zone on trunk highways as well as on local roads in response to a local request (discussed below). [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subsd. 4 and 5. To determine the appropriate limit, MnDOT conducts an engineering and traffic investigation, which analyzes a variety of factors including: roadway design and characteristics; traffic volume; crash history; and observed speeds, with a particular focus on the 85th percentile of vehicle speeds (that is, the speed at or below which 85 percent of vehicles are measured as traveling).

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 respective jurisdictions. Several provisions govern adjustments to the statutory speed limits under different 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 resulting speed limit. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5.
- Cities can set speed limits on city streets without a MnDOT traffic study but following various other process requirements. [Minn. Stat. § 169.14](#), subd. 5h.
- 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 not a collector or arterial road and is in an area zoned exclusively for housing. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.011](#), subd. 64; [169.14](#), subd. 2.
- If MnDOT sets a speed zone for a city street or town road in an “urban district” (as defined above) that is at least a quarter-mile long, the city or town can lower the limit to 30 m.p.h.

- 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.
- 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 (at no less than 25 m.p.h.); (2) on 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); (3) in manufactured home parks (at between 10 m.p.h. and 30 m.p.h.); (4) in alleys; and (5) as designated by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on its roads (at no less than 20 m.p.h.). [Minn. Stat. §§ 160.263](#), subd. 4; [169.14](#), subds. 5c and 5e; [327.27](#); [Laws 2021, 1st spec. sess., ch. 5](#).

Work Zones

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

Penalties

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.

The penalty is enhanced in various circumstances. The base fine for speeding 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. The fine is \$300 for a violation in a work zone. A surcharge also applies in some situations. A speeding violation can be charged as a misdemeanor if it is in a manner that endangers people or property. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14; 169.89; 357.021](#), subd. 6.

Loss of 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 within 12- or 24-month periods cause removal of driving privileges. [Minn. Stat. §§ 169.14](#), subd. 1a; [169.89](#); [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 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, 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. [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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