

California

Speed Limits: 1994 and 2004

State	Limited Access Rural Interstates		Limited Access Urban Interstates		Other Limited Access Roads		Truck Speed (Y or N)
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
California	55	70	55	65	55	65	Y

The above speeds apply to all roadways. In California, the speed limit for trucks in all categories is 55 mph.

Speeding-related Data

California collects speeding-related crash data from information provided on the motor vehicle crash report form. The state also collects speeding-related citation data. Specific aggressive driving statistics are not collected or maintained in a database, although the state does collect aggressive driving citation data with the following components: reckless driving, unsafe lane change and following too close.

- California defines an aggressive driver as one who exhibits the following driving behaviors:
- Driving with excessive speed
- Tailgating (the 3-second space cushion is recommended when possible)
- Frequent unnecessary lane changes
- Improper merging techniques (having enough room to enter safely)

Proportion of Speeding-related Crashes

Year	Speeding-related Crashes	Total Crashes	State Highway Patrol Citations
2003	28,205 (36.7%)	76,813	993,592
2002	26,964 (36.1%)	74,655	954,166
2001	27,750 (37.7%)	73,528	925,516

The state highway safety office reported speed data does not show over-representation by any specific geographic area, race, ethnic group, gender, age or other grouping.

Efforts to Reduce Excessive Speeding

California reported funding a number of speeding-related activities:

- Sideshows and Street Racing project, in cooperation with allied agencies, to establish a hazard-assessment for sideshow/street racing activities statewide. The project uses a task force approach to evaluate the results of street racing collisions due to speed.
- Corridor Safety Program strategically focuses enforcement efforts on corridors where unusual spikes in the number of impaired driving, speeding and other primary collision-related factors signal a need for enhanced enforcement and increased public awareness.
- Highway patrol radar (installed in 100 percent of enforcement vehicles) and aerial speed enforcement are used. One educational tool is the SPECial Traffic Education Radar (SPECTER) Trailer. These radar-equipped display trailers are deployed around school zones, parks, special events and other areas experiencing a high incidence of speed-related conditions. The purpose of the trailers is to give the motoring public a visual evidence of their speed, remind them of the posted speed limit in the area and encourage them to reduce their speed accordingly. Many highway patrol jurisdictions have special teams of officers (Specialized Enforcement Units-SEU) that focus on specific violations for enforcement. Often these teams concentrate efforts on speed laws.
- Statewide Traffic Collision Reduction on County Roads Project is a statewide exclusive focus on county roads to reduce traffic collisions caused by the top primary collision factors, including speeding.
- Operation Road Share days were conducted four times each month throughout California. Operation Road Share days were pre-planned events where every available officer conducted rules of the road enforcement for commercial motor vehicle and passenger vehicle drivers. During an Operation Road Share mobilization, speeding was the most common violation cited.
- Funding to cities and counties for the purchase of visible display radar trailers, radar and laser speed detection units, solar powered vehicle speed feedback signs (devices are attached to poles) and flashing beacons.
- Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) activities that include a focus on speed enforcement and education. All STEP programs target enforcement of the top primary collision factors – speeding, improper turning, auto right-of-way, stop signs and so forth.

California reported that in 2003, 2004 and 2005 an average of 15 percent of all federal highway safety dollars were committed to reducing speeding (approximately 12 percent in 2003, approximately 14 percent in 2004 and approximately 18 percent in 2005). The estimated percentage of STEP funds used for speed-related activities is 30 percent. California uses state funds for highway patrol speeding enforcement but not for other grant-related activities.

California reported positive results from speed and/or aggressive driving programs in the last two years. In 2003, the provisional Mileage Death Rate (MDR) was 1.25, which is down from 1.28 in 2002. The MDR measures the number of traffic fatalities per 100 million miles of travel. During the same time period, speeding-related fatal and injury collisions also decreased, from 36 percent to 35.9 percent.

Public Perception

California's state highway safety office felt the motoring public believes police give a 5-10 mph cushion in enforcing the posted speed limit.