

Minnesota

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	
Minnesota	65	70	55	55 to 70	55	55	N

Minnesota reported that for Limited Access Urban Interstates in 2004, half had speed limits of 55 mph and the remainder had speed limits posted at 60, 65 or 70 mph. There is no separate speed limit for trucks.

Speeding-related Data

Minnesota reported speeding-related crash data specifically relating to the speed limit change is available on the website: <http://www.dot.mn.speed/index.html>. Reported speed limit and the estimated speed provided by the officer on the crash report form are the primary elements used to record the data. Speeding-related citation data is collected by the state patrol but other agency speeding citation data is not available on a statewide database. Some speeding-related citation/violation data is available from the driver record database. For example, in the 2004 calendar year, 175,155 speeding violations were posted to the driving records.

Minnesota statutes do not define aggressive driving, nor does the state have a citation category called “aggressive driving.” However, the crash report form introduced in 2003 has a field called “apparent physical condition” which the officer completes for drivers in crashes. One of the categories in that field is “aggressive.” The state noted that officers completing crash report forms need to be given guidelines on what types of behaviors would be defined to include an “apparent physical condition” of “aggressive.” Currently that decision is left to the judgment of the officer who completes the report. Among the 233,257 motor vehicle drivers on whom a crash report has been written, the field “aggressive” was reported 112 times (one-twentieth of one percent). There is some consensus that “aggressive driving” might be operationally defined as driving characterized by two or more driving violations that might include speeding and following too closely, or speeding and unsafe lane use.

Proportion Speeding-related Crashes

Year	Percent Speeding-related Fatal Crashes	Percent Speeding-related Injury Crashes	State Patrol Speeding Citations
2003	20.8%	Data Not Available	106,452
2002	18.3%	11.4%	114,669
2001	17.9%	12.2%	115,418

No study has been performed to determine if there is over representation by any specific geographic area, race, ethnic group, gender, age or other grouping. Minnesota noted, however, that operating speeds increase as vehicles approach the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.

Efforts to Reduce Excessive Speeding

Minnesota's state patrol and other law enforcement agencies enforce traffic laws, including those related to speeding. The more urban areas of the state utilize traffic calming strategies. Some jurisdictions slow traffic down by using speed display signs, roundabouts, reducing the number of through streets in residential areas and so forth. Annually since the fall of 1994, Minnesota has supported Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) activities. STEP efforts combine publicity, public education and overtime enforcement of impaired driving, speeding, and passenger protection laws. Called *Safe & Sober*, the programs are conducted on and around holiday periods and focus on one of the three areas for each of the periods.

Minnesota reported that federal highway dollars committed to speed are those that fund the *Safe & Sober* programs, involving state patrol troopers, county deputies and municipal officers. In 2002, approximately \$200,000 was expended on activities that addressed speeding. In 2003, approximately \$297,000 was expended on efforts that addressed speeding, and in 2004, approximately \$330,000 was expended on speeding.

Minnesota reported little impact of speeding-related programs. While no formal evaluation of the specific speeding components of *Safe & Sober* programs has been carried out, there has been no apparent impact on speeding. Statewide data is indicating 85th percentile speeds (the prevailing speed of 85 percent of drivers on a particular stretch of roadway over a specified period of time) have continued to increase (from 1997 when speed limits increased through 2002) on rural freeways, rural divided highways and urban freeways. On rural two lane/two way roadways, 85th percentile speeds have remained about the same. Although speeds on urban divided highways have decreased, that decrease likely relates as much to increased congestion as to driver speed selection.

Public Perception

Minnesota state highway safety office noted state law provides that citations are not recorded on the driver record for less than 10 miles per hour over the posted limit in 55 mph zones, resulting in some abuse of the posted limit. While the law applies to 55 zones specifically, the attitude does seem to spill over into other zones.