

Montana

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	
Montana	65	75	55	65	N/A	N/A	Y

Montana noted that on non-interstate roads, the speed limit in 1994 was 55 mph and in 2004 the speed limit changed to 70 mph. The state has a specific speed limit for trucks: on interstate roads, the speed limit is 65 mph; on non-interstate roads the day speed limit is 65 mph and the nighttime limit is 60 mph.

Speeding-related Data

Montana collects speeding-related crash data, through too fast for conditions and exceeded speed limit data elements. The state does not collect citation data. No aggressive driving data is collected and the state has no formal definition of aggressive driving in state statutes.

Proportion of Speeding-related Crashes

Year	Too Fast for Conditions Crashes (# Fatal Conditions)	Exceeded Speed Limit Crashes (# Fatal Conditions)
2003	4,663 (58)	414 (38%)
2002	4,518 (58)	420 (31%)
2001	3,426 (59)	322 (24%)

The state noted both too fast for conditions and exceeded speed limit could be coded for the same crash.

Efforts to Reduce Excessive Speeding

Montana's state highway safety office assists local law enforcement agencies in purchasing radar units. The state also includes speeding as an element in their Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) efforts. In order to make stops for these secondary offenses, such as safety belt use, speed infraction stops are made. No STEP funds are used specifically for speeding-related enforcement efforts but the state estimates a high number of speeding citations and warnings result from alcohol and seat belt STEP law enforcement activities.

Montana has not been targeting speeding to any serious degree because the majority of federal highway safety dollars are earmarked and targeted for alcohol and seat belts. Since Montana has the highest alcohol related fatality rate in the nation, much of the emphasis is directed toward these problem areas rather than speeding.

Montana's speed monitoring sites are showing a small increase in speed over the last year. This change is not yet statistically significant, but is being watched closely to determine if this upward trend will continue.

Public Perception

Montana's state highway safety office felt the motoring public believes police give a 5-8 mph cushion in enforcing the posted speed limit. State law provides for small fines for speeds up to 10 miles per hour over the speed limit, after which a much higher structured fine is imposed. Thus the state statute tends to support the idea of a cushion.