

# New Mexico

## 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	
New Mexico	65	75	55	65	55	70	N

New Mexico reported the above speed limits are maximums and that many access segments have lower speed limits, depending on engineering design. All but a few sections of rural interstates are signed for 75 mph. Following the repeal of the NMSL, speed limits for rural highways were set on the basis of criteria that included lane and shoulder width, horizontal and vertical alignment and pavement condition. When NMSL was repealed in 1995, speed limits did not change until April 1996 in order to provide time for that analysis. Some segment speeds have been raised or lowered since. The state does not have a different speed limit for trucks.

## Speeding-related Data

New Mexico collects speeding-related crash data from the state's motor vehicle crash report form, using excessive speed and/or too fast for conditions data elements. The state does not collect speeding-related citation data, although speeding conviction data is collected. New Mexico does not collect aggressive driving data. Currently there is no clear definition of aggressive driving. Generally police officers code a citation as "careless or reckless" driving but coding is not uniform across the state.

## Proportion of Speeding-related Crashes

Year	Percent Speeding-related Fatal & Injury Crashes	Speeding Convictions Added to Driver Records
2003	17.3%	117,303 (data incomplete)
2002	17.5%	122,207
2001	16.5%	129,216

New Mexico analyzed speed data for over representation by any specific geographic area, race, ethnic group, gender, age or other grouping. The state found urban counties (particularly Bernalillo) are under represented. Rural counties with interstate highways and other major highways are somewhat over represented. San Juan County seems particularly high. The data shows 63 percent of convictions are male, 67 percent are under the age of 40, and 46 percent are under the age of 30.

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### **Efforts to Reduce Excessive Speeding**

New Mexico includes speeding as an element of the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) activities, and implements STEP programs in locations with high crash statistics, but not necessarily where a majority of the speeding may be occurring. There are very few STEP efforts targeted specifically at speeding. The state identified and implemented six “Safety Corridors.” These safety corridors are segments of highway that have high crash rates. Fines are doubled for these segments and the segments are identified by special signage. The state provides law enforcement funding to patrol these specific segments and is looking at six additional locations. The state does have specific speeding components of projects, but generally the projects encompass all “aggressive driving” behavior.

New Mexico commits approximately 10 percent of the total federal highway dollars received toward speeding-related activities. The state designates state funding for law enforcement activities, a portion of which is committed to speeding-related enforcement. Funding levels vary, but are estimated to be approximately \$100,000 annually. New Mexico estimated approximately \$500,000-\$1million per year for STEP or other related general traffic enforcement activities.

New Mexico believes there exists a direct relationship between funds spent on enforcement and a reduction in numbers of crashes.

### **Public Perception**

New Mexico’s state highway safety office felt the motoring public believes police give a 5 mph cushion in enforcing the posted speed limit on interstates with a 75 mph speed limit, and 10 mph on other roadways. The state also noted there are some exceptions in some counties where the public knows law enforcement officers give no cushion (Los Alamos, Sandoval.)