

# Washington

## 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 |                      |
| Washington | 65                               | 70   | 55                               | 60   | 55                         | 60   | Y                    |

Washington reports speed limits noted above apply to all roadways within the state, except county roads, where speed limits are 50 mph unless otherwise posted. Maximum speed for trucks on Washington roadways is 60 mph unless otherwise posted.

### Speeding-related Data

Washington maintains data on average speed and high speed in specific areas as indicated by speed monitoring devices, aircraft and pacing. The state patrol maintains a database with data on number of speeders contacted and citations issued per month and year-to-date, as well as comparison by month, year-to-date and last 12 months. The state also collects speeding citation data and data about aggressive driving.

Washington uses the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's definition of aggressive driving: the commission of two or more moving violations likely to endanger other persons or property, or any single intentional violation that requires defensive reaction of another driver.

Washington has 39 unconventional vehicles assigned to a statewide Aggressive Driving Apprehension Team (ADAT), which monitors total contacts, citations issued (and type of violation) per month, comparisons and year-to-date totals. ADAT also tracks the number of media contacts and rides-a-long provided. Aggressive drivers reported to the communication centers by citizens are recorded and mapped, then provided to patrol commanders for deployment decisions. If the citizen can provide a license plate number, a formal letter is sent to the registered owner advising them that the vehicle was observed driving aggressively at a specific location. As of December 2004, citizens can also access a website to report locations or "hot spots" of observed aggressive driving. Those locations are also provided to patrol commanders for deployment decisions and enforcement strategies.

### Proportion Speeding-related Crashes

| Year | Speeding Involved in Collision | State Police Citations |
|------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2003 | 44%                            | 289,898                |
| 2002 | 34%                            | 260,294                |
| 2001 | Data Not Available             | 174,949                |

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

In 2001, Washington began focusing on four core missions: strict enforcement and accountability through monthly monitoring of impaired driving enforcement, aggressive driving, dangerous speeding and occupant protection. The state believes this approach has the greatest impact on reducing serious injuries and fatalities. The results are increased activity and enforcement and a reduction in fatalities and injury collisions. There is a consistent effort to keep patrol activities in the media with interesting stories to help educate and increase awareness of the core mission. Field troopers also make a concentrated effort to educate through community outreach programs. In 2004 there were 612 presentations by field troopers statewide.

Washington dedicated \$1.6 million in 2003 to the four core missions, including speeding. During 2004, the amount was \$1.33 million, some of which was used to purchase unconventional vehicles to address the aggressive driving problems. Washington believes the major component in most aggressive driving acts is speeding. In 2005, the state anticipates expending \$1.37 million toward the four core missions. Some of those funds will be used to purchase newer improved speed measuring devices as well as speed emphasis patrols.

Washington reported their programs to address speeding have been largely successful. Since 2002, injury collisions have been reduced by 15 percent statewide and aggressive driving citations have increased 54 percent during the same period. The most important outcome has been a reduction in fatalities on state routes by 14 percent and interstates by 8 percent. Speed contacts have increased by 8.55 percent. The aggressive driving program including mapping of citizen reports, Internet capability for citizen reports and deployment of unconventional vehicles have all raised awareness of the issue and received positive input from the public.

### **Public Perception**

Washington does not mandate patrol quotas or require troopers to write tickets at a specific speed over the posted limit. Officers are trained to consider the totality of the circumstances and conditions in making a discretionary decision to issue a citation for speed. However, there are work standards and troopers are expected to take part in enforcement actions as a law enforcement agency. There appears to be a public perception that it is more likely than not a person will be cited at 10 mph over the posted limit. Very few citations are issued for 5 mph over the posted limit.