

Wisconsin

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	
Wisconsin	55	65	55	55	55	65	N

Wisconsin noted that the 55 mph speed limit only applies to large metropolitan areas. A limit of 65 mph is used on most rural 4+-lane roadways, even some with cross traffic access. The state does not have a separate limit for trucks.

Speeding-related Data

Wisconsin collects speeding-related crash data, using the driving too fast for conditions, exceeding posted limits and imprudent speed (failure to have control) data elements. The state also collects speeding-related citation data, but does not collect aggressive driving data. Currently Wisconsin statutes do not define aggressive driving, although the state highway safety office plans to address the definition and take action to develop countermeasures in 2005.

Proportion Speeding-related Crashes

Year	Speeding-related Fatal Crashes	Speeding-related Injury Crashes	State Patrol Speed Citations
2003	34%	20%	92,940
2002	34%	20%	91,806
2001	32%	18%	86,196

Wisconsin analyzed speed data to determine over representation by any specific geographic area, race, ethnic group, gender, age or other grouping. The state noted speeding is most prevalent among males, and most significant in ages 16-34.

Efforts to Reduce Excessive Speeding

Wisconsin includes speed as a component of Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) efforts. The state also initiated a program to target specific speeding-related enforcement details in high-speeding-related crash history areas. Deploying multiple agencies working coordinated efforts, the initiative encourages local earned media and utilizes radar, laser, and aircraft speed equipment to generate high volumes of enforcement activity. The primary media message reminds the public of the dangers associated with speeding and its increasing involvement in crash factors. In 2005, Wisconsin plans to produce and air spots with a speed-related message, entitled, "Busted, over the limit, under arrest!"

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Wisconsin estimated approximately 5 percent of annual federal highway safety funds were committed each year in fiscal year (FY) 2003, 2004 and 2005 to specific speed-reduction projects. Another 9 percent was committed to enforcement programs that focus on other issues such as belt use and impaired driving, but also impact speeding. About 20 percent all Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) funds are expended specifically on speeding-related enforcement. Wisconsin uses no state funding for speeding-related enforcement, but noted that the state patrol generates nearly 100,000 citations per year using state sources of funding for personnel.

Wisconsin has not completed specific impact evaluations of their speeding-related programs and so the impact is largely unknown. However, the state noted average speeds continue to climb, the percentage of speeding-related crashes increases and greater numbers of top-end speeders are being detected. While current programs have been effective in generating speeding-related enforcement, the state noted the programs are not sufficient to reverse these trends. Wisconsin believes it is not possible to accurately determine the impact of the state's speeding-related programs against current trends to determine if the rates of increase would have been greater without having any of the countermeasures in place.

Public Perception

Wisconsin's state highway safety office felt the motoring public believes police give a cushion in enforcing the posted speed limit. The amount varies, but has been steadily increasing. On most rural highways, the perceived tolerance has climbed to nearly 9 mph, while the rural interstates have climbed to around 14 mph over posted limits.