



# *What to know about* **Speed Limits**

## **Raising and Lowering Speed Limits**

Prior to adjusting a speed limit, an assessment of the roadway should be performed. The assessment should consider the safety performance of the roadway, existing traffic and roadway characteristics, and any infrastructure improvements needed. These assessments will also help ensure a consistent application of speed limits across the state. Assessments should be led by MoDOT but include appropriate partners during the review (law enforcement, emergency services, schools, business owners, local officials, etc.).

Infrastructure improvements that may need constructed include:

- Wider lanes or paved shoulders with rumble stripes
- Left and right turn lanes
- Acceleration and deceleration lanes
- Changes in access to limit cross traffic and left turns onto the highway
- Realignment of the roadway to straighten curves
- Median guard cable

When necessary infrastructure improvements are identified, they should be prioritized alongside other regional needs through the normal planning process. Costs for necessary improvements can be significant, and this process ensures available funding is distributed throughout the state according to a region's highest prioritized needs.

### **Want to Know More?**

If you are interested in discussing plans in your area for potential improvements, please contact your local planning organization by visiting [www.modot.org/ppg](http://www.modot.org/ppg).





Missouri averages nearly 1,000 traffic crash fatalities each year. Approximately 35% of these fatalities involve excessive speeds. Research shows increased vehicle speeds contribute to higher levels of severity in roadway crashes. Speed limits are established to foster safe driving behaviors that minimize the risk of severe crashes and promote smooth traffic flow.

# Speed Limits

## State Law and Speed Limits

Uniform maximum speed limits in Missouri are set by state statute. The following maximums are established according to roadway classification and population density:

- Interstates and freeways in rural areas: 70 mph
- Interstates, freeways, and expressways in urbanized areas: 60 mph
- Expressways in rural areas: 65 mph
- State lettered routes: 55 mph
- All other roads: 60 mph

By statute, the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission may set a speed limit higher or lower than these maximum speed limits based on engineering judgment. However, speed limits must not exceed 70 mph in any case.

Typical safety, traffic, and roadway characteristics to consider when establishing speed limits include:

- Crash history
- Traffic volumes
- Lane and shoulder widths
- Roadway alignment and grade (curves and hills)
- Sight distance (e.g., unobstructed views for drivers)
- Presence of traffic control devices (signals, signs, stripes, signals, etc.)
- Presence of safety enhancements (rumble stripes, guard cable, etc.)