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The History of SPEED LIMITS in Indiana

The Indiana State Highway Commission first began establishing speed limits in 1937 with the passage of House Enrolled Act 238. The first known speed limit established in this way was on U.S. 31 near State Road 28 in June 1937 at 40 mph.

Speed limits encourage drivers to travel at a more uniform speed, which in turn enhances traffic flow and safety. Speed limits are also a means by which law enforcement can address risky behavior. According to the Federal Highway Administration, speeding is cited as a contributing factor in about 30% of all fatal crashes.

Today, Indiana Code has established multiple statutory maximum speed limits, depending on roadway type. For example, the maximum speed limit for a rural interstate highway is 70 mph, whereas the maximum speed limit for an alley is 15 mph.

All speed limits in Indiana, that vary from the statutory maximum, are set by engineering studies and are usually within 5 mph of the 85th percentile speed, which is the speed that 85% of drivers are traveling at or below. The speed at which drivers will travel can be affected by many factors, including roadway features (for example, lane width or curves), traffic conditions, weather, vehicle type and condition, the driver's perception of their own driving ability, law enforcement presence, and so on. As a result, studies show that there is little change in operating speeds after posting a new speed limit. INDOT will, however, consider additional factors, such as crash history and sight distance, along the segment as part of the engineering study.



Statutory Maximum Speed Limits Established by Indiana Code (IC 9-21-5-2)

- 70 mph for rural interstate highways and the Indiana Toll Road
- 65 mph for trucks on rural interstate highways
- 65 mph for non-interstate freeways
- 60 mph on divided highways
- 55 mph for urban interstate highways
- 55 mph for rural highways (two-lane or multilane undivided)
- 30 mph for roads in urban districts
- 15 mph for alleys

Facts About Speed Limits

What are the types of speed limits?

REGULATORY SPEED LIMITS



The regulatory speed limit is indicated by a black and white sign showing the maximum speed that motorists may travel under ideal conditions. A lower speed limit may be established for trucks and buses.

ADVISORY SPEED LIMITS



Advisory speed limits are indicated by a black and yellow sign or plaque and are used to notify drivers of the recommended speed to navigate a curve, exit ramp, or other special condition.

WORKSITE SPEED LIMITS



Worksite speed limits for construction zones must be at least 10 mph below the regular speed limit and may be used only when workers are present or if a lower speed limit is necessary for the safety of the traveling public.

SCHOOL SPEED LIMITS



School speed limits are a reduced speed that is in effect when flashing or at the times designated. By policy, INDOT will post school speed limits for schools with a driveway, property frontage, or a designated school crosswalk on a state highway. The school speed limit will be 10 mph less than the regular speed limit or 40 mph if the regular speed limit is 55 mph or 60 mph.

Can a local unit of government ask INDOT to alter a speed limit within its boundaries?

A local unit of government can make a request directly to INDOT to alter a speed limit on a state-maintained roadway within its boundaries. Following that request, INDOT will conduct an engineering study. State-maintained roadways include all interstate highways, U.S. routes, and state roads.

Can local jurisdictions post a lower school speed limit on a state highway?

For schools with property frontage on a state highway, local jurisdictions may post a lower school speed limit on the state highway by notifying INDOT via certified mail.

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