



Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Speeding



JUST THE FACTS

NATIONALLY:

- Speeding is involved in almost one-third of traffic fatalities, killing an average of over 33 people per day.¹
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a crash is speeding-related if the driver was charged with a speeding-related offense or if an officer indicated that racing, driving too fast for conditions, or exceeding the posted speed limit was a contributing factor in the crash.²
- There were an estimated 300,595 people injured in speeding related traffic crashes in 2022.³
- NHTSA estimates that the annual economic cost to society of speeding-related crashes was \$46 billion in 2019.⁴
- Young males are the most likely to speed. In 2022, 35% of male drivers in the 15- to 24-year-old age group involved in fatal crashes were speeding at the time of the crash.⁵
- Alcohol involvement is common for drivers in speeding-related crashes. In 2022, 38% of speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher.⁶
- Motorcycles involved in fatal crashes are the most likely to be speeding of all vehicle types. In 2022, 38% of all motorcycles involved in fatal crashes were speeding, compared to 22% for passenger cars, 15% for light trucks, and 6% for large trucks.⁷
- In 2022, for passenger car and light truck operators involved in fatal crashes with known restraint use, more than half (52%) who were speeding were also unrestrained at the time of the crash, compared to 22% unrestrained for non-speeding drivers.⁸
- Although 8 in 10 people know that speeding is dangerous, 9 of 10 of these same drivers admit to speeding themselves.⁹
- According to *Focus on Safety: A Practical Guide to Automated Traffic Enforcement*,¹⁰ drivers speed because:
 - They're in a hurry.
 - They're inattentive to their driving.
 - They don't take traffic laws seriously; they don't think the laws apply to them.
 - They don't view their driving behavior as dangerous.
 - They don't expect to get caught.
 - Some or all of the above.

TEXAS:

- In 2023, there were 1,456 speeding-related traffic fatalities in Texas. There were also 5,983 speeding-related serious injuries.¹¹
- There were 161,752 total speed-related crashes in Texas in 2023.¹²
- Speeding was a contributing factor in 35% of all fatal crashes in Texas in 2022.¹³
- Texas has the highest speed limit in the country. On a toll road near Austin, the speed limit is 85 miles per hour.¹⁴

IT'S THE LAW

- The speeding law in Texas is that no person may drive a vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the circumstances then existing. Drivers must also control the speed of their vehicle as necessary to avoid collisions.¹⁵ In addition, no person shall drive so slowly as to impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic.¹⁶
- Driving over the speed limit is *prima facie* evidence that a speed is not reasonable and prudent under the circumstances then existing.¹⁷ Speed limits are often posted. If there is no posted speed limit, the below speed limits apply:
 - **70 miles per hour (mph)** on “numbered” highways and farm/ranch-to-market roads outside an urban district.¹⁸ (“Urban district” means the territory adjacent to and including a highway, if the territory is improved with structures that are used for business, industry, or dwelling houses and are located at intervals of less than 100 feet for a distance of at least one-quarter mile on either side of the highway.¹⁹)
 - **60 mph** on highways that are not “numbered” and are outside of an urban district.²⁰
 - **30 mph** in an urban district on a street other than an alley.²¹
 - **15 mph** in an alley in an urban district.²²
 - **15 mph** on a beach.²³
- A fine for a speeding violation can range from \$1 to \$200.²⁴ If a speeding offense occurs in a construction zone with workers present, the minimum and maximum fines are doubled.²⁵ Following conviction, speeders are also assessed court costs.²⁶
- If a person is speeding 25 mph or more above the speed limit, or is driving 95 mph or more, they are ineligible to have their case dismissed via a Driving Safety Course.²⁷

SAFETY TIPS

- Leave earlier so you don't feel rushed.
- Pay close attention to the speedometer, while still carefully watching the road.
- Drive under the speed limit.
- Going slower gets you better gas mileage.
- Your vehicle will get the best gas mileage at speeds between 30 and 60 miles per hour, according to the Department of Energy.
- Use the “cruise control” option if your car has it.
- If you find yourself going too fast, mentally calculate how much a speeding ticket could cost you. Convictions can easily exceed \$400 after court costs. There could also be collateral consequences such as a criminal record or increased car insurance premiums.
- Figure out just how much time you save by speeding. It is probably much less than you think: going 65 mph in a 55 zone for 15 miles “saves” less than three minutes. Five over saves less than 90 seconds.
- Listen to classical or light music instead of hard rock. The soft music will help you relax and slow down.
- Make sure your car is at a comfortable temperature. If not, you may rush just to get out of that “uncomfortable” car.

What Other Safety Tips Can You Suggest?

¹ National Safety Council (NSC), *Speeding*, accessed November 7, 2024, at <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/motor-vehicle-safety-issues/speeding/>.

² National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Traffic Safety Facts, 2022 Data, *Speeding*, DOT HS 813 582, <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813582>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ NHTSA, *Traffic Crashes Cost America \$340 Billion in 2019*, <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/traffic-crashes-cost-america-billions-2019>.

⁵ *Supra* note 2.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ The Zebra, <https://www.thezebra.com/resources/research/speeding-car-insurance-rates/>, accessed November 8, 2024.

¹⁰ National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running, *Focus on Safety: A Practical Guide to Automated Traffic Enforcement*, accessed January 18, 2013, at http://www.stopredlightrunning.com/pdfs/WEBONLY_Red%20Light%20Book.pdf.

¹¹ Texas Department of Transportation, *Speed Involved Crashes and Injuries by County*, accessed November 8, 2024, at <https://www.txdot.gov/content/dam/docs/trf/crash-reports-records/2023/22.pdf>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Supra* note 2.

¹⁴ Associated Press, *Texas Approves Highest Speed Limit In Country At 85 MPH*, CBS Houston, September 7, 2012, available at <http://houston.cbslocal.com/2012/09/07/texas-approves-highest-speed-limit-in-country-at-85-mph/>.

¹⁵ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.351(a) & (b).

¹⁶ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.363(a).

¹⁷ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.352(a).

¹⁸ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.352(b)(2).

¹⁹ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.352(d)(3).

²⁰ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.352(b)(3).

²¹ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.352(b)(1).

²² *Id.*

²³ Tex. Transp. Code § 545.352(b)(5).

²⁴ Tex. Transp. Code § 542.401.

²⁵ Tex. Transp. Code § 542.404(a).

²⁶ See TMCEC's Court Cost chart for convictions on or after January 1, 2024, available at <https://www.tmcec.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AY-24-Court-Costs-Chart-FINAL.pdf>.

²⁷ Tex. Code of Crim. Proc. Art. 45A.352(a)(5).