



The Institute of Transportation Engineers
Traffic Engineering Council
presents TIPS on



Lower Speed Limits

Why not lower the speed limit to reduce hazards in our area?

An unrealistically low speed limit can actually lead to accidents. Here's why:

- First, many studies conducted over the last several decades in all parts of the country have shown that a driver's speed is influenced more by the appearance of the roadway and the prevailing traffic conditions than it is by the posted speed limit.
- Second, some drivers will obey the lower posted speed while others will feel it's unreasonable and simply ignore it. This disrupts the uniform traffic flow and increases accident potential between the faster and the slower drivers. Research has shown that when vehicles travel about the same speed, accidents are minimized.
- Third, when traffic is traveling at different speeds, the accuracy of the judgement of speeds by crossing pedestrians and motorists decreases.

State Speed Laws

Although each state has its own separate set of laws, speed limit laws are generally derived from very similar language. For instance, the foundation for most speed limits laws generally states that "No person shall drive a vehicle on a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions, and having regard to the actual and potential hazards, then existing."



