

Traffic Safety Policy Priority: Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users

Description:

The National Roadway Safety Strategy and the Safe Systems Approach identifies Safer Speeds as a critical component to the reduction of fatal and serious injury crashes. The Safe System Approach recognizes the impacts of kinetic energy on the human body and the fact that effective speed management will reduce the kinetic energy in crashes.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has listed Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users as a Proven Safety Countermeasure due to broad consensus among roadway safety experts that speed control is one of the most important methods for reducing fatalities and serious injuries. Speeding, exceeding the posted speed limits, or traveling too fast for conditions is a repeating trend. Of the 42,939 fatalities that occurred on our Nation's roadway in 2021, 29% were speeding related. The Nevada Speed Management Action Plan (SMAP) studied speeding related data from 2015-2019 and found that 31% of the fatal crashes in Nevada listed speeding as a contributing factor.

Managing speed requires a Safe Systems Approach. Safer speeds, coupled with other Safe Systems objectives will rely on modifying behaviors to begin moving toward Zero Fatalities. As such, implementation of SMAP needs to continuously engage in learning from doing. The Safe Systems principles embody learning from doing and should be fundamental in this policy priority for implementing Appropriate Speed Limits for All Users. Appropriate Speed Limits for All Users can be achieved by understanding the roadway context and environment. Speed limits can be based on the facility and the needs of the users rather than continuing the practice of setting speeds using the 85th percentile method.

All road owners should adopt a policy to set Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users to reduce fatal and serious injuries on the roadway system.

Data to Support:

[Speed Management Action Plan \(SMAP\) | Nevada Department of Transportation \(nv.gov\)](#)

Subject Matter Expert(s):

1. Lacey Tisler, NDOT, ltisler@dot.nv.gov

Resources & Reference:

[Safer Speeds | US Department of Transportation](#)

[Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)

[Safe System Approach for Speed Management \(dot.gov\)](#)

[Speed Management Action Plan \(SMAP\) | Nevada Department of Transportation \(nv.gov\)](#)

[Aligning Geometric Design with Roadway Context | Blurbs New | Blurbs | Publications \(trb.org\)](#)

[Understanding the 85th Percentile Speed \(strongtowns.org\)](#)

Submitted By:

Safe Speeds Task Force

Contact: Lacey Tisler, ltisler@dot.nv.gov