Information on
Speed Limits

SPEED LIMIT 55

How are speed limits determined? How can I get the speed limit in my neighborhood lower than 25?
How can I get more speed limit signs posted? If you lower the speed limit, won't the motorist slow down?
Aren't speed limits always posted to 10 miles slower that I can go?

How are speed limits determined?

Years of experience and research have led engineers to the conclusion that the 85th percentile speed (or the speed at or below that 85 percent of the motorists will travel on the street) is a reasonable speed. It is an acknowledgement that 15 percent of drivers drive unreasonable for the given conditions. Many speed studies conducted over the past decades have found that the likelihood of an accident is lowest when the majority of the motorists are moving at the same rate. The 85th percentile speed is the safest rate for all ranges; safer event than the 50th percentile (half of the traffic is faster, half of the traffic is slower) or the average speed (sum of all speeds divided by the number of vehicles) for the simple reason that the speed differential is least for this group. Measurements of the 85th percentile are made under free-flowing and ideal traffic conditions. Finally, the engineers will consider other factors such as number of driveways, the volume of traffic, the width of the roadway, and number of travel lanes; however, the basic speed limit through a zone remains premised on the 85th percentile. There are other appropriate signs (curve warning, intersection ahead, school, etc.) that are intended to complement the overall signing scheme.

Once the 85th percentile speed is determined through a traffic study, the speed limit is set to the nearest ending 5-mile interval (25, 35, 45, 55, or 65 miles per hour). Most streets in Clark County are designed for a pre-determined speed limit. Arterials streets are designed and constructed to be posted at 45 miles per hour, collectors at 35 miles per hour, and all other streets at 25 miles per hour. ***25 miles per hour is the lowest speed posted for non-school frontage areas.*** The Beltway (I-215/CC 215) is designed for an ultimate 65 miles per hour upon completion to a freeway type of roadway but has lower speed limits in sections that are interim roadway facilities or under construction.

How are the speed limit signs posted?

Clark County places speed limit signs at the location where a motorist would need to change speeds. Speed limit signs are posted at entrances to residential areas where the speed limit has changed from a higher speed to 25 miles per hour. Speed limit signs are normally not posted within subdivisions. Speed limits signs on arterial and collector streets are normally posted at ½ mile intervals just past crossing another arterial or collector streets. On streets with no posted speed limit signs, the "prima facie" speed limit is 25 mile per hour.

If you lower the speed limit, won't the motorist slow down?

While a common myth, research and studies have found that motorist will drive on a street at a speed they feel comfortable with regardless of the posted speed. Posting artificially lower speed limits does not slow traffic and can increase the potential for accidents.

Aren't speed limits always posted to 10 miles slower that I can go?

Speed limits are set at the maximum speed a motorist can drive. Roadway and weather conditions may required a motorist to drive slower than the posted speed but there are no times when a motorist should driver faster than the posted speed limit.