

Speed Limit Myths and Facts

Myth: Lowering the posted speed limit will reduce speeding.

Many people assume that reducing the speed limit will slow down speeders. The truth is, studies have shown that most drivers will drive at the speed they perceive appropriate for the conditions of the roadway they are traveling on.

Myth: Lower speed limits will reduce crashes.

Safety is always NDOT's number one concern. Reducing speed limits to unreasonable values can actually result in an increase in crashes due to greater variance in vehicle speeds.

Myth: Speed limits are arbitrarily set by government officials.

Besides those speed limits that are defined in state law, Nebraska State Statute requires that speed limits be established on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation.

Myth: The 85th percentile speed is just a value engineers developed.

Use of the 85th percentile speed for establishing speed limits is founded on national research and has been established as the national standard for determining speed limits.

Myth: Heavy truck traffic is unsafe and frequently speed through slower speed zones.

Speed studies performed by NDOT on state highways through communities have shown that on average heavy vehicles travel slower than passenger vehicles.

Myth: Speed limits should be set for peak hour congested traffic and weather conditions.

Speed limits are set for the ideal travel conditions, low traffic volumes and dry pavement conditions. When traffic or weather conditions determine a need for slower speeds, drivers are required to drive at a reasonable and prudent speed for the conditions.

Myth: The yellow and black advisory speed signs mounted below warning signs are not enforceable speed limits.

Although advisory speeds may not be enforceable as a speed limit, they can be enforced under the basic speed law that motorists must operate at speeds that are reasonable and prudent for the conditions present.

Myth: Speed limits should be set for the drunk, drugged, drowsy and distracted drivers.

Speed limits are set to be acceptable by the normally careful and competent actions of reasonable and prudent vehicle operators, not the high-risk, unreasonable actions of a few.