

Speed Zones - Ohio Speed Limits

How, why and when, speed zones are established to lower legal speed limits

The Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices states "Section 4511.21 of the Ohio Revised Code (O.R.C.) establishes statutory speed limits, and prescribes how those speed limits may be altered when an engineering study determines that they do not fit the road and traffic conditions. The process by which an altered speed limit is established is typically referred to as speed zoning."

When setting speed limits it is important to have speed limits that the majority of drivers consider reasonable. Studies have shown that most drivers tend to drive at a speed they are comfortable with. Raising or lowering the speed limits does not have a significant effect on speed. However, when the speed limit is set at a level that most drivers consider reasonable the speed of vehicles is more uniform. It is considered safer to have all the vehicles traveling at approximately the same speed. Also the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) does not want to set unreasonably low speed limits that would make the average driver a law breaker.

When doing speed zone studies ODOT considers various factors such as the development of the area, roadway features including traffic volume, accidents, and the speed vehicles are traveling. Both the 85 percentile speed and the 10 mph pace are very important factors. The 85 percentile speed is the speed at which 85 percent of the vehicles are traveling at that speed or lower. The 10 mph pace is the ten mile per hour range of speeds containing the greatest number of observed speeds.

Speed zone requirements are for roads and streets in all jurisdictions

It should be noted that ODOT approved speed zones are needed for roads and streets that are to have a speed limit lower than the statutory prima-facie speed limits given in the Ohio Revised Code regardless of jurisdiction. This includes, rural state highways, county and township roads and streets in both cities and villages. However, a Board of Trustees has the authority to lower the speed limit without ODOT approval on a road that is an "unimproved highway" or is in an area that meets the Ohio Revised Code definition of a commercial or residential subdivision.

What are the Speed Limits in Urbana

1. Twenty miles per hour in school zones during school recess and while children are going to or leaving school during the opening or closing hours, and when twenty miles per hour school speed limit signs are erected.
2. Twenty-five miles per hour in all other portions of a municipal corporation, except on state routes outside business districts, through highways outside business districts, and alleys.
3. Thirty-five miles per hour on all state routes or through highways within municipal corporations outside business districts.
4. Fifty miles per hour on controlled-access highways and expressways within municipal corporations.
5. Fifteen miles per hour on all alleys within the municipal corporation.
6. Thirty-five miles per hour on highways outside municipal corporations that are within an island jurisdiction.

Urbana Speed Limit Questions:

1. What is the speed limit on North 68 in front of the airport? From the northern most entrance to the airport, south to Dellinger Road, the speed limit is 50 mph.
2. What is the speed limit of State Route 55 from South Main Street, west to city limits? State Route 55 is a 50 mph zone from South Main Street to the corporation limits.
3. What is the speed limit of South Main Street south of State Route 55? South Main Street (US 68) transitions from 35 mph north of State Route 55 to 50 mph south of that location to the city limits.
4. What is the speed limit of State Route 54? State Route 54 from the corporation limits (East Powell Avenue) northbound to East Water Street is 50 mph. The speed then transitions to 35 mph from East Water to Scioto Street.
5. I noticed that the speed limit has been raised from 35 mph to 50 mph eastbound on SR 29 from Eastview to corporation limits. Why was it changed? The State of Ohio Revised Code sets the speed limits. A state route or U.S. Highway within a corporation limit is 35 unless it is a controlled access. Since there are not street or driveway entrances on both sides of the roadway within every 100 feet of each other, this section is considered a controlled access highway.
6. What is the speed limit on Norwood Avenue (West SR 29)? The speed limit is 50 mph from West Light Street westbound to the corporation limits (Millerstown Road).
7. What is the speed limit in front of Walmart (East US HWY 36)? From the East corporation limits westbound, the speed limit is 50 mph and then transitions to 35 mph midway between the two main entrances to the Walmart complex.
8. What is the speed limit on South Edgewood? The entire length of South Edgewood is 35 mph.
9. What is the speed limit on East Powell Avenue? From South Main Street eastbound to the corporation limit (Main Entrance to Fairgrounds) the speed limit is 35 mph. Eastbound from the corporation limits to State Route 54 is 55 mph.