SPEEDING

Decrease Speed Limit

Decreasing posted speed limits involves reducing the regulatory speed limit to a lower value deemed safer based on roadway conditions, crash history, or operational concerns.

Implementation Strategy

How and Where to Apply

- Apply on expressways with crash history, poor design, heavy merging, work zones, or near urban areas and vulnerable users.
- Set limits based on engineering study considering 85th percentile speed, crash data, land use, and road design.
- Not recommended on high-speed, limited-access expressways without supporting design changes, where compliance is unlikely, and congestion impacts outweigh safety benefits.

Use in a Safe System Approach

Lowering expressway speed limits reduces crash severity, supports safe speeds, acknowledges human vulnerability, promotes shared responsibility, and ensures proactive, redundant safety when combined with enforcement and roadway design measures.

Key Stakeholders

State DOTs, MPOs, law enforcement agencies, judicial authorities, engineering consultants, safety advocacy groups.

Proactive Implementation

Speed limit reductions can be implemented proactively through corridor safety assessments, systemic speed management programs, or in response to evolving land use and mobility patterns. Agencies may also adjust speed limits as part of Vision Zero initiatives or when integrating expressways into urban networks with multimodal interactions.

Countermeasure Overview

Objective: Set appropriate speed limits.
Strategy: Implement differential speed limits for heavy vehicles if appropriate (High Speed Only). `

Targeted Solution

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS	▪ Unsafe speed ▪ Aggressive driving behaviors
TARGET CRASH TYPE	▪ Speeding ▪ Run-off-road
ROAD FACILITY TYPE (ARTERIAL, COLLECTOR, LOCAL)	▪ All
AREA TYPE	▪ All

Safety Linkage

NCHRP 500 Series	SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH
Speeding-related Crashes	Safe Speeds
AASHTO'S TOWARD ZERO DEATHS	SAFE SYSTEM ROADWAY DESIGN (TIER 1, TIER 2, TIER 3, TIER 4)
Safer Drivers and Passengers	Tier 2

Selected Related Countermeasures

- CM1 Apply High-Friction Surface Treatment (HFST)
- CM2 Enhanced police enforcement operations
- CM3 Speed limit reduction campaigns

Cost: $ (Low)
Service Life: 10 years

Safety Benefits

14% Reduces all crash types and severity levels on divided roads (CMF ID: 2928)

09% Reduces speed-related crashes of all severities on divided roads (CMF ID: 2929)

Resources

- FHWA Speed Management Program
- NHTSA Lower Speed Limits
- FHWA: Speed Management Basics

Decrease Speed Limit. Source: FHWA.