

The Traffic Calming Program

Traffic Calming is defined as “the combination of non-physical and physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.” Traffic calming measures are tools which attempt to slow traffic within residential communities with minimal or no restriction to access.



The portable trailer visually displays drivers' real-time speed as part of the traffic calming program.

For more information or to download copies of this brochure, please visit our website at: www.vbgov.com, click the link to *Public Works*, then the link to *Roads and Traffic*.



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Mission:

Proactively enhance the transportation network by improving traffic safety, reliability, and convenience.

Equip decision makers with transportation engineering expertise that ensures effective use of resources and infrastructure.

Deliver quality customer service with a team of professionals committed to responding in an equitable manner.

Speed Limits

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW!



Department of Public Works
Traffic Engineering Division

SPEED LIMITS

Speed limits provide motorists with information that will facilitate the safe flow of traffic under normal conditions. They are established based upon thorough traffic engineering criteria, not set on casual observations or uninformed opinion.

What factors are considered?

Traffic engineers examine many traffic and road conditions to determine speed limits.

These include:

- roadway classification
- accident history
- vehicle speed
- number of vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles

Also considered are the physical features of the road such as:

- sidewalks
- curves
- driveways
- intersections
- traffic control

Why not simply post a lower speed limit and have the police enforce it?

Posting speed limits lower than the 85th percentile speed does not result in voluntary motorist compliance with the posted speed limit unless there is continuous, visible enforcement.



Most drivers drive 5 to 10 mph over the speed limit. Why not establish the speed limit with this in mind?

While some people drive faster than the speed limit, this is not true of everyone. Experience shows that 85% of the drivers adhere to properly established speed limits.

This is the 85th percentile speed. It is the speed at, or below which, 85% of the traffic moves. Police officers can then target their speed enforcement efforts at the 15% of drivers who do not obey the speed limit. When enforcement is directed at these drivers, voluntary compliance increases, resulting in a lower percentage of violators.

Can speed enforcement be effective when limited to a small portion of the drivers?

When the majority of drivers respect the posted speed limit, enforcement can be directed at drivers who exceed the speed limit. When enforcement is directed at these drivers, voluntary compliance increases, resulting in a lower percentage of violators.

Is a lower speed limit always safer?

No, lower speed limits do not necessarily improve safety. The more uniform the speeds of vehicles in a traffic stream, the less chance there is for conflicts and crashes.

Posting speed limits lower or higher than what the majority of drivers are traveling produces two distinct groups of drivers:

- People attempting to observe the limit.
- People driving at the speed they feel is reasonable.

These differences in speeds may result in increased crashes due to tailgating, improper passing, reckless driving and weaving from lane to lane.



Why wait until someone is seriously injured or killed before anything is done about speeding?

After a serious crash, speeding is often assumed to be the cause. This may not always be true. While crash experience is one of the factors considered in establishing speed limits, it is not the only one - or even the major one. The prevailing 85th percentile speed is a primary factor used to establish a proper speed limit, even if there have been no crashes.