

Speed Limits

Speed – it makes a difference

We live in an increasingly high speed world. We're used to things happening quickly, and we can become frustrated when they don't. Speed can be a good thing and a bad thing. It's really important to remember that behind the wheel, you are responsible for controlling your own speed.

For example, the road safety charity Brake estimates that for every 1 mph reduction in average speeds, crash rates fall by 5% on average.

And because professional drivers are behind the wheel for the majority of their working day, statistically they are more at risk of being involved in a road accident – or being the cause of one. Over 1,700 people were killed on roads in the UK in 2016. That works out at nearly 5 people every day.

Key Stats and Tips

- ❖ Accident statistics show that if a pedestrian is hit by a car at 40mph, you are 90% likely to be killed. At 20mph you have a 90% chance of survival.
- ❖ Obey speed limits and check your speedo often. In 2015, 222 people were killed in crashes involving someone exceeding the speed limit.
- ❖ The speed limit isn't a target speed so don't always drive to it. For instance, on some country roads, the 60mph limit may be too high for safety and road or weather conditions will affect your speed – 167 people died in 2015 in the UK from someone travelling too fast for the conditions.
- ❖ On 30mph roads in built-up areas, 45% of car drivers exceed 30mph. On motorways, almost half (46%) of car drivers exceed the speed limit of 70mph, with 11% going faster than 80mph.
- ❖ Drivers should be aware that the braking distances and handling characteristics of all vehicles vary considerably depending on your load and your speed. Your driving style should be adapted accordingly.
- ❖ Drive smart. Aggressive driving on urban roads and in built up areas rarely saves much journey time. Smoother driving will save fuel and could save someone's life.
- ❖ Never rush. Plan ahead and ring ahead if you are going to be late – take it easy.
- ❖ Know your limits

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- ✦ Whilst there really is no such thing as a totally safe speed, by cutting speed, driving defensively and observing speed limits we can all play a part in reducing road casualties. Of course, when it comes to speed limits, we all think we know them. Or do we?

Below are the speed limits applying to vehicles of differing weights. However, drivers should check the Gross Vehicle Weight and 'plated' weight of their van/goods vehicle to ensure that they are aware of which speed limits apply.

Note: Vans with a maximum laden weight (Gross Vehicle Weight) of over 2 tonnes (2,000 kg) are restricted to lower speed limits on single carriageways and dual carriageways. Vans with a maximum laden weight (Gross Vehicle Weight) of over 7.5 tonnes (7,500 kg) are also restricted to lower speed limits on motorways.

Speed limiters

Speed limiters are designed to reduce accidents. They limit the maximum speed of a vehicle by restricting the fuel supply to the engine. Having a speed limiter may mean that your vehicle can't reach the speed limit.

A speed limiter must be fitted on:

- ✦ vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats, eg buses, minibuses, coaches, stretch limousines
- ✦ goods vehicles with a maximum laden weight of more than 3.5 tonnes

Note: Regardless of the legal speed limit, many limiters are set at 56mph to help fuel efficiency.

Disclaimer

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