SAFETY OVER SPEED

Managing Speed for Safety

Understanding Why Speed Matters Most

Each year in the U.S., an estimated 46,000 people lose their lives in preventable traffic crashes. Each is someone's friend, family member, classmate, or neighbor who will be deeply missed. These tragedies are disproportionately impacting people walking and bicycling, children, seniors, low-income community members, and people of color.

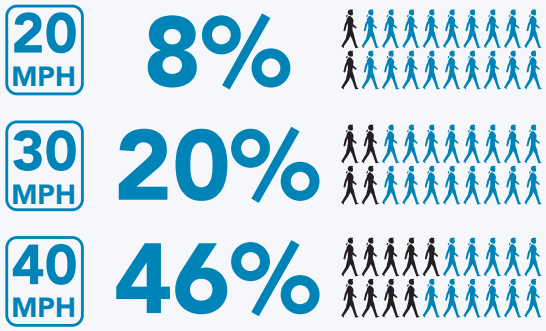
More than one-third of fatal crashes are speeding-related. The most significant way to prevent traffic deaths and severe injuries is to manage speed for safety. In this series, we'll explain *why* speed matters most and *how* policymakers and roadway designers can prioritize safety over speed.

SPEED KILLS

Higher vehicle speeds significantly increase likelihood of death

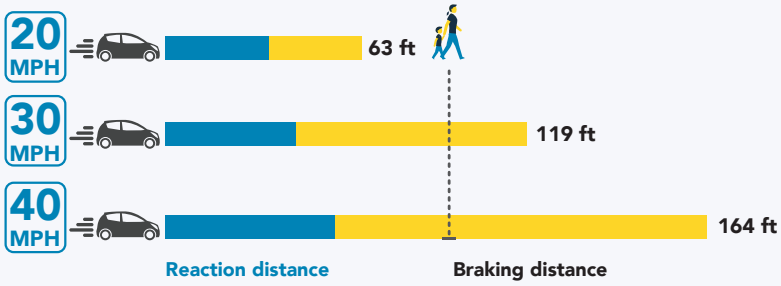
Our bodies can only tolerate so much physical impact. Even small increases in vehicle speed significantly escalate risk of severe injuries and deaths.

System designers and policymakers can use proven tools to encourage lower, safer speeds. Where there is a mix of people walking, biking and driving — **20 is plenty!**



Likelihood of death for people walking if hit at these speeds

Source: AAA Foundation, Tefft, B.C. (2011)



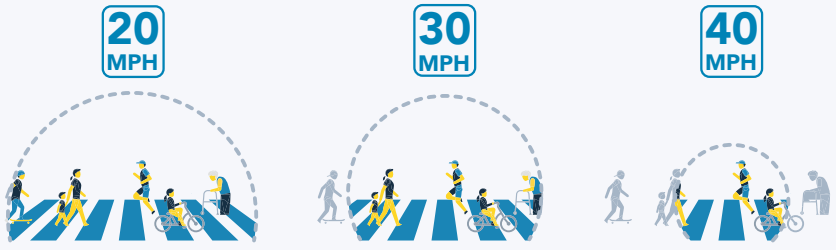
Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2015)

Higher speeds increase a driver's reaction time & braking distance

We will always face unpredictable, urgent reasons to stop. The speed we're traveling can make the difference between life and death.

Higher speeds reduce a driver's field of vision

Traveling at higher speeds narrows your field of vision as you drive, making it more difficult to see and react to people in the roadway.



Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)

VISION ZERO NETWORK
visionzeronetwork.org/speed

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We know what works to manage speed for safety

We know that people make mistakes, and we cannot prevent all crashes. But with Vision Zero's Safe System approach we can design streets, set speed limits, and implement policies that decrease speeds and lessen the likelihood and forcefulness of crashes.

Managing speed for safety is not rocket science. There are proven strategies to proactively encourage safe mobility, including self-enforcing street designs and policies, that lessen over-reliance on police enforcement and opportunities for racial bias.

What are the barriers to change?

We know what works to manage speed for safety. Now we need to develop the political will to change the status quo and implement what works to save lives. As with curbing smoking and other societal shifts, change is possible – by designing safer roads, lowering speed limits, and using smart technologies to influence behaviors and improve safety. Our policymakers and roadway designers *have* the power to prioritize safety over speed. Now, let's bring the call for change.

Call to Action: You can make a difference

- **Policymakers:** Elected officials and public safety leaders set speed limits, decide who designs the roadways, and control how technologies are used to encourage safe speeds. If you're serious about Vision Zero, take a lead in assessing and improving your community's speed management policies and practices.
- **System designers:** How engineers and planners design streets plays a critical role in how people travel. You can design to prioritize safety over speed — including Complete Streets best practices — to ensure safe mobility.
- **Community members:** Contact your City Council members & Mayor, meet with transportation professionals, and join with neighbors to advocate for safe speeds. Are speed limits set too high? Are roads designed for speed over safety?

  Advocate for change!

Learn more at **visionzeronetwork.org/speed**

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