

Speed



Speeding is the biggest contributor to road trauma on NSW roads.

Each year, speeding contributes to about 42% of road fatalities and 25% of serious injuries.

Speeding is not just travelling above the designated speed limit, but also driving too fast for the conditions (e.g. wet weather and curves in the road).

The facts

- ▶ Most speeding deaths occur at no more than 10km/h over the speed limit.
- ▶ If you're going 10 km/h over in a 60 km/h zone, you're four times as likely to be involved in a crash.
- ▶ Going 5km/h over in a 60km/h zone on an average commute saves you just 75 seconds and doubles your crash risk.

The faster you go, the harder you hit

No matter what causes a crash, vehicle speed directly affects the force of the impact and the resulting trauma outcome.

▶ Pedestrian crash

There is a 10 per cent risk that a pedestrian will be killed if hit by a modern car at 30km/h. At a 50km/h impact speed, the risk increases to 90 per cent.*

▶ Side impact crash with another vehicle

There is a 10 per cent risk that a person in a safe car will be killed if they crash at speed of up to 45–50km/h. At a 70km/h impact speed, the risk increases to 80 per cent.

▶ Side impact crash with a tree/pole

Because the energy is concentrated on a smaller area, side impact crashes with a narrow, fixed object, like a tree or pole, are less survivable than those with another vehicle, and the fatality risk at 45–50km/h is much higher.

▶ Head on/frontal impact with another vehicle

There is a 10 per cent risk of a driver/passenger being killed at collision speeds up to 70km/h. At 90km/h the risk is up to 80 per cent. This is why speed limits are often set lower when there are no central barriers to protect motorists from oncoming vehicles.

With increased speed, the amount of energy released in a crash increases. It is inevitable that some of this energy will be absorbed by the human body. However, the human body can only withstand limited forces before injury or death occurs.

Pedestrians and bicycle riders are particularly vulnerable as they are unprotected during a crash.

* Wramborg, P 2005, 'A new approach to a safe and sustainable road structure and street design for urban areas', Road safety on four continents conference, 2005, Warsaw, Poland, Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute (VTI), Linkoeping, Sweden.

The faster you go, the greater your risk of a crash

As speed increases, so does the likelihood of serious injury or death. This is because:

- ▶ The driver has less time to react to a hazard.
- ▶ The distance travelled before coming to a stop is greater.
- ▶ The speed upon impact is greater.

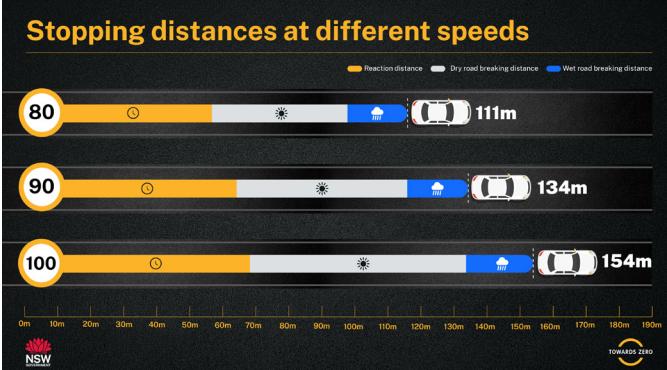
The combined effects of reaction and braking times in both wet and dry conditions is illustrated below.

How can I stay safe?

- ▶ Regularly check your speed to ensure you are travelling within the posted speed limit. The Speed Adviser smartphone app (transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/topics-tips/speeding/speed-adviser) can help by providing the speed limit on all NSW roads and alerting you when the speed limit changes.
- ▶ Follow speed advisory signs. This will help ensure you drive through that section of road safely.
- ▶ Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front (at least a three second gap). When travelling at higher speeds, increase the distance to allow at least five seconds so you have enough time to react and brake.
- ▶ In poor conditions (such as wet weather) drive slower and leave a larger gap between you and the vehicle in front.
- ▶ Ensure plenty of travel time, including time for rest breaks, so you don't feel the need to speed.
- ▶ If you're a passenger, speak up if you think the driver is going too fast.

Average Speed Cameras The facts

- ▶ Average speed enforcement works by measuring the amount of time it takes a vehicle to drive between two points, calculating the vehicle's average speed.
- ▶ From 1 May 2025 until 30 June 2026, a trial is being conducted in two separate locations on limited stretches of highway in regional NSW to expand average speed cameras from heavy vehicles to light vehicles. This includes cars, motorcycles and utes.
- ▶ Previously in NSW, only heavy vehicles received a penalty for speeding if the vehicle's average speed exceeds the speed limit for the length of road.
- ▶ All speeding fines in NSW (including from the Average Speed Camera Trial) are allocated to the Community Road Safety Fund and used solely to improve road safety in NSW.



More information

Visit the Transport for NSW road safety website (transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety) for information on travelling at safe speeds and to learn about other important road safety topics.

If you're driving for work, visit the Towards Zero website (towardszero.nsw.gov.au/workplace) to complete the Road safety: Everybody's business online learning course to learn about road safety risk and how you can stay safe on NSW roads.



Scan the QR code for more information on road safety

