

For an understanding of where the State of Minnesota has been regarding speed limits, a history of Minnesota speed laws from 1881 to the present is provided in the following list. This list is updated from information provided in the *2008 MnDOT Study and Report on Speed Limits* research.

Year	Description
1881	Streetcars in the City of Duluth restricted to 6 mph.
1885	Incorporated villages or boroughs are authorized to regulate the rate of speed of engine-powered vehicles.
1911	Rate of speed —Sec. 16. No person shall drive a motor vehicle upon any public highway “of this state at a speed greater than is reasonable and proper, having regard to the traffic and use of the highway, or so as to endanger the life or limb or injure the property of any person. If the rate of speed of any motor vehicle, operated on any public highway in this state, where the same passes through the closely built up portions of any incorporated city, town or village, or where the traffic is more or less congested, exceeds ten (10) miles an hour for a distance of one eighth of a mile, or if the rate of speed of any motor-vehicle, operated on any public highway of this state, where the same passes through the residence portions of any city, town or village, exceeds fifteen (15) miles an hour for a distance of one-eighth of a mile, or of the rate of speed of any motor-vehicle operated on any public highway in this state, outside the closely built up business portions, and the residence portions of any incorporated city, town or village, exceeds twenty-five (25) miles an hour for a distance of one-quarter of a mile, such rates of speed shall be prima facie evidence that the person operating such motor-vehicle is running at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper, having regard to the traffic and use of the way, or so as to endanger the life or limb or injure the property of any person. If the rate of speed of a motor-vehicle, operated on any public highway in this state, in going around a corner or curve in a highway, where the operator’s view of the road traffic is obstructed, exceeds six (6) miles per hour, such rate of speed shall be prima facie evidence that the person operating such motor-vehicle is running at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper, having regard to the traffic and the use of the way, or so as to endanger the life or limb or injure the property of any person.”
1917	General Statute Section 2635 – Statutes renumbered and the in-town distance changed from 1/8 to 1/10 mile

Year	Description
1925	<p>If the rate of speed of any motor vehicle operated on any highway where the same passes through the closely-built-up portions of any municipality, or where the traffic is congested, exceeds 15 mph for a distance of 1/10 of a mile, or if the rate of speed of any motor vehicle operated on any highway where the same passes through the residence portion of any municipality exceeds 20 mph for a distance of 1/10 of a mile, or if the rate of speed of any motor vehicle operated on any highway outside the closely-built-up business portions and the residence portions of any municipality exceeds 35 mph for a distance of one-quarter of a mile, such rate of speed shall be prima facie evidence that the person operating such motor vehicle is driving at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper.</p> <p>Sec. 16. Not to pass horse drawn vehicles at a greater speed than 15 mph. No person operating a motor vehicle or tractor on a highway shall, upon meeting or overtaking any horse or other draft animal driven or in charge of a woman, child, or aged person, or upon meeting or overtaking any other domestic animal except dogs and poultry being upon the highway, pass said animal at a rate of speed greater than 15 mph; and in case said animal exhibits any signs of fright, the operator shall bring his vehicle to a stop.</p>
1927	<p>Statutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fifteen miles an hour when approaching within fifty feet of a grade crossing of any steam, electric or street railway when the driver's view is obstructed. A driver's view shall be deemed to be obstructed when at any time during the last two hundred feet of his approach to such crossing he does not have a clear and uninterrupted view of such railway crossing and of any traffic on such railway for a distance of four hundred feet in each direction from such crossing; 2. Fifteen miles an hour when passing a school during school recess or while children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours; 3. Fifteen miles an hour when approaching within fifty feet and in crossing an intersection of highways when the driver's view is obstructed. A driver's view shall be deemed to be obstructed when at any time during the last fifty feet of his approach to such intersection, he does not have a clear and unobstructed view of such intersection and of the traffic upon all of the highways entering such intersection for a distance of two hundred feet from such intersection; 4. Fifteen miles an hour in going around curves or along a grade upon a highway when the driver's view is obstructed within a distance of one hundred feet along such highway in the direction in which he is proceeding; 5. Twenty miles an hour on any highway where the same passes through the closely built-up portions of any municipality or where the traffic is congested, when traffic on such highway is controlled at intersections by traffic officers or traffic control devices; 6. Fifteen miles an hour on all other highways where the same pass through the closely built-up portion of any municipality or where the traffic is congested; 7. Twenty miles an hour on any highway where the same passes through the residence portion of any municipality; <p>(Continued on next page.)</p>

Year	Description
1927	(Continued from previous page.) 8. Thirty-five miles an hour under all other conditions, (c) Municipalities in their respective jurisdictions are hereby authorized in their discretion to increase the speed which shall be prima facie unlawful upon "thru" highways at the entrances to which vehicles are by ordinance of such municipalities required to stop before entering or crossing such "thru" highways. Municipalities shall place and maintain upon all "thru" highways as to which such speed is so increased adequate signs giving notice of such special regulations and shall also place and maintain upon each and every highway intersecting any such "thru" highway, appropriate top signs which shall be illuminated at night or so placed as to be illuminated by the headlights of an approaching vehicle or by streetlights.
1929	Rural speed is raised to 45 mph under all other conditions.
1937	Statutes are renumbered and reformatted, the beginning of Statute 169.14 as we know it and traffic control devices must comply with American Association of State Highway Officials. 30 mph in a business or residence district and 45 mph under all other conditions. The commissioner may establish speed zones up to 60 mph daytime and 50 mph when vehicle lights are needed.
1939	30 mph in any municipality. Changed the rural statutory values to 60 mph daytime/50 mph nighttime and authorized the Commissioner to set any speed limit.
1942	Governor's Order implements a Wartime Speed Limit of 40 mph under orders from the USA Office of Defense Transportation. Upon the advice of the Wartime National Rubber Director. Repeat offenders will lose their gas ration stamps.
1947	Commissioner of Highways must make changes to speed limits based on engineering and traffic investigation if designation is different from default speed. Signage is required designating the non default speed.
1963	Changed rural statutory values to 65 mph daytime/55 mph nighttime and introduced the definition of "urban district."
1974	National Maximum Speed Limit 55 mph (NMSL55) on all roads imposed by US DOT for emergency energy conservation, prompted by foreign oil embargoes. US DOT requires substantial compliance to NMSL55 or else funding will be sanctioned. Governors order implements this in Minnesota.
1975	Legislation makes Governor's Order into law. Local authorities are granted the power to establish school zone speed limits 20 mph below the normal speed limit but not lower than 15 mph.
1976	Subd.4 — Speed on street with bicycle lane. The governing body of any political subdivision, by resolution or ordinance and without an engineering or traffic investigation, may designate a safe speed for any street or highway under its authority upon which it has established a bicycle lane; provided that such safe speed shall not be lower than 25 miles per hour. The ordinance or resolution designating a safe speed is effective when appropriate signs designating the speed are erected.
1980	Gives municipalities the power to override Commissioner's speed orders in urban districts.
1984	Sets 10 mph in alleys unless studied and posted with a different speed limit.

Year	Description
1986	Dimmler Amendment: If driving 10 mph or less over the speed limit, the speeding ticket is not recorded on drivers license record if on a 55 mph highway.
1987	US DOT issues new interpretation of NMSL55 and allows rural interstates to go to 65 mph and Minnesota follows this. Local road authorities are authorized to lower work zone speed limits by as much as 15 mph below the normal limit.
1991	Allows local road authorities to set speed limits on park roads at 20 mph below normal and establishes rustic road speed limit at a maximum of 45 mph.
1994	25 mph on residential roadways. The beginning and end of the residential zone must be signed and less than one-quarter of mile in length. Fines are doubled in work zones.
1995	Federal repeal of NMSL55. Commissioner's Order keeps all speed limits status quo until a study can be performed to determine course of action.
1997	Speed limits raised to 70 mph on rural interstate, 65 mph on expressways and urban interstates. Commissioner's authorization keeps most urban interstates at 55 or 60 mph. Fines are also doubled for citations issued in school zones or for not reducing speed when passing an emergency vehicle on the side of the road.
1999	Rural residential district definition introduced establishing 30 mph speed limit with house spacing at 300 feet or less, on platted land or subdivisions. This applies to township roads only.
2001	Residential roadway definition changed to ½ mile in length. Work zone signs are required to be posted and workers must be present for the fine to be doubled.
2003	Permits a school speed limit to be 30 mph less than the normal speed limit. Revokes drivers license for six months for offenders over 100 mph.
2009	Redefined Urban District to include street or highway and amended the residential roadway definition to apply to a whole street not just a portion of a street. Removed the definition of Rural Residential District from section 169.14 and added it to the definition section to statute. Removed 30 mph statutory speed in rural residential district and added a statutory speed limit of 35 mph in a rural residential district if speed limit signs are erected upon entering the Rural Residential District.
2019	Amended laws regarding the jurisdiction for speed limit setting on local roads. Prior to new laws that went into effect in 2019, the ability of a city to change speed limits was limited. With some exceptions, a city interested in changing a speed limit had to request an engineering and traffic study of the street from MnDOT. A city that uses the authority under this new law must develop procedures to set speed limits based on the city's safety, engineering, and traffic analysis. The new law requires that at a minimum, the safety, engineering, and traffic analysis must consider national urban speed limit guidance and studies, local traffic crashes, and methods to effectively communicate the change to the public.