



FAQ'S – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the speed limit changing to 25 MPH?

In August 2014, the Governor signed into law a bill authorizing New York City to establish a citywide speed limit of 25 MPH. New York City is reducing its speed limit to 25 MPH in order to make the city safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers and help meet the City's goal of bringing traffic fatalities to zero. Data shows that driving at or below 25 MPH improves drivers' ability to avoid crashes. Pedestrians struck by vehicles traveling at 25 MPH are half as likely to die as those struck at 30 MPH.

When is the speed limit changing to 25 MPH?

The new default speed limit law, which changes the speed limit in New York City from 30 MPH to 25 MPH, takes effect on November 7th, 2014.

Which streets are affected by the new 25 MPH speed limit?

As of November 7th, 2014, the 25 MPH default citywide speed limit will affect all streets where there is no posted speed limit. The existing "gateway" signs that read "NYC LAW SPEED LIMIT 30 UNLESS OTHERWISE POSTED" will be changed to new signs that reflect the 25 MPH default speed limit.

Some larger streets, such as limited access highways or major arterial streets, have posted speed limits of 30 MPH and above; these will remain in place while DOT evaluates these locations. Some smaller streets where traffic calming measures have been implemented, like schools, where streets are signed for speeds less than 25 MPH. All streets that do not have a posted speed limit will have a speed limit of 25 MPH after November 7th.

How does lowering the speed limit impact traffic fatalities?

Driving at or below 25 MPH decreases stopping distance, gives drivers and pedestrians more time to see each other and react, and improves drivers' ability to avoid crashes. Vehicle stopping distance improves by 45 feet (23%) when travelling at 25 MPH versus 30 MPH. This small 5 MPH decrease in speed means that many crashes can be avoided altogether. The speed at which a vehicle is travelling directly impacts the likelihood of death for pedestrians who are struck. Pedestrians struck by vehicles traveling at 25 MPH are half as likely to die as those struck at 30 MPH. If crashes do occur, the severity of injuries is reduced at lower speeds.

What is being done to educate New Yorkers about the lower speed limit?

The City has undertaken a comprehensive public outreach campaign, combining on-street outreach efforts with mailings, newspaper ads, radio messages, and social media campaigns. These outreach campaigns will continue even after the speed limit changes.

What is the fine for exceeding the speed limit? Is that also changing?

The penalty for violating the speed limit will not change. The penalty for exceeding the speed limit for most drivers ranges from \$150-\$600, depending on how many miles per hour over the speed limit the motorist was travelling, and how many speeding tickets the driver had previously acquired. In addition, drivers also get points on their license for speeding. Violations issued by speed cameras carry a \$50 fine, and are not made part of the operating record of the person receiving the violation nor is it used for insurance purposes.

Won't lowering the speed limit make NYC traffic even worse?

No. Vehicle speed is primarily determined by factors like traffic congestion, double-parked vehicles, turning vehicles, and traffic signals. A 25 MPH citywide speed limit will effectively impact those drivers traveling at excessive, unsafe speeds. Coupled with comprehensive education and enforcement campaigns, a lower citywide speed limit will save lives.

Isn't this just a way to raise additional revenue for the City?

No. New York City is reducing its speed limit to 25 MPH in order to make the city safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers and help meet the City's goal of bringing traffic fatalities to zero. Data shows that driving at or below 25 MPH improves drivers' ability to avoid crashes.

Why is the City targeting drivers?

Vision Zero targets dangerous behaviors and choices – like speeding and failing to yield - not specific people. Reaching our goal of zero traffic fatalities requires everyone – drivers and pedestrians alike – to join together to be part of the solution. Reducing the speed limit gives drivers and pedestrians more time to see each other and react and improves drivers' ability to avoid crashes. Dangerous driver choices, such as speeding, are the primary cause or a contributing factor in 70% of pedestrian fatalities.

Will the new speed limit be enforced?

The NYPD is committed to achieving Vision Zero and will use enforcement to deter violations of the speed limit. The City will also expand the speed camera program to deter violators.

How does this new speed limit – 25 MPH – compare with speed limits in other comparable cities?

The new speed limit – 25 MPH – puts New York City on par with other large cities that have made it a priority to reduce traffic fatalities. Many major cities around the world, including London, Paris, Berlin, and Tokyo, have a speed limit set at 25 MPH or lower, and have far fewer traffic deaths. American cities with a 25 MPH speed limit include Los Angeles and Washington D.C.

Other than changing the speed limit, what else is being done to reduce traffic fatalities?

The new speed limit is one aspect of Mayor de Blasio's comprehensive Vision Zero Action Plan to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries. The plan sets out a robust platform of legislation, enhanced enforcement, roadway design and education to reduce traffic fatalities in New York City. It includes a massive public education campaign that includes joint DOT/NYPD street teams at high-crash intersections, public ad campaigns and safety demonstrations; direct outreach to pedestrians, drivers and cyclists; enhanced street safety education for schoolchildren; improved street designs, like additional pedestrian islands; increased resources for traffic enforcement and data analysis and enforcement of the most hazardous violations by NYPD, like speeding and illegal turns; the expanded use of speed cameras and red light cameras. You can find out more about Vision Zero by visiting nyc.gov/visionzero.

Sometimes an accident is just an accident. Why are we focusing on speed?

Dangerous driver choices, such as speeding, failure to yield, and improper turns, are the primary cause or a contributing factor in 70% of pedestrian fatalities. Legislative efforts, like lowering the speed limit, combined with enhanced street design, education and enforcement policies work together to create a street system and standard of behavior that dramatically lessens the consequences of every day mistakes. Mistakes can and will happen, but they should not be deadly or lead to serious, life-altering injury.

What percent of traffic fatalities in NYC can be attributed to speed?

Excessive speed is a factor in about 25% of traffic fatalities in New York City. Overall, dangerous driver choices, such as speeding, failure to yield, and improper turns, are the primary cause or a contributing factor in 70% of pedestrian fatalities.

How will drivers know what the speed limit is on the street they are using? What kinds of signage will be installed?

The new speed limit law means that the default speed limit in New York City (i.e. the speed limit unless otherwise posted) is 25 MPH. 25 MPH signs will replace existing 30 MPH signs and will be placed at all border crossings and major East River bridge/tunnels, and at airport rental facilities; in addition to highway exits, major arterial slow zone corridors and other corridors with high crash rates.

How many new signs will be posted? Won't it be expensive?

DOT will replace over 3,000 30 MPH signs with new 25 MPH signs around the city. They will be produced and installed by the Department of Transportation using existing resources.

Where will the new 25 MPH signs be posted?

DOT will replace all the signs which indicate a citywide speed limit. In addition, many existing 30 MPH signs will be replaced with new 25 MPH signs. The 25 MPH signs will be placed at all border crossings, the entrances of bridges and tunnels, and airport rental facilities, highway exits, major arterial slow zone corridors, and other corridors with high-crash rates

What about speed cameras?

Speed cameras are used to deter speed limit violations. On November 7th, 2014, when the speed limit changes to 25 MPH, the speed cameras will be adjusted accordingly. The change in the speed limit does not affect the administration of this program.