



GET THERE. SAFELY.

The Role of Speeding in Road Crashes



Traffic Injury Research Foundation in partnership with
RSA & Consolidated Collision Services
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Speeding is a leading cause of road crashes.¹ Research shows driving above the speed limit, or too fast for conditions, increases your risk of crashing, injury, and death.² In Canada, speeding is a contributing factor in 1 in 4 fatal crashes.³

At the height of lock downs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traffic volumes decreased tremendously. This led to an overall reduction in crashes, small increases in average speeds and some instances of excessive speeding and stunt driving (e.g., driving at least 40km/hr over the speed limit).

While traffic volumes are rapidly returning to near normal levels, given the important role of speed in crashes, reducing speed is a priority, now more than ever.

Dangers of speeding

Speeding increases the distance a vehicle travels and space it needs to stop. For example, on a dry road surface, the stopping distance for a family-size car is:

- > 26 metres for a vehicle travelling 40km/hr;
- > 69 metres for a vehicle travelling 80km/hr; and,
- > 113 metres for a vehicle travelling 110km/hr.⁴

Speeding also increases the total amount of kinetic energy or impact the vehicle must absorb when a crash occurs.

There are two important consequences of speeding: as speed increases, so does

the risk of crashing⁵ and crashes at higher speeds are more severe. Driving 10km/hr above the speed limit more than doubles crash risk while driving 20km/hr above the limit increases this risk up to six times.⁶

Self-reported speeding behaviour in Canada

- > In Canada, 23% of a representative sample of survey respondents admitted driving well over the speed limit; 4% reported doing this very often.⁷
- > An estimated 6 million Canadians drive well over the speed limit and an estimated 1 million do this very often.
- > Almost half of Albertans (46%) are concerned about speeding compared

to 24% who are concerned about drivers using their phones.⁸

- > 64% of Nova Scotians considered excessive speeding a serious or extremely serious problem in 2013.⁹
- > In Ontario, 3 of 5 respondents (61%) said they felt comfortable driving at speeds above the posted limit of 100km/hr.¹⁰

Speeding offences in some Canadian jurisdictions

In Alberta from 2014-2018:

- > On average, 294,780 speeding offence tickets were issued annually.
- > 10.4% of speeding offences occurred in April compared to only 5.0% in December.
- > 31% of offences occurred between 11am and 3pm.¹¹

In Nova Scotia from 2014-2018:

- > On average, 23,250 speeding offence tickets were issued annually.
- > 225 of these offences were related to driving at excessive speed in a work zone or near an emergency vehicle.¹²

In Ontario, during the first 5 months of 2020 compared to the first 5 months of 2019:

- > Speeding charges decreased 29%.
- > But, stunt/racing charges (speeding at least 40km/hr over the speed limit) increased 40%.

Victims in speed-related crashes

- > An estimated 400 people are killed each year in speed-related crashes.

- > In known cases, 41% of persons killed in speed-related crashes were NOT the speeding driver.¹³

Strategies to reduce speeding

Governments and individuals play an important role to reduce speeding. Governmental strategies include photo enforcement, speed humps, roundabouts, dynamic speed feedback signs, lowered speed limits and higher penalties.

But, individuals can take action by: scheduling enough time to arrive at your destination, and choosing safety over speed. Talk with family and friends about why you make safe choices.

Footnotes 1-13 see <https://tirf.ca/tirf-research/infographic-sources/>

Most importantly, road safety is everybody's business. You can make our roads safer by simply slowing down.



Traffic Injury Research Foundation

TIRF is a national, independent, charitable road safety research institute that studies road user behaviours. Visit www.tirf.ca

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