



# NEWS

## Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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**New speed limit signs to be installed along rural Interstates**  
*70 mph speed limit will not take effect until a highway segment is officially posted*

Now that Governor Walker has signed a 70 mph speed limit bill, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will oversee installation of about 470 new speed limit and related signs along 726 miles of rural Interstate in Wisconsin. Motorists are advised the 70 mph speed limit will not take effect until a specific highway segment is posted at the higher speed. Drivers are asked to be alert, to slow down and move over for county highway crews as they install the new signs along rural Interstates beginning next month.

“The safety of all travelers and roadside workers remains our department’s top priority,” said WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb. “Our Interstates have an outstanding safety record, but only when motorists do their part by travelling at the appropriate speed, buckling-up, driving sober and staying alert.”

WisDOT is reminding motorists:

- Posted speed limits apply when travel conditions are ideal. State law requires drivers to adjust their speed to what is “reasonable and prudent” based on travel conditions. Factors such as snow, rain, construction or heavy traffic require reduced speeds.
- The state’s Move Over Law requires drivers to slow down or move over any time they see highway maintenance vehicles, law enforcement, other emergency responders or tow trucks stopped along the highway with warning lights flashing. Violations can result in a \$263 citation.

Rural Interstate segments in Wisconsin where speed limits will be raised to 70 mph:

Highway	From	To	Miles
I-94	Illinois State Line	Milwaukee County Line	25
I-94	I-39/90 in Dane County	WIS 164 in Waukesha County	57
I-39/90	Illinois State line	US 12 in Dane County	41
I-39/90/94	US 151 in Dane County	I-39 split in Columbia County	22
I-39	I-90/94 split in Columbia County	WIS 54 in Portage County	65
I-39	WIS 66 in Portage County	Bus 51 in Marathon County	26
I-90/94	I-39/90/94 in Columbia County	I-90 in Monroe County	63
I-90	I-94 in Monroe County	US 53 in La Crosse County	37
I-94	I-90 in Monroe County	US 53 in Eau Claire County	77
I-94	WIS 312 in Eau Claire County	WIS 35 in St. Croix County	55
I-43	County T in Ozaukee County	WIS 29 in Brown County	91
I-43	I-39 in Rock County	WIS 164 in Waukesha County	54
I-41	South Washington County Line	WIS 441 in Winnebago County	93
I-41	WIS 441 in Outagamie County	WIS 172 in Brown County	20

Along with rural Interstates, the recently-approved state legislation provides WisDOT the authority to increase the speed limit to 70 mph along certain multi-lane highways with access limited to interchanges. The department is still reviewing freeway segments to consider for posting at 70 mph.

A brief history of speed limits in Wisconsin:

- Prior to 1947, it was unlawful to operate a vehicle “carelessly and heedlessly” with “wanton disregard” of the safety of others.
- In 1949, state law specified a 65 mph speed limit during daytime hours, 55 mph at night, and 45 mph for trucks.
- In 1962, as more of the Interstate system was completed, speed limits on Interstate highways were set at 70 mph during daylight hours, 60 mph at night and 55 mph for trucks.
- In 1973, as an energy conservation measure, the U.S. Congress adopted a national maximum speed limit of 55 mph.
- In 1987, Congress allowed states to adopt a 65 mph speed limit on rural Interstates.
- In 1996, state law extended the 65 mph speed limit to certain freeways and expressways.

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