

# How Speed Limits Are Set in Vermont

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February 25, 2026

# MUTCD Provisions

Federal law requires states to adopt the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD) or a substantially similar state document. 23 U.S.C. § 109.

23 V.S.A. § 1025(a) provides: “The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration’s [MUTCD], as amended, shall be the standards for all traffic control signs, signals, and markings within the State.”

MUTCD § 2B.21 sets the general parameters for speed limits and provides that “[s]peed zones (other than statutory speed limits) shall only be established on the basis of an engineering study that has been performed in accordance with traffic engineering practices. The engineering study shall consider the roadway context.”

23 V.S.A. § 1081  
Basic rule and  
maximum limits

If no other limit is set,  
maximum legal speed is  
50mph.

That maximum may be altered  
pursuant to 23 V.S.A. § 1003,  
1004, 1007, and 1010.

# 23 V.S.A. § 1003

## State Speed Zones

- Permits Traffic Committee to determine “on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation” that a statutory speed limit should be revised.
  - Can revise up or down
  - Applies to all State highways including school zones and Interstates
  - Becomes effective when appropriate signage is installed
  - For school zones, must consider data collected for school travel plan as part of Safe Routes to School Program, in addition to engineering and traffic data

## 23 V.S.A. § 1004

### Interstate and Other Limited Access Highways

23 V.S.A. § 1004 permits the Traffic Committee to adopt rules governing vehicle traffic on limited access highways.

Regulations Governing the use of State Highways with Limited Access Facilities (CVR 14-053-004), article 1.1 provides that the speed limit on limited access highways is 65mph.

# 23 V.S.A. § 1007

## Local Speed Limits

The “legislative body of a municipality may establish, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation” a speed limit between 25 and 50 mph on any municipal highway.

- Without engineering and traffic investigation, speed limit can be between 35 and 50 mph.
- On all unpaved roads in municipality between 35 and 50 mph.

The “legislative body of a city may establish, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation” a speed limit between 25 and 50 mph on any State highway that is not a limited access highway.

Permits speed limits under 25 mph in downtown development districts designated pursuant to 24 V.S.A. ch. 76A.

## 24 V.S.A. § 5803

### Designation of Downtown and Village Centers

#### Requirements:

- Designated as a downtown or village center on an approved regional planning commission future land use map or is a designated village center or new town center under 24 V.S.A. ch. 76A;
- Municipality has a confirmed municipal planning process under 24 V.S.A. § 4350;
- Municipality has a municipal plan with goals for investment in the center; and
- Portion of the center is listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Permits municipal legislative body to establish speed limits of less than 25 mph within the center under 23 V.S.A. § 1007(g).

24 V.S.A. § 5804

Designated  
Neighborhood

A planned growth area or village area on a future land use map may be approved as a designated neighborhood by the Land Use Review Board

A municipal legislative body may establish a speed limit of less than 25 mph within a designated neighborhood