



Road Commission
of Kalamazoo County

3801 E. Kilgore Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
(269) 381-3171
Fax (269) 381-1760
www.kalamazoocountyroads.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Elli Blonde, Communications Administrator

Email: eblonde@kalamazoocountyroads.com

Phone: (269) 381-3170 extension 224

Public Service Message: How County Road Speed Limits Are Set – Who Knew?

KALAMAZOO, MI – Speed limits in Michigan are set by very specific legislation, which prescribes the method of data collection and evaluation. The Michigan State Police work with county road agencies to collect and analyze data. According to the Michigan Vehicle Code Section 257.628 subsection 5: A speed limit established under this section shall be determined by an engineering and safety study and by the eighty-fifth percentile speed of free-flowing traffic under ideal conditions of a section of highway rounded to the nearest multiple of 5 miles per hour. A speed limit established under this act shall not be posted at less than the fiftieth percentile speed of free-flowing traffic under optimal conditions on the fastest portion of the highway segment for which the speed limit is being posted.

This is an objective, data-driven process as prescribed by law. State law dictates how speed limits are set. State law dictates that county road agencies and the Michigan State Police jointly set speed limits that are based on the 85th percentile speed, which is the speed at or below which 85 percent of drivers are currently driving a given section of roadway. For example, if 85 percent of drivers on a section of road are driving 55 mph or less, the 85th percentile speed would be 55.

Michigan uses this methodology because it is the national standard for setting speed limits, recognizing the great majority of drivers instinctively and must drive at a speed that is safe and comfortable based on the roadway design and other factors (back to our driver education training). This also results in fewer safety conflicts between drivers, which lead to unsafe actions such as tailgating, road rage, improper passing and allows law enforcement to focus their limited resources. (Find this information on the state's FAQ here: <https://bit.ly/31fWNCD>)

Check out these resources below for more information:

- Legislature: <https://bit.ly/3ssSfow>
- Brochure: <https://bit.ly/3rn4Xn2>
- Establishing Realistic Speed Limits: <https://bit.ly/2QvAnek>



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The RCKC has served as the local road professionals of Kalamazoo County since 1909. RCKC remains committed to our goal of using our expertise, energy, and funds to provide the safest and most convenient road system possible, and to contribute to economic development and high quality of life throughout the county.

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