

Frequently Asked Questions - Speed Limits on Tasmanian Roads

WHAT IS A SPEED LIMIT?

A speed limit is the maximum speed you can travel on a good road and in good weather conditions. You must never go faster than the speed limit.

WHAT IS THE HIGHEST SPEED LIMIT I CAN TRAVEL IN TASMANIA?

The highest speed limit you can travel at in Tasmania is 100 km/h unless otherwise sign posted. On some Tasmanian highways the speed limit may be 110 km/h. This is clearly sign posted on those highways.

ARE SPEED LIMITS ON GRAVEL ROADS DIFFERENT?

On the 1st of February 2014, a new maximum speed limit of 80 km/h was applied to all gravel roads in Tasmania unless otherwise signposted.

Gravel roads can be unpredictable, and the conditions can change quickly. In some instances the 80km/h limit may be too fast and you will need to **slow down** to a more appropriate speed.

HOW ARE SPEED LIMITS SET?

The setting of speed limits is a complex matter.

Speed limits are set to reflect varying road environments, vehicle types and community needs such as safety, convenience and economics.

Speed limit management is about finding an acceptable compromise across a wide range of objectives and diverse groups of road users and communities.

Speed limits are set with the following in mind - although there may be other things to consider:

- the crash history,
- growth in traffic volumes
- changes in the environment and roadside development over time,
- the terrain
- the number of accesses onto a road
- the road's function
- the road's conditions and specifications

WHO SETS THE SPEED LIMITS IN TASMANIA?

The Department of State Growth sets all speed limits on all public roads within Tasmania.

I SOMETIMES SEE SPEED LIMIT SIGNS ON ROAD WORK SITES WHEN THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY WORK OCCURRING. WHAT'S HAPPENING THERE?

Speed limits sometimes remain in place after road works appear to have been completed. Generally they remain in place because certain road conditions make it unsafe to go a higher speed limit. This might include things such as wet tar, loose gravel, uneven surfaces and other safety issues. At other times, poor weather conditions may prevent the completion of road works for a long period of time and so the lower speed limit remains in place until the work can be finished. Speed limits on works sites are mandatory meaning by law you must obey the speed limit and can be penalised if you do not.

ARE THERE SPECIFIC AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS FOR SETTING SPEED LIMITS ON TASMANIA ROADS?

The Australian Standard AS1742.4 provides guidance on how speed limits should be varied to provide the best outcome for the community. Further guidance is provided by Austroads publications and associated research.

DO WE REVIEW SPEED LIMITS AND HOW ARE THEY CONDUCTED?

Yes speed limits are regularly reviewed to ensure consistency of application where ever possible and to ensure they remain appropriate for the location.

Reviews may include but are not limited to carrying out site investigations and traffic surveys, undertaking stakeholder consultations, reviewing all previous data including crash history, assessing road side development and terrain, consulting the latest research and reviewing the operation of new speed limits once implemented.

WHAT ARE VARIABLE SPEED LIMIT SYSTEMS?

These are systems that use electronic signs to change the speed limit to match the road conditions and situation. Changes might be triggered by a crash, an obstacle on the road, a queue of vehicles during peak times, or weather- such as rain, ice or wind.

A Variable Speed Limit system can be seen operating on the Tasman Highway from Liverpool Street Hobart to the Cambridge Interchange, including the Tasman Bridge. This system replaced existing static speed limit signs with 43 electronic speed limit signs.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE YELLOW / BLACK SPEED SIGNS AND THE WHITE SIGNS WITH THE RED CIRCLE ?

Speed signs that are yellow with black writing are known as "speed advisory signs". They are a guide to the safe speed you should use for the location to which the sign applies. Speed

signs that are white with a red circle enclosing the back speed limit show the upper most limit which you are able to travel. These are mandatory speed limit signs.

Speed limits signs that are erected for road works, lane closures or special events are also white with a red circle enclosing the back speed limit. Although temporary, they are also mandatory speed limits.

Tasmania Police has the power to enforce mandatory speed limits on our roads and to penalise non-compliance.

WHY DON'T 40KM/H ELECTRONIC SCHOOL SPEED SIGNS OPERATE AT THE SAME TIME FOR ALL SCHOOLS?

The hours of operation of electronic school speed signs are determined by each school community and therefore differ from school to school.

CONTACT US

If you need further information on setting and management of speed limits on Tasmanian Roads please contact us at info@stategrowth.tas.gov.au.