

Tips to stay within the limit.

Many car drivers unintentionally exceed the speed limit, often without realising it. Modern cars are so powerful and comfortable they give drivers little sensation of their speed. It is too easy to creep above the limit, and in particular, many drivers believe it is difficult to drive a modern car at no more than 30 mph on a road with a 30 mph limit. Ultimately drivers are responsible for the speeds at which they choose to drive

This is particularly true when coming onto a lower speed road after driving on a high speed road for a long period. It can often feel like you are moving at a snail's pace when you reduce your speed to 40 mph or 30 mph after coming off a motorway or dual carriageway. In reality, 30 mph and 40 mph are still very substantial speeds and a pedestrian hit at those speeds will be seriously injured, and quite likely killed.

In many cases, the nature of the road does not indicate the speed limit. In urban areas, for example, dual carriageways can have limits of 30 mph, 40 mph, 50 mph, 60 mph or 70 mph.

You need to know the speed limit of the roads you are using. Far too many drivers who have been caught speeding complain that they thought the road had a higher speed limit (40 mph instead of 30 mph).

Speed limit signs tend to be placed at junctions because this is often the point at which the limit changes. However, junctions are also where you need to absorb a wide range of different information and it is easy to miss a speed limit sign when concentrating on one or more other things (e.g., which way am I going, is that driver going to pull out, etc.). So you need to get into the habit of checking for speed limit signs at junctions, and looking for repeater signs after the junction, especially if the nature of the road has changed.

It is misleading to rely on a 'feeling' of speed. The only way to be sure of your speed, and to check you have reduced to an appropriate speed (even if it 'feels' slow) is to check the car's speedometer regularly. Although you should never rely on 'feeling' your speed, you may be able to improve your judgement of it by regularly comparing how fast you think you are driving with what the speedometer says.

Many cars now have speed management devices that allow the driver to set certain speeds and receive a warning when they are being exceeded. If your vehicle has a pre-set speed function, set this so it will warn you if you exceed certain speeds.

Here are some simple and practical things drivers who find it difficult to stay with speed limits can do to help themselves.

- Check your speedometer regularly, especially when leaving high speed roads.
- Know the limits - look for signs, especially at junctions.
- Assume lamp posts mean 30 mph, until signs say otherwise, but remember it could be 20 mph.
- Remember, speed limits are a maximum, not a target.
- 20's plenty when kids are about - and may even be too fast.
- Try a lower gear to help say no higher than 3rd gear in a 30 mph limit or 4th in a 40 mph limit.
- Recognise what makes you speed - keeping up with traffic, overtaking or being tailgated.
- Concentrate - distracted drivers speed.
- Slow down when entering villages.
- Give yourself time, there's no need to speed and you won't get there quicker.
- If you are not sure, assume the limit is lower until you see a sign.
- Even a small amount above the limit makes a big difference.