

RW Signs No. 2

**National Committee on  
Uniform Traffic Control Devices**



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RWSTC Agenda item IV.B,  
June 2012  
RWSTC agenda item III.2,  
January 2013

**National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices**

**RWSTC RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWING SPONSOR COMMENTS**

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: NCUTCD Regulatory/Warning Signs Technical  
Committee**

**DATE OF ACTION: (Task Force) 5-6-12, revised 5-7-12, revised 12-9-12 following  
sponsor comments**

**TASK FORCE: Tom Heydel (chair), Fred Ranck, Jim Pline**

**RWSTC APPROVAL DATE: 1-9-13**

**TRANSMITTAL TO SPONSORS DATE: Fall 2012**

**COUNCIL APPROVAL DATE: 1-13-13**

**TOPIC: Statutory Speed limit definition**

**AFFECTED PORTIONS OF MUTCD: Section 2B.13 and 1A.13**

**DISCUSSION/QUESTION:**

The MUTCD in Section 2B.13 paragraph 06 talks about maximum speed limits and applying them by State Law. It uses the term "Statutorily". Section 1A.13 does contain a definition of statutory speed limit. A question was raised that we need to define statutory speed limit better.

Review of the definition in Section 1A.13 and in 2B.13 indicates that the only change needed is to add "State Law" in parenthesis in 1A.13.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Modify definition of statutory speed limit to section 1A.13 definitions list.

**RECOMMENDED WORDING:**

**Note: Proposed changes to the MUTCD are shown in underline red and removed text are shown in ~~strikethrough red~~.**

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42 **Section 1A.13 Definitions of Headings, Words, and Phrases in this Manual**

- 43 214. **Speed**—speed is defined based on the following classifications:
- 44 a. **Average Speed**—the summation of the instantaneous or spot-
- 45 measured speeds at a specific location of vehicles divided by the
- 46 number of vehicles observed.
- 47 b. **Design Speed**—a selected speed used to determine the various
- 48 geometric design features of a roadway.
- 49 c. **85th-Percentile Speed**—the speed at or below which 85 percent of
- 50 the motor vehicles travel.
- 51 d. **Operating Speed**—a speed at which a typical vehicle or the overall
- 52 traffic operates. Operating speed might be defined with speed
- 53 values such as the average, pace, or 85th-percentile speeds.
- 54 e. **Pace**—the 10 mph speed range representing the speeds of the
- 55 largest percentage of vehicles in the traffic stream.
- 56 215. **Speed Limit**—the maximum (or minimum) speed applicable to a
- 57 section of highway as established by law or regulation.
- 58 216. **Speed Limit Sign Beacon**—a beacon used to supplement a SPEED LIMIT
- 59 sign.
- 60 217. **Speed Measurement Markings**—a white transverse pavement marking
- 61 placed on the roadway to assist the enforcement of speed regulations.
- 62 218. **Speed Zone**—a section of highway with a speed limit that is
- 63 established by law or regulation, but which might be different from a
- 64 legislatively specified statutory speed limit.
- 65 219. **Splitter Island**—a median island used to separate opposing directions
- 66 of traffic entering and exiting a roundabout.
- 67 220. **Station Crossing**—a pathway grade crossing that is associated with a
- 68 station platform.
- 69 221. **Statutory Speed Limit**—a speed limit established by legislative action
- 70 (e.g. Federal or state law) that typically is applicable for a particular class
- 71 of highways with specified design, functional, jurisdictional and/or location
- 72 characteristics and that is not necessarily displayed on Speed Limit signs.

73 **Section 2B.13 Speed Limit Sign (R2-1)**

74 **Standard:**

75 01 **Speed zones (other than statutory speed limits e.g. established by Federal or**

76 **state law) shall only be established on the basis of an engineering study that**

77 **has been performed in accordance with traffic engineering practices. The**

78 **engineering study shall include an analysis of the current speed distribution of**

79 **free-flowing vehicles.**

80 02 **The Speed Limit (R2-1) sign (see Figure 2B-3) shall display the limit**

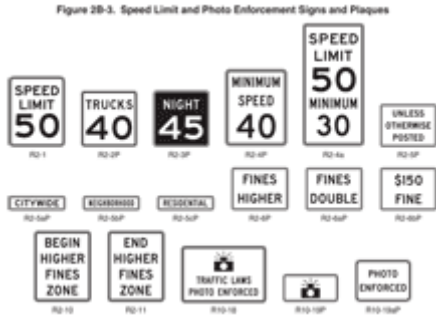
81 **established by law, ordinance, regulation, or as adopted by the authorized**

82 **agency based on the engineering study. The speed limits displayed shall be in**

83 **multiples of 5 mph.**

84 **Figure 2B-3 Speed Limit and Photo Enforcement Signs and Plaques**

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86 03 Speed Limit (R2-1) signs, indicating speed limits for which posting is required  
87 by law, shall be located at the points of change from one speed limit to another.

88 04 At the downstream end of the section to which a speed limit applies, a Speed  
89 Limit sign showing the next speed limit shall be installed. Additional Speed Limit  
90 signs shall be installed beyond major intersections and at other locations where  
91 it is necessary to remind road users of the speed limit that is applicable.

92 05 Speed Limit signs indicating the statutory speed limits shall be installed at  
93 entrances to the State and, where appropriate, at jurisdictional boundaries in  
94 urban areas.

95 Support:

96 06 In general, the maximum speed limits applicable to rural and urban roads are  
97 established:

- 98 A. Statutorily – a maximum speed limit applicable to a particular class of road, such  
99 as freeways or city streets, that is established by State law; or
- 100 B. As altered speed zones – based on engineering studies.

101 07 State statutory limits might restrict the maximum speed limit that can be established  
102 on a particular road, notwithstanding what an engineering study might indicate.

103 Option:

104 08 If a jurisdiction has a policy of installing Speed Limit signs in accordance with statutory  
105 requirements only on the streets that enter a city, neighborhood, or residential  
106 area to indicate the speed limit that is applicable to the entire city, neighborhood, or residential  
107 area unless otherwise posted, a CITYWIDE (R2-5aP), NEIGHBORHOOD (R2-5bP), or  
108 RESIDENTIAL (R2-5cP) plaque may be mounted above the Speed Limit sign and an  
109 UNLESS OTHERWISE POSTED (R2-5P) plaque may be mounted below the Speed Limit  
110 sign (see [Figure 2B-3](#)).

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113 RWSTC Vote: For: Unanimous June 2012

114 Against:

115 Abstentions:

116 RWSTC Vote following sponsor comments For: Unanimous January 9, 2013

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118 Council Vote: 1-11-13 For: Unanimous

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119 c: NCUTCD/June 2013/Heydel/RW # 2 statutory speed limit definition 1A.13 and  
120 2B.13 5-6-12, revised 5-7-12, 6-20-12 READY FOR SPONSORS, revised following  
121 sponsor comments 12-9-12, approved by RWSTC 1-9-13, approved by council 1-11-13  
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