**Speed limits are a maximum – not a target**

Inappropriate or excessive speed is one of [the fatal five](https://www.cheshire.police.uk/police-forces/cheshire-constabulary/areas/cheshire/campaigns/fatal-5/) – in other words, a leading killer on the roads. In 2023 [almost 400 people died in collisions](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/reported-road-accidents-vehicles-and-casualties-tables-for-great-britain#factors-contributing-to-collisions-and-casualties-ras07) and more than 3,000 were seriously injured in a collision involving excessive speed or a vehicle going too fast for the conditions.

The speed limit is a **maximum, not a target** or a minimum speed. It is possible to drive too fast to be safe or legally compliant, without going over the limit.

Going too fast for the road or the conditions is dangerous in many ways:

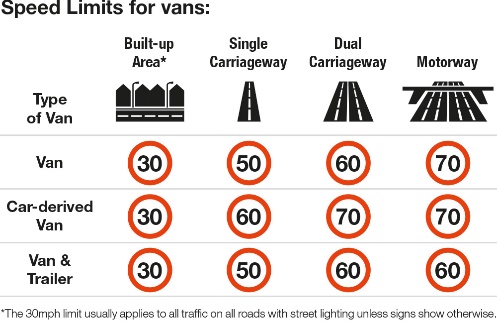
* It compromises your ability to handle the vehicle.
* It reduces the time you and other drivers have to react.
* Twice the speed requires four times the braking distance.
* Speed reduction is not linear – the faster a vehicle travels, the more slowly it loses speed on braking. If two identical vehicles, traveling at 70mph and 80mph respectively brake equally at the same time, when the slower car stops, the second will still be traveling at 39mph. The similar huge differential applies at slower speeds like 30/40mph. That’s why extra speed kills – because even small increments in mph mean **far** higher impact speeds. It doesn’t matter how ‘good’ a driver you are - even Lewis Hamilton can’t change the laws of physics.
* Even [slightly higher impact speeds](https://futuretransport.info/human-impact/) make it far more likely someone will die. Vulnerable road users suffer far greater injuries at 30mph impact speeds compared to 20mph – but so do vehicle occupants. Seat belts and airbags save lives – but at high speeds inertia still has a devastating impact on human bodies.
* Modern brakes and autonomous braking systems do not prevent collision. The faster you travel, the more likely you are to have a collision, and the higher the impact speed will be – even with every modern driver aid.

Here’s the good news: as inappropriate speed is involved in [more than half of all fatal collisions](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-fatal-4-factsheet-2023/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-fatal-4-speed-factsheet-2023), we can all protect ourselves and others simply by driving a little bit slower.

**Managing speed at work**

You and about half of all other drivers on the road are working when behind the wheel. This means you face different risks – e.g. work pressures, distraction, fatigue, a desire to get finished and get home. People drive differently when they are driving for work – and not in a good way. You have a duty of care to people around you to drive carefully.

[2023 government data on speed compliance](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-speed-compliance-statistics-for-great-britain-2023/vehicle-speed-compliance-statistics-for-great-britain-2023#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20under%20free%2Dflowing,roads%20and%2045%25%20on%20motorways.) shows that almost half of all motorists, van drivers and motorcyclists exceeded the speed limits on motorways; and more than half car and van drivers and one-third of HGV drivers broke the speed limit on 30mph roads.



Vans are often required to keep to a lower speed limit than cars on certain types of road – make sure you know what speed limit applies to your vehicle, whatever type of road you’re on.

This makes it even more important that you do not speed, because going slower will give you more time to protect yourself against more reckless drivers.

Speeding also increases the numbers of hazards and manoeuvres, including tail-gating and over-taking. Reducing speed slightly makes driving less stressful as well as less risky.

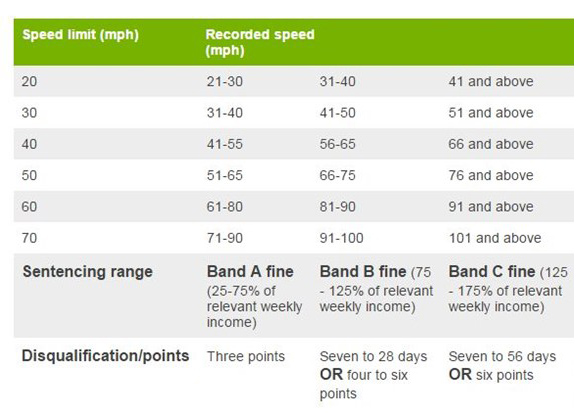
Going even a little slower also [saves a lot of fuel](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/business/transport/efficient-driving/#:~:text=Avoid%20excessive%20speeds,high%20speeds%20is%20even%20greater.). A car uses 18% more fuel at 75mph than at 60mph and a van 37% more.

**Five minutes later – or 20 years earlier?**

The nature of UK roads, with their traffic lights, roundabouts, junctions and congestion, means that speeding gains you hardly any time. For a three-mile journey across London, for example, it only takes [four minutes longer to drive it at 15mph than at 30mph](https://futuretransport.info/impact-of-maximum-speed-on-journey-times/).

How about the M1? National Highways’ trials on the [M1 compared 50mph speed limits](https://assets.nationalhighways.co.uk/Knowledge+Compendium/Monitoring+and+evaluation+M1+J45.pdf) with 55mph – and found the average driver only saved 5 seconds in journey time.

On the other hand, your risk of collision if you exceed the speed limit climbs significantly. And if you are speeding prior to a collision, it is possible that your (or your company’s) insurance will be invalidated, and that if you die, your family does not receive death in service payments.

[Penalties for speeding](https://www.gov.uk/speeding-penalties) range from £100 for a fixed penalty notice plus three points; or if the driver goes to court the penalty can be up to £2,500 plus three to six penalty points. If a speeding driver causes death or injury to someone else they can also face jail.

Potentially speeding can lose you your licence, your job, and even your freedom.

Speeding therefore represents **huge risk for potentially huge losses – and virtually no gain.**

**Given that speeding involves huge risk for virtually no reward, if you speed, ask yourself *why*. Is it really *time* which drives you – or is it stress, or frustration, or a need to be in front…? How would it feel to drive more safely?**