

Safety Bulletin

6 Speed Safety Tips

If you're like most truck drivers, you've noticed big changes in speed limits lately.

In some states, freeway speed limits for passenger cars can rise as high as 80 mph. Other states hold the line at 65 mph.

Yet for large trucks, agencies like the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) are proposing mandatory speed limiters. They recommended truck speed limits of 60, 65 or 68 mph. While their mandate is on hold right now, speed remains a hot topic.

And no wonder. Speeding took three of the top 20 positions on the FMCSA's list of 2016 driver violations. And in 2015, "speeding of any kind" was the most frequent driver-related crash factor in fatal truck crashes.

The bottom line: driving at a "safe speed" gets confusing these days. So use these 6 general rules to stay safe:

- 1. Keep it under 65 mph.** Groups like the American Trucking Association believe that driving 65 mph or slower will improve safety, save on fuel and save on truck repairs.
- 2. Keep your distance.** Leave a distance of at least 5 seconds between you and the car or truck in front of you when you're driving over 40 mph. Double that distance when driving in bad weather.
- 3. Slow down for bad weather.** If you hit a rain shower, reduce your speed by one-third. So, if you're driving at 65 mph in dry weather, slow down to about 45 mph when the roads turn wet. If you hit snow-packed roads, reduce your speed by one-half.
- 4. Stay alert when crossing state lines.** Each state sets its own truck speed limit. So when you hit that state line, watch for the signs and make sure you're following that state's laws. It can save you from a potentially costly violation.
- 5. Be extra careful in work zones.** Reduce your speed to the posted work zone limit, merge well ahead of lane closures, and be prepared to slow down or stop suddenly.
- 6. Keep lane-changing to a minimum.** It's a good way to stay safe on freeways with significantly higher passenger car speed limits.

