



MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Speed Too Fast for Conditions

Illegal or unsafe speed is a factor in about 18% of Maine's crashes BUT speed causes more than 40% of crash fatalities. In Maine more than 6,000 speed-related crashes a year occur that result in about 80 deaths and more than 10,000 injuries. By simply *slowing down* you better your chances of avoiding a disaster. Excessive speed can affect your ability of staying in your lane, and lead to a dangerous head on or run off the road crash. The MaineDOT offers the following reminders for driving at a safe speed:

- Allow yourself enough time to react and brake safely. Reduce speed in hazardous situations such as roadway curves, bright sun, nighttime and inclement weather.
- Adjust your speed to the weather conditions. Rain or fog are two examples where the posted speed limit can be too fast for road or visibility conditions.
- Use caution when driving on unfamiliar roads.
- Maintain a safe distance from vehicles ahead.

When you're driving in bad weather, remember to do two things: Decrease your speed and increase the distance between you and the vehicle ahead.

Higher speeds diminish your ability to safely control your vehicle. If you add bad weather to the mix, the chance of a car crash is even higher. Here are some tips from the Maine D-O-T for rain and fog conditions:

- Remember that rain affects visibility and traction. Hydroplaning is a BIG concern. Wet roads can significantly affect your braking and vehicle handling. Higher speeds increase chances of hydroplaning.
- Turn off the cruise control in heavy rains to maintain proper power control to the wheels.
- Driving in fog can be disorientating - even on familiar roads – so slow down.
- Drive so that you can stop within your line of sight - when your sight distance ahead drops, so should your speed.
- If you decide to pull off the road, go to a parking area - not on the shoulder.



An important aspect of traveling at a safe speed is allowing enough reaction time for safe braking and vehicle control. In addition to bad weather adjustments, the Maine D-O-T reminds you to slow down in these situations:

- Work Zones – Workers are very vulnerable. Remember speeding fines are often doubled in these areas. Work Zone crashes injure drivers and passengers, not just workers.
- Neighborhoods and other areas with many intersections and driveways – where you can expect entering traffic and pedestrians.
- Nighttime – **nearly 40%** of speed-related fatal crashes occur between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. So even though you may feel as though it is safer to speed up during lightly traveled nighttime hours, crash statistics indicate you should be doing the opposite – so slow down!

Eighty percent of moose crashes and more than 90% of moose crash fatalities occur during hours of darkness. Deer crashes also often occur at night.

Be a Road Model: Adjust your speed to weather and light conditions and always remember to wear your seat belt.