

The Institute of Transportation Engineers
Traffic Engineering Council
presents TIPS on



School Zones

What is the law with regard to school speed zones?

Reduced speed limits may be desirable or necessary for school zones during the hours when children are going to and from school. Usually such school speed zones are only considered for schools located adjacent to highways or visible from highways. Pedestrian crossing activity is usually the primary basis for reduced school speed zones.

Generally, each state's laws governing School Zones can be found in that state's Vehicle and Traffic Law literature. These laws typically include limitations in the amount of speed reduction and the reduced speed zone location.

Once a reduced speed zone for a school area has been established (in accordance with law, after an engineering study or traffic investigation), the school speed limit sign is installed with two supplemental plaques. Above the speed limit sign, a black on yellow sign reads

"School." Below the speed limit sign, a black on white supplemental plaque defines when the school speed limit shall be enforced. Flashing beacons may also be added to the sign with the bottom mounted plaque reading, "When flashing."

In addition to the school speed limit sign, the School Advance Warning Sign may be used to in advance of established school crossings not adjacent to a school ground. Where used, the sign is generally erected 150 to 700 feet in advance of the crossing.



School Crossing Sign

The school crossing sign, sometimes confused with the school advance sign, is intended for use at established crossings including signalized intersections used by pupils going to and from school. The sign should be omitted at crossings controlled by stop signs. Only crossings adjacent to schools and those on established school pedestrian routes shall be signed.



School Advance Sign