

# Establishing Speed Limits

Technical Advisory Committee

June 5, 2025

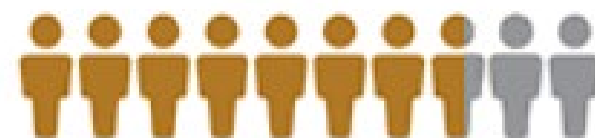
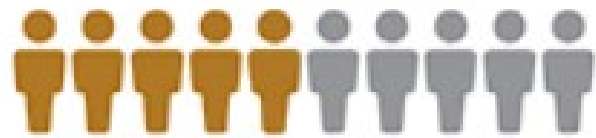
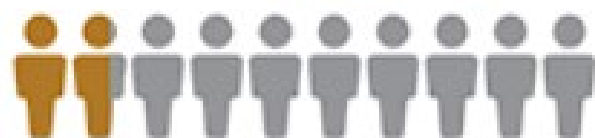


— PEDESTRIAN FATALITY & SERIOUS INJURY RISK +

18%

50%

77%



20  
MPH

30  
MPH

40  
MPH



**CONE OF VISION**

## Who Establishes Safe Limits?



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State and local agencies have jurisdiction over the road.

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California has over 60 laws governing speed limits

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California Vehicle Code places these into language used for enforcement

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The California Manual on Traffic Control Devices provides guidance

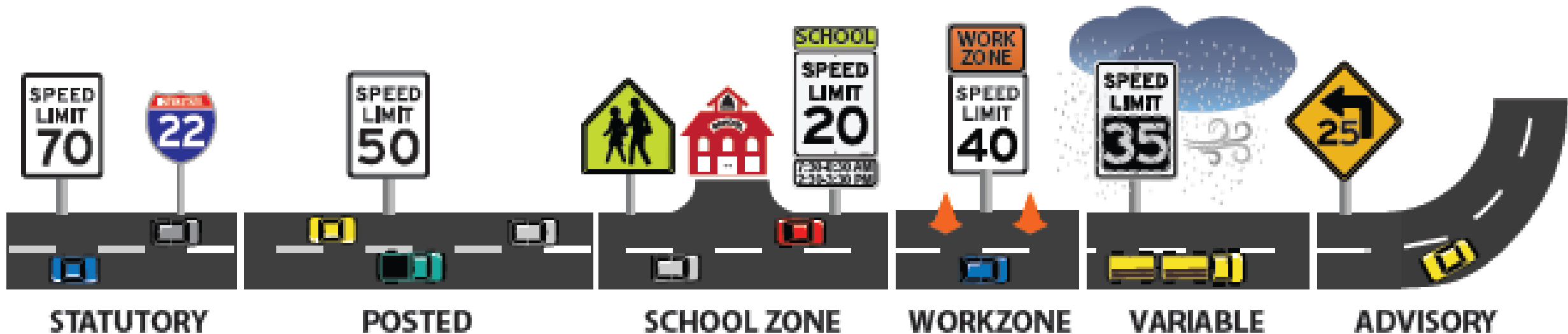
# California's Basic Speed Law

(CVC § 22350)

No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property.

# 2 Types of Speed Limits

- Statutory/Prima Facie
- Posted/Regulatory Speed Limits



# Engineering & Traffic Survey:

## 3 Things Used to Select a Speed Limit

01

Prevailing  
speeds in  
normal  
conditions

02

Crash History &  
Traffic Volume

03

Non-apparent  
road conditions

Prevailing Speed =  
85th Percentile



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Drivers choose reasonable speeds

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85% of drivers travel at a safe speed

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Developed in 1930s as “conventional wisdom”

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Some argued that speed differential is worse than higher speeds

Reconsider view that drivers choose reasonable and safe speeds

Safe speed limits should consider:

- crash types
- impact forces
- body's ability to withstand forces

# Assembly Bills (AB) 43 & 1938:

Makes it Easier to Establish Lower Speed Limits

## New Traffic Study Directives

- Consider Vulnerable users
- Speeds don't need updating as often
- Use an older Traffic Study speed limit

## New Prima Facie Speed Limits

- Business Activity District: 20 or 25 mph
- Senior Zone: 25 mph

## Adjustments to 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed

- Easier to round down 5 mph
- Extra 5 mph safety reduction
- 12.4 mph below 85<sup>th</sup> percentile

# A Lower Speed Limit Doesn't Lower Speeds, But Lower Speeds Lower the Speed Limit!



Speed Limits  
Require  
Enforcement



Complete  
Streets Designs



Speed  
Management



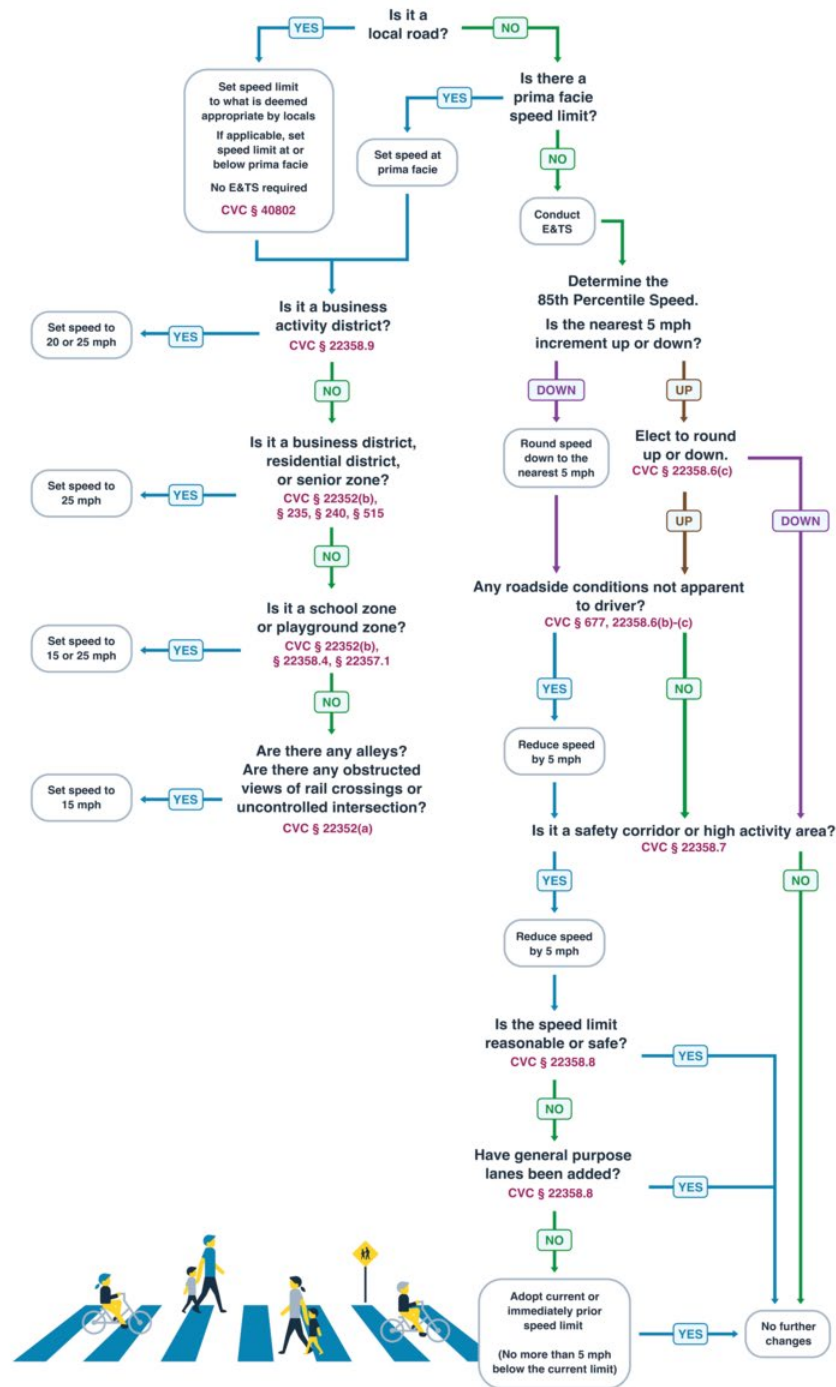
Slower Driving  
leads to Lower  
Speed Limits

# Complete Street Designs



# CVC as a Decision Tree

[California Safe Speeds Toolkit: Next Steps | Safe Transportation Research and Education Center](#)





## Questions?

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