

**TITLE 9: VEHICLE CODE**  
**DIVISION 5: RULES OF THE ROAD**

**§ 5251. Speed Limits.**

(a) All motor vehicles traveling upon the public highway shall be operated at a careful, prudent rate of speed not greater than nor less than is reasonable and proper, having due regard to the surface of the highway, the width of the highway and the condition of traffic upon the highway and all other restrictions and conditions then and there existing.

(b) In no event shall any motor vehicle be operated at a speed greater than will permit it to be stopped within the assured clear distance ahead.

(c) Subject to subsections (a) and (b) of this section, speeds in excess of 45 miles per hour are unlawful.

(d) All vehicles shall reduce their rate of speed to 10 miles per hour when passing a bus while the bus is taking or discharging passengers unless the bus is stopping off the surface of the highway.

(e) Where a safety zone has been established, or where traffic is controlled by a police officer or mechanical traffic signal, cross-walks, designated school bus stops, school drop-off and pick-up zones when pedestrians are present a vehicle may proceed at a speed not greater than is reasonable and proper and in no event at a speed greater than 10 miles per hour, and shall exercise due caution for the safety of all pedestrians.

(f) The speed limitations in this section do not apply to vehicles under the direction of the police in the chase or apprehension of suspected violators of the law or of persons charged with a law violation, nor to fire fighting vehicles when traveling in response to a fire alarm, nor to ambulances when traveling in emergencies, but the above emergencies do not protect the operator of any such vehicle from the consequences of a reckless disregard of the safety of others.

(g) The Commissioner may designate certain areas as limited speed areas, based upon engineering and traffic investigation studies, and mark those areas with conspicuous and appropriate warning signs. No vehicle may be operated in those areas in excess of the maximum speeds as indicated by the signs.

**Source:** [PL 3-61](#), § 1 (§ 538); amended by [PL 9-69](#) § 2, modified; (e) enacted, (e) and (f) redesignated as (f) and (g) by [PL 19-40](#) § 2 (Apr. 3, 2016).

**Commission Comment:** [PL 9-69](#), which took effect October 31, 1995, amended subsection (f) of this section. According to [PL 9-69](#), § 1:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that our roads are improving, making high speed travel along them easier. Such high speed travel may cause safety problems. In addition, the road improvements make travel routes more complex. In order to facilitate the safe travel along the Commonwealth's improving roads, it may become necessary for prompt action to regulate the maximum speed of travel along the roads. The Commissioner of Public Safety must be given the ability to quickly regulate speeds in certain areas. Consequently, the deletion of the requirement for regulations will facilitate this process.

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[PL 19-40](#) became law on April 3, 2016 without the Governor's signature.