

Local Agency Options for Setting or Changing Speed Limits in Oregon

Why This Matters

Road authorities have options for setting or changing speed limits on their roads. Some options take more time than others and will depend on the local agency's resources and ODOT's speed zoning workload, but each option results in an enforceable speed limit.

Statutory vs Designated Speed Limits

- **Statutory Speed Limits:** These are default speed limits set by law ([ORS 811.105](#) & [811.111](#)). Examples:
 - 20 mph in [business districts](#) or [school zones](#)
 - 25 mph in [residence districts](#), so long as it's not an arterial roadwayStatutory speed limits can be posted without ODOT involvement, unless there is currently a designated speed limit on the roadway.
- **Designated Speed Limits:** These are speed limits that differ from statutory speed limits.
 - [ORS 810.180](#) grants ODOT authority to designate a speed limit on a public roadway based on an engineering investigation. The engineering investigation is guided by Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) and the Speed Zone Manual and results in an official order from ODOT.
 - [ORS 810.180 \(8\) and \(9\)](#) grants the authority to set temporary and emergency speed limits.
 - [ORS 810.180\(11\)](#) grants cities authority to designate a 20 mph speed limit on non-arterial roadways in residence districts by ordinance without an engineering investigation.

Options for Engineering Investigations on Local Roads

1. Ask ODOT to Investigate

This is the most common way to change or establish a designated speed limit. [This flowchart](#) outlines the process. The investigation is completed by ODOT at no cost to the local agency.

- a. Fill out ODOT's [online request form](#).
- b. ODOT investigates and sends you a recommendation.
- c. If you agree, ODOT issues an order and you can install speed limit signs.
- d. If you disagree, you can ask ODOT to reconsider or appeal to the Speed Zone Review Panel.

2. Complete a Standard Method Investigation

Any city or county can do the same engineering investigation ODOT would do using their own engineering staff or a consultant.

- a. Follow [OAR 734-020-0015](#) and the [Speed Zone Manual](#) to complete the investigation.
- b. Use the templates on ODOT's [Speed Investigations](#) page.
- c. Submit your engineering investigation to ODOT. If ODOT approves, ODOT issues an order and you can install speed limit signs.

3. Complete an Alternative Method Investigation

For roads functionally classified as local or collector, any city or county can do a shorter version of the engineering investigation using their own engineering staff or a consultant.

- a. Follow [OAR 734-020-0015\(4\)](#) and the [Speed Zone Manual](#) to complete the investigation.
- b. Use the templates on ODOT's [Speed Investigations](#) page.
- c. Submit your engineering investigation to ODOT. If ODOT approves, ODOT issues the order and you can install speed limit signs.

4. Rescind an Order to use Statutory Speed Limits

If a road has a designated speed limit and meets the definition of a [residence](#) district (and not an arterial), [narrow residential roadway](#), or [business district](#), you can apply statutory speed limits.

- a. Fill out the [online request form](#) and note "rescind and go statutory" in the reason box.
- b. Reply to the automated email with details on the request including existing speed zone order number, the statutory definition the roadway meets (e.g. residence or business district), and beginning and end points of the section.

5. Apply for Delegated Authority on Low-Volume Roads

ODOT can delegate its speed zoning authority to any city or county for roads in its jurisdiction with fewer than 400 vehicles per day. This applies to all roads that qualify or a specific road that qualifies.

- a. Follow [OAR 734-020-0016](#) to apply for Delegated Authority on low-volume roads.
- b. Follow [OAR 734-020-0015](#) and the [Speed Zone Manual](#) to complete the investigation.
- c. See the [Delegated Authority for Low Volume and Unpaved Roads website](#) for more information.
- d. You'll do the engineering investigation and order and send copies to ODOT.

6. Apply for Delegated Authority on Unpaved Roads

Speed zones are generally discouraged on unpaved roads and ODOT only establishes speed zones for unpaved roads that are gravel.

- a. See the [Delegated Authority for Low Volume and Unpaved Roads website](#) for more information.
- b. Follow [OAR 734-020-0017](#) to apply for Delegated Authority on a specific roadway and to complete the investigation.

7. Apply for Full Delegated Authority

ODOT can delegate its speed zoning authority to any city and certain counties for all roads in its jurisdiction.

- a. See the [Delegated Authority for Public Paved Roads website](#) for more information.
- b. Follow [OAR 734-020-013](#) to apply for Delegated Authority.
- c. Follow [OAR 734-020-0015](#) and the [Speed Zone Manual](#) to complete the investigation.
- d. You'll start with a probation period where ODOT reviews your first 10 engineering studies.
- e. Submit your engineering investigation and order to ODOT for approval 30 days prior to installing speed limit signs.

Resources

- [ODOT Speed Zones Website](#)
- [ODOT Speed Zone Manual](#)
- [ODOT Speed Zone Review Panel](#)
- [Delegated Authority for Speed Zones](#)
- [Delegated Authority for Low Volume and Unpaved Roads](#)
- [Delegated Authority for Public Paved Roads](#)
- [ORS 810.180](#)
- [ORS 811.100 & ORS 811.111](#)
- [OAR 734-020-0013](#)
- [OAR 734-020-0015](#)
- [OAR 734-020-0017](#)

Questions?

ODOT Speed Zoning: odotspeedzoning@odot.oregon.gov

Traffic Speed Zone Engineer: laura.prusakiewicz@odot.oregon.gov

Phone: 503-949-1156