

Information Note

Default Speed Limits

The Road Traffic Act 2004, which is the legislative basis for speed limits generally, provides for the application of default speed limits in respect of various road types, as follows:

- Motorways - 120 km/h.
- National Roads - 100 km/h.
- Regional & Local Roads - 80 km/h.
- Built-Up Areas - 50 km/h (built-up area is defined in the Local Government Act 2001).

Special Speed Limits

Under the 2004 Act, a County or City Council may make Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws to change the default speed limit on any public road within its administrative area.

The making of Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws is a reserved function of the Local Authority (i.e. the Bye-Laws must be passed by the Elected Members of the Council). Where the Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws pertain to speed limits on a national road or motorway, the prior written consent of Transport Infrastructure Ireland is required. The process for setting new Special Speed Limits also involves consultation by the Local Authority with An Garda Síochána and the general public.

Speed Limits Review

In November 2013, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS) published a report *Speed Limits Review 2013*. One of the key recommendations of the report was that all speed limits across the country should be reviewed and updated, as appropriate. The report also recommended that the Speed Limit Guidelines should be revised and updated. New **Guidelines for Setting and Management of Speed Limits in Ireland** were subsequently published by DTTS in March 2015 and were adhered to by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). In April 2015, DTTS directed all Local Authorities and TII to carry out a national speed limits review and update speed limits in accordance with the revised Guidelines. The new Speed Limit Guidelines require that staff involved in the setting and management of speed limits shall be “trained and competent” in the use of the Guidelines.

Objective of the Review

- Review occurrences of **inconsistency** and **inappropriateness** of speed limits throughout the country that were highlighted in the 2013 report.
- Address these issues and to bring about a greater level of **credibility**, **respect** and **compliance** with the speed limit system and ultimately to enhance the **safety** of the road system.

Review of speed limits on national roads

TII established a Speed Limit Review Team to carry out the review on the national road network. This extensive and comprehensive review process was undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Setting and Management of Speed Limits in Ireland* and required a collaborative effort between the local authorities and TII, under the direction of DTTS.

Current Status

The recommended changes to speed limits on national roads that were identified following the TII review will form part of the Local Authorities’ own speed limit reviews within their respective administrative areas.

It is a matter for each Local Authority to prepare and make Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws to bring the identified revised speed limits into force. As indicated earlier, the prior written consent of Transport Infrastructure Ireland must be obtained by Local Authorities for proposed Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws relating to national roads.

What Happens Next?

Once the Speed Limit Review is complete in each Local Authority area and the Special Speed Limit Bye-laws made, revised speed limit signage will be installed to post these limits on the ground. TII will continue to liaise with each Local Authority to facilitate the installation of this signage in the most effective manner.

In general speed limits should be set in accordance with the Guidelines, and should not be applied to deal with isolated hazards or to facilitate the granting of Planning Permission.