

Speed



Speeding is the biggest contributor to road trauma on NSW roads.

Each year almost 140 people die and 1,145 people are seriously injured in NSW from speed-related crashes.

Speeding is not just travelling above the designated speed limit, but also driving too fast for the conditions (e.g. wet weather and curves in the road).

The facts

- ▶ Most speeding deaths occur at no more than 10km/h over the speed limit.
- ▶ In NSW, speeding consistently contributes to around 41 per cent of road fatalities and 24 per cent of serious injuries each year.
- ▶ If you're going 10 km/h over in a 60 km/h zone, you're four times as likely to be involved in a crash.
- ▶ More than half of NSW drivers admit to speeding at least some of the time.
- ▶ Going 5km/h over in a 60km/h zone on an average commute saves you just 75 seconds and doubles your crash risk.
- ▶ 69 per cent of speed-related casualty crashes in NSW in 2018–20 happened on a curve.

The faster you go, the harder you hit

No matter what causes a crash, vehicle speed directly affects the force of the impact and the resulting trauma outcome.

▶ Pedestrian crash

There is a 10 per cent risk that a pedestrian will be killed if hit by a modern car at 30km/h. At a 50km/h impact speed, the risk increases to 90 per cent.*

▶ Side impact crash with another vehicle

There is a 10 per cent risk that a person in a safe car will be killed if they crash at speed of up to 45–50km/h. At a 70km/h impact speed, the risk increases to 80 per cent.

▶ Side impact crash with a tree/pole

Because the energy is concentrated on a smaller area, side impact crashes with a narrow, fixed object, like a tree or pole, are less survivable than those with another vehicle, and the fatality risk at 45–50km/h is much higher.

▶ Head on/frontal impact with another vehicle

There is a 10 per cent risk of a driver/passenger being killed at collision speeds up to 70km/h. At 90km/h the risk is up to 80 per cent. This is why speed limits are often set lower when there are no central barriers to protect motorists from oncoming vehicles.

With increased speed, the amount of energy released in a crash increases. It is inevitable that some of this energy will be absorbed by the human body. However, the human body can only withstand limited forces before injury or death occurs.

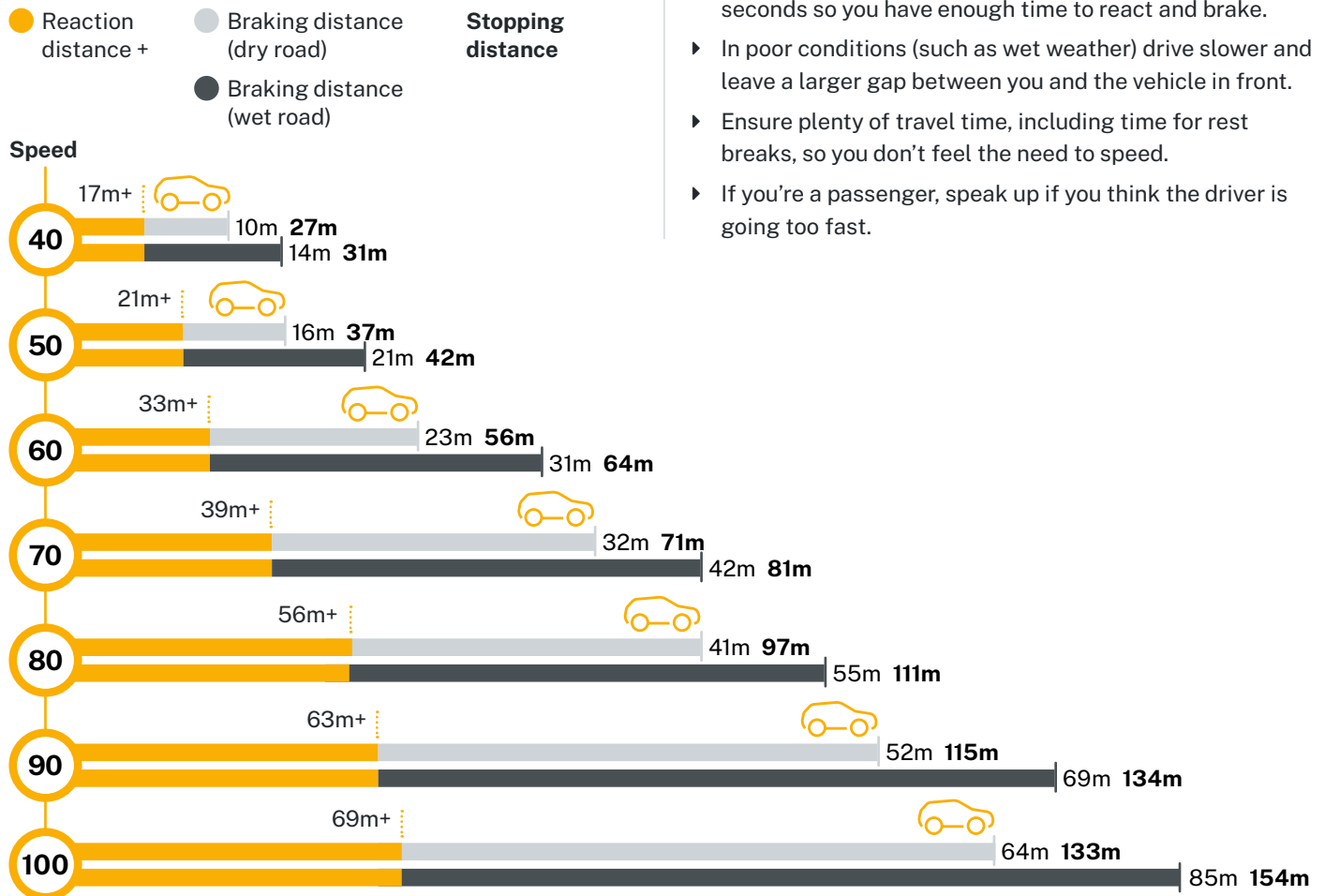
Pedestrians and bicycle riders are particularly vulnerable as they are unprotected during a crash.

The faster you go, the greater your risk of a crash

As speed increases, so does the likelihood of serious injury or death. This is because:

- ▶ The driver has less time to react to a hazard.
- ▶ The distance travelled before coming to a stop is greater.
- ▶ The speed upon impact is greater.

The combined effects of reaction and braking times in both wet and dry conditions is illustrated below.



How can I stay safe?

- ▶ Regularly check your speed to ensure you are travelling within the posted speed limit. The Speed Adviser smartphone app (roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/speeding/speedadviser) can help by providing the speed limit on all NSW roads and alerting you when the speed limit changes.
- ▶ Follow speed advisory signs. This will help ensure you drive through that section of road safely.
- ▶ Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front (usually a three second gap). When travelling at higher speeds, increase the distance to allow at least five seconds so you have enough time to react and brake.
- ▶ In poor conditions (such as wet weather) drive slower and leave a larger gap between you and the vehicle in front.
- ▶ Ensure plenty of travel time, including time for rest breaks, so you don't feel the need to speed.
- ▶ If you're a passenger, speak up if you think the driver is going too fast.

More information

Visit the Transport for NSW road safety website (roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/speeding) for information on travelling at safe speeds, to download the Speed Adviser smartphone app, and to learn about other important road safety topics.



Scan the QR code for more information on road safety



If you're driving for work, visit the Towards Zero website (towardszero.nsw.gov.au/workplace) to complete the Road safety: Everybody's business online learning course to learn about road safety risk and how you can stay safe on NSW roads.