

- MEMBER AGENCIES -

California Department of
Transportation
California Highway Patrol
California State
Association of Counties
League of California Cities
California State Automobile
Association
Automobile Club of Southern
California

(916) 654-4715

California Traffic Control Devices Committee



January 2, 2008

Public Works Directors, Traffic Engineers of Cities and Counties of California

Re: New Regulations on Setting Speed Limits

Dear Colleagues;

On September 4, 2007, we provided you with the background on the changes to the 2003 MUTCD and the changes that were made in California's MUTCD in 2004.

On October 10, 2007, we held a workshop which was attended by over 40 participants representing public and private traffic engineers, law enforcement, city attorneys, legislative analysts and elected officials. At the conclusion of the workshop a number of recommendations were made to this committee.

On October 11, 2007, the committee reviewed the results of the workshop; reviewed written comments and received additional public testimony. The Committee's guiding principles were:

1. Regulations must implement the requirement and the spirit of the relevant sections of the California Vehicle Code.
2. Flexibility for local municipalities while providing safeguards and protections against creation of speed traps.
3. Professional decision making process that does not lead to abuse of motorist rights due to undue pressure.

At the conclusion of deliberations, the Committee unanimously made the following decision:

- When a speed limit is to be posted as required and/or allowed by the California Vehicle Code (CVC), it shall be within 5 mph of the 85th percentile of speed for free-flowing traffic as determined by an Engineering & Traffic Survey (E&TS) as prescribed in the CA MUTCD.
- The posted speed limit might be further reduced by 5 mph, if conditions not readily apparent to a driver exist. Any such reduction shall fully comply with all appropriate sections of the CVC, especially Section 22358.5. The data used and reasoning for this 5 mph reduction shall be fully documented in writing and approved by a registered civil or traffic engineer licensed to practice in California.
- Under no conditions a posted speed limit anywhere in California shall be less than the 50th percentile speed as determined by an E&TS.

Address: Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Operations MS 36, Attention: Executive Secretary CTCDC,
P.O. Box 942874, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001

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The enclosed revised Section of 2B.13 of California's MUTCD is attached for your reference. Please make sure you and your staff become familiar with these changes as they are now the new regulations on how to set Speed Limits in California under the relevant vehicle code sections.

Please note that this amendment to Section 2B.13 is on our next agenda for final discussion. Our next meeting will be on January 31, 2008 in Thousand Oaks (2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd.) beginning at 9:00am.

Thank you for your cooperation in working together to resolve this issue.

Very truly yours,

Farhad Mansourian, Chairman
Director of Public Works
County of Marin

c: Committee Members and Alternates
Devinder Singh – Committee Secretary

Attachments:

- 1) September 4, 2007 Background Memo
- 2) Relevant Minutes of October 11, 2007 Committee Meeting
- 3) Revised Section 2B.13 of CA MUTCD