

## Press release

### Ministers O'Brien and Canney launch 'Slower Speeds, Safer Roads' campaign supporting road safety

From [Department of Transport](#)

Published on 30 January 2025

Last updated on 30 January 2025

Ministers O'Brien and Canney have launched the 'Slower Speeds, Safer Roads' information and awareness campaign, to highlight the forthcoming change in speed limits on rural local roads.

On Friday 7 February, the speed limit on many rural local roads will change from 80 kilometres per hour to 60 kilometres per hour. The 'Slower Speeds, Safer Roads' campaign will run on radio, online, in print, and in 'out of home' locations to increase awareness of this change.

In line with the 'Vision Zero' aspiration for 2050 adopted across EU Member States, Ireland's [Government Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030](#) has the primary aim of reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries on Irish roads by 50% by 2030. [International research](#) indicates that speed is a contributory factor in a third of fatal collisions, and that reducing speed significantly reduces road deaths. Under the [Phase 1 action plan for the Strategy](#), a working group of relevant stakeholders and subject matter experts was convened to review speed limits and to make recommendations to help set consistent and appropriate speed limits across the road network. The working group comprised the Department of Transport, Road Safety Authority (RSA), An Garda Síochána, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority (NTA), and the County and City Management Association (CCMA).

The [Speed Limit Review](#) was presented to Government and published in September 2023. The final report concluded that protecting vulnerable road users must be a key focus when setting speed limits. For example, the risk of being killed is much greater for collisions between a car and a vulnerable road user at 50 km/h, when compared with the same type of collision at 30 km/h.

In April 2024, the [Road Traffic Act 2024](#) was signed into law and included provisions to amend the default speed limits on rural, local roads, urban roads and national secondary roads. The change in default speed limits for rural local roads, from 80km/h to 60km/h, will be implemented first, starting on 7 February 2025.

Future implementation phases will focus on the speed limit in urban cores, which include built up areas as well as housing estates and town centres, reducing to 30 km/h. The speed limit on national secondary roads is recommended to reduce from 100km/h to 80km/h.

Countries across Europe including France and the UK have lowered speed limits on certain road types in recent years. Subsequent research has indicated that reducing speed limits contributed to a [10% reduction in road fatalities in France](#), and contributed to a [reduction in insurance costs](#) in the UK.

The structure of speed limit law in Ireland is that national legislation sets default speed limits for different classes of roads. Local Authorities may then make changes to the default by setting

'special speed limits' for given roads in their areas. Recent legislation establishes a safer baseline for speed limits on affected road classes but has not diminished the important devolved role for Local Authorities to vary speed limits under their jurisdiction, where this is appropriate. The Department of Transport issued new guidelines to Local Authorities in early 2024 to assist them with this process.

Local authorities have received grants to change speed limit signs from '80' to '60' on relevant local roads. These will be in place on 7 February, so road users can see clearly which limit applies. The striped 'rural speed limit sign', which is used as an alternative to numeric speed limit signs on specific single lane rural roads, will also now mean that a maximum 60km/h limit is in force. For more information on changes in their local area, people should check with their local authority.

As with all speed limits, it will be an offence to exceed the stated limit and enforcement will be a matter for An Garda Síochána. The Department of Transport has been working with An Garda Síochána to ensure they are ready to implement the new limit.

Minister for Transport Darragh O'Brien said:

"I am delighted that the 'Slower Speeds, Safer Roads' information and awareness campaign has launched. This Government is committed to reducing road fatalities and creating safer roads for everyone in Ireland."

"There is no doubt that speeding is a significant contributing factor to many collisions and going slower will benefit us all. By reducing speed limits on many rural local roads from 80km per hour to 60km per hour, the Government is taking action to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries. These measures are part of a range of initiatives to improve road safety and help us to progress toward our longer-term goal of Vision Zero, as set out in the Government's Road Safety Strategy and its Phase 1 Action Plan."

Speaking about the campaign at today's An Garda Síochána and Road Safety Authority Bank Holiday Road Safety appeal, Minister of State Seán Canney said:

"A reduction in the default speed limit from 80 to 60km/h on local rural roads - which can be narrow and winding, with limited visibility, and where sadly many collisions happen - is a step in the right direction towards tackling the unfortunate increase in fatalities and serious injuries we have seen in recent years."

"Reducing speed on these roads increases the time we have to react to an unexpected situation, such that any collisions that might occur will be less impactful. This is just one of the range of measures and actions the Government is taking to make roads nationwide safer, including stepping up ongoing education, awareness campaigns, enforcement, and significant Government investment in infrastructure improvements. As a nation, we have made great strides in making our roads safer for all in recent decades, and we must keep this up. I have no doubt that if we work together, we can see the numbers of lives lost on our roads come down once again."

Welcoming the launch, Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan said:

"I am delighted to support the launch of the Slower Speeds, Safer Roads information and awareness campaign, and indeed the lower speed limits being introduced. Successful road safety strategies require us to consider a number of matters that together can save lives:

technology, road design, driver behaviour and education, severity of penalties, and speed limits. And of course, ongoing enforcement is a very important aspect of the Road Safety Strategy, be that by Gardaí themselves, mobile, static, and average speed cameras or other technology being deployed”.

Chief Superintendent Jane Humphries in the Garda National Roads Policing Bureau said:

“An Garda Síochána has been working closely with the Department of Transport and other stakeholders in preparation for the implementation of reduced speed limits on certain rural roads. An Garda Síochána has in place the necessary structures to implement these changes.”

"There can be no transitional period. From Friday 7 February, those travelling faster than the new legal speed limit on rural roads will be liable for prosecution."

"An Garda Síochána will be utilising our network of roads policing and front line resources and technology to enforce these new speed limits on local rural roads. An Garda Síochána partners in Road Safety, GoSafe, will also be deploying mobile safety camera vans as required to enforce the new lower speed limits.

"Remember: Slower Speeds, Safer Roads.”

Sam Waide, CEO of the RSA, said:

"Speed is one of the most critical factors in road safety—both in the likelihood of a crash occurring and the severity of the outcome. The laws of physics are unforgiving: the energy and force involved in a collision increase exponentially with speed, meaning even a small reduction can significantly improve survival rates.

The reality is stark—9 out of 10 pedestrians struck at 80km/h will not survive, while at 60km/h, that number drops to 5 out of 10. Lowering speed limits makes our roads safer for all users, particularly on rural roads where many serious and fatal collisions occur. This change will help reduce the risk of crashes and, crucially, lessen the severity of injuries when they do happen. We urge all road users to respect the new limits, as every kilometre per hour counts when it comes to saving lives.”

Visit [Slower Speeds, Safer Roads](#) to find out more about the new slower speed limits.