

January Law of the Month

346.57 Speed restrictions

Driving too fast for conditions causes many wintertime troubles

Even people who take pride in being under control in every situation can easily lose control of their vehicles on icy or snow covered roads when they drive too fast for conditions.

“When there’s ice, snow and slick spots on roadways or when visibility is reduced because of bad weather, driving at the posted speed limit might actually be too fast for conditions. The speed limit is based on a dry roadway and good driving conditions. You might not be able to stop or control your vehicle at that speed on a slippery road or during hazardous weather.”

Slowing down when driving conditions deteriorate is not just sound advice—it’s also the law.

346.57 (2) Reasonable and prudent limit. No person shall drive a vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions and having regard for the actual and potential hazards then existing. The speed of a vehicle shall be so controlled as may be necessary to avoid colliding with any object, person, vehicle or other conveyance on or entering the highway in compliance with legal requirements and using due care.

346.57 (3) Conditions requiring reduced speed. The operator of every vehicle shall, consistent with the requirements of sub. (2), drive at an appropriate reduced speed when approaching and crossing an intersection or railway grade crossing, when approaching and going around a curve, when approaching a hillcrest, when traveling upon any narrow or winding roadway, when passing school children, highway construction or maintenance workers, sanitation workers, or other pedestrians, and when special hazard exists with regard to other traffic or by reason of weather or highway conditions.

A violation of this state law costs \$213.10 with four demerit points added to the driver’s record. A second offense within a 12-month period costs \$263.50 with four additional points.