

# Traffic Safety

## Overview

Our goal is to reduce the number of motor vehicle crashes that cause personal injury, death, and property damage. We hope to accomplish this mission through voluntary compliance, education, and enforcement of the state traffic laws and the local traffic bylaws.

It is the responsibility of all officers of the Lee Police Department to enforce the traffic laws and to educate the public about the traffic laws. They achieve this while on regular patrol, responding to citizen complaints, and via patrols directed by motor vehicle crash data.

## Traffic Complaints

Please dial 911 on your telephone if this is an emergency.

If you wish to report a traffic-related problem please telephone the police department at 413-243-5530. Normally a patrol officer will handle the problem. More complicated traffic problems will be directed to Sergeant or the Chief of Police. We clearly understand that a safe and efficient road system is a quality of life issue among the residents and visitors of our town. Any input that will help accomplish our mission is welcomed and appreciated.

## Definition of a *Crash*

A “crash” is an avoidable motor vehicle collision. The word accident implies an occurrence completely beyond someone’s control. A crash is caused by factors such as excessive speed or impaired driving that almost always can be controlled by drivers.

Source: Massachusetts Governor’s Highway Safety Bureau

## Tools

### Moving/Stationary Traffic Radar

All Lee Police cruisers are equipped with a Traffic Safety Radar System. These units have two antennas; one is located in the front and the other is located in the rear of the patrol vehicle. Speed-readings can be obtained while the patrol vehicle is moving or stationary.

### Traffic Analyzer

The department also utilizes a NC-100 portable traffic analyzer designed to provide accurate count, speed, and classification data. The device is placed directly in the traffic lane to provide accurate data, but can be installed and removed quickly and easily. Occasionally a marked police cruiser fails to be able to document speed on a particular street due to its high visibility. In such cases, the traffic analyzer is used to help us determine the average speed, and provides us with statistical information on the best time to run radar at that location.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How can I receive traffic enforcement on my street?**

Please call the police department at 413-243-5530 and give the communications personnel a detailed description of the traffic-related problem. The information will be logged into our database and normally an officer will be dispatched to handle the problem. If it is an ongoing speeding problem, you may request extra radar patrols on your street. Please provide the exact location and time of day you believe the speeding most often occurs so we can optimize our radar enforcement ability at that location.

### **How can I have a traffic-related sign “replaced” on my street?**

Please contact the Department of Public Works at 413-243-5520 to have a sign replaced.

### **How can I have a “new” traffic-related sign erected on my street?**

The Traffic Commission must first review all new traffic-related sign requests. If the Traffic Commission believes the new sign will improve traffic safety, they will forward their recommendation to the Board of Selectman for final approval. The Traffic Commission Chairman is Gerald LeProvost. He may be contacted at 413-243-2490 or your request may be sent by mail to: Traffic Commission, 32 Main Street, Lee, MA 01238

### **What is the “basic speed law” (or “fundamental speed law”)?**

The Registry of Motor Vehicles (R.M.V.) Driver’s Manual states,

“... at all times, you must never travel faster than reasonable and proper for the current conditions and public safety.”

This includes traffic conditions, pedestrian conditions, road conditions, and weather conditions.

EXAMPLE: If you were driving 55 mph during a snowstorm on a highway with a posted speed limit of 55 mph, you could still be issued a citation for driving too fast for the current conditions.

In addition, according to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90 Section 17, unless otherwise posted, your speed would not be reasonable and proper if you were driving...

- Over 20 mph in a school zone.
- Over 30 mph in a thickly settled or business district.
- Over 40 mph outside a thickly settled or business district.
- Over 50 mph on a highway outside a thickly settled or business district.

NOTE: "Thickly settled or business district", the territory contiguous to any way which is built up with structures devoted to business, or the territory contiguous to any way where the dwelling houses are situated at such distances as will average less than two hundred feet between them for a distance of a quarter of a mile or over. (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90 Section 1)

### **How can I tell if a vehicle is traveling above the speed limit?**

You must first understand some basic principles:

- Large vehicles such as dump trucks, trash trucks, and tractor-trailer rigs sometimes appear to be traveling faster than they may seem.
- Loud vehicles such as trucks, motorcycles, and some sports cars sometimes appear to be traveling faster than they may seem.
- Vehicles negotiating corners sometimes appear to be traveling faster than they may seem.
- Vehicles traveling on a narrow road sometimes appear to be traveling faster than they may seem.

Keeping these principles in mind, you should observe the traffic flow on your street. Traffic studies indicate that 85% of the public will travel at a reasonable and prudent speed. As you observe the traffic, it will usually be evident what the appropriate speed is for your street by judging the majority of the traffic. You may also enlist a family member, friend, or neighbor to travel the road at the speed limit while you observe. This is a great method for you to learn what a particular speed looks like with a trusted party operating the vehicle.