



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Smith Chief Deputy

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70 MPH Speed Limit

Recently the Wisconsin Legislature passed a new law to create a 70 mph speed limit on certain freeways. So what does that mean for the motoring public and when does it take effect? I have received countless inquiries wondering if US 41 (Soon to be Interstate 41) and US 151 now have the new 70 mph speed limit. The answer is no. They are both still currently 65 mph zones.

I thought I would break it down for everyone so they will understand when changes may take place and why some highways will continue to be 65 mph. The statute states, "Seventy miles per hour on any freeway, including freeways that are a part of the national system of interstate and defense highways and on any portion of an expressway that gives preference to through traffic by utilizing interchanges only".

What that means is that only highways with restricted access will be allowed to have their speed limit raised to 70 mph. Those highways include interstates and other highways where the only access to the highway is a ramp type interchange. While US 41 meets that description, the speed limit has not yet changed and will remain at 65mph until the Wisconsin Department of Transportation posts signs indicating a new speed limit.

US 151 will remain a 65mph highway for the foreseeable future as it still has a significant amount of cross traffic and therefore does not meet the statutory definition for an increased speed limit. In my opinion, this is a wise decision by our legislature. We have had numerous serious crashes as a result of cross traffic in recent months on US 151 which justify that decision.

So what is law enforcements response to this new law going to be? Speeding violations will continue to fall under the discretion of the individual law enforcement officer who observe the violation. My message to our deputies is for them to continue using their discretion as they have in the past but I will encourage them to revisit the tolerances in which they choose to enforce those speed limits. I would ask that they consider lowering the tolerance given to those exceeding the speed limit for the safety of the motoring public.

Some will argue that it is safer, some will argue that it is more dangerous but regardless it is my job to enforce the laws which the legislature puts into place. We all know that with an increase in speed comes the potential for more severe crashes and an increase in the severity of injury in those crashes. I encourage everyone to use good judgement when the speed limits does increase. Remember that it only takes a second for something to go drastically wrong and for a crash to occur.

I ask for everyone's cooperation in driving safely on our Dodge County highways. With your help, we can continue to make Dodge County a fun and safe place to live, work, and visit.

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt