



2024 Operation Southern Slow Down Talking Points

- Operation Southern Slow Down is a week-long speed enforcement and education campaign conducted between July 15–20.
- State troopers and local law enforcement officers will conduct concentrated enforcement on interstates and state highways in the Southeast (Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee) for the week in a team effort to help prevent an increase in drivers traveling at speeds well above the legal limit.
- "Operation Southern Slow Down" began in 2017 when these five states that comprise National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Region 4 – Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee – decided to hold a week-long joint speed enforcement and education awareness campaign annually in the third week of July with the goal of reducing crashes and saving lives.
- Safety is the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT's) top priority, and we are committed to improving safety for all transportation users with a target of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries.
- Florida is enhancing its commitment to safety by adopting a holistic approach that increasingly focuses on actions to modify driver behavior. Targeted, systematic enforcement initiatives such as Operation Southern Slow Down are an example of this effort. In support of this campaign and other safety partnerships, the FDOT is integrating the traffic data it collects with crash and other data to provide insight into how we can best work together with partners to plan and implement education, enforcement, engineering, and other initiatives that will collectively generate sustained safety improvement.
- Safety is a community effort and takes much more than just engineering and enforcement. We are here today to educate on the importance of making smart driving decisions and good behavior while driving as safety can't happen without drivers also taking responsibility to be safe.
- One of the primary reasons that speed-related crashes have such detrimental effects is that the increased velocity and force of impact in a crash work against the usefulness of safety equipment, such as seat belts and airbags.
- Speeding and driving aggressively translate to less vehicle control, increased stopping distances, and greater risk to others on or near the roadway.

- FDOT, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV), and its division of the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) will work collaboratively with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and four other southeastern states (Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee) to conduct this week-long campaign.

Safety Data

- In 2021, speeding was a contributing factor in nearly one-third (29%) of all traffic fatalities¹. Every one of these fatalities represents a family member, a loved one, or a best friend, who died for no good reason. We are urging everyone who travels to stay safe on our roads by not engaging in the behaviors of speeding and aggressive driving.
- Law enforcement agencies in the Southeast and across the nation have seen a substantial increase in the number of vehicles traveling at speeds above 100 miles per hour in the last two years.
- Federal highway safety data shows that drivers under 25 are more often speeding when involved in a fatal crash than any other age group².

Important Safety Tips and Reminders

- Faster speeds require longer time and distance to stop a vehicle.
- Stopping distance quadruples every time a driver doubles their speed.
- Allow more stopping time for bigger vehicles when traveling downhill on wet or uneven pavement.
- Slow down and check your speed when approaching a curve and apply the brakes before the curve.
- Children usually drive in the same manner as they witness adults driving, so drivers are encouraged to set a good example by driving at the speed limit.
- Buckle up and make sure all passengers are buckled up the entire trip.
- Always slow down in construction zones and school zones.

¹ [NHTSA, Speeding and Aggressive Driving Prevention, 2021](#)

² [NHTSA, Traffic Safety Facts, 2020](#)

- We've all been there! Anxiety and stress can have you running in circles, especially behind the wheel. It doesn't matter if you get there early, on time, or a little late, as long as you get there safely. Anticipate increased traffic during peak travel periods. Plan ahead and give yourself ample drive time.
- No matter how eager you are to get to your destination, speeding and driving aggressively are dangerous. Stay patient and give other road users plenty of space.

Potential Talking Points for LEO

- When someone is using their phone, eating, or talking to a friend while driving, their reaction time could be significantly affected. This goes hand in hand with how fast they're driving. For example, a car traveling 55 miles per hour requires the length of a football field to come to a full and complete stop. Speed directly impacts the survivability of a crash, and for distracted drivers, this could very well mean life or death.
- Always Obey Posted Speed Limits. Speed limits are set for a reason on roadways. Speed is always a factor considered in every crash. Speeding is when we have a problem, as these roadways are not designed for you to be speeding. Speeding is a violation of the speed limits assigned to a given stretch of roadway.
- Crashes like these are preventable and with the help of the community, we can create a roadway system that's safer for all users.
- Drivers who choose these negative behaviors like speeding and driving distracted endanger themselves, but they endanger the lives of other motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists as well.
- It's better to be late than to be a statistic.
- Slow down because it is the right thing to do. Slow down for those you love and do your part so that everyone gets home safely.
- There are many factors that create a safe driving experience in Florida and it depends on each of us to do the right thing and obey the laws. We want our roadways and highways to be safe for all motorists, and that is the reason we are here today. This is a call to action for everyone in our community ... reminding all Floridians and our visitors to slow down, be patient, and buckle up!