



**INSTRUCTIONAL MEMORANDUMS  
To County Engineers**

To	County Engineers	Date	March 2002
From	Office of Local Systems	IM No.	2.21
Subject	Engineering and Traffic Investigations – Speed Limit Study		

The purpose of this Instructional Memorandum is to describe how an engineering and traffic investigation may be performed and to provide a procedure for implementing a speed limit.

The current Iowa Code Section 321.285 provides a county board of supervisors the ability to determine and declare a reasonable and proper speed limit of a county secondary road. The determination of the speed limit must be made upon an engineering and traffic investigation. The section does not require that an engineering and traffic investigation be conducted by the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT). However, any county may request the Iowa DOT to conduct an investigation.

- A. A county should follow the procedure described below to request the Iowa DOT to conduct a speed limit investigation:
  - 1. The County Engineer should request, in writing, the Iowa DOT conduct an engineering and traffic investigation to recommend a speed limit. The request should include the route description with accurate termini and a map marking the route location.
  - 2. The county should send the request to the appropriate District Local Systems Engineer. No other Iowa DOT office needs to be notified by the county.
  - 3. The District Local Systems Engineer will direct the request to the Iowa DOT's Office of Traffic and Safety for action. The Office of Traffic and Safety will inform the county and the District Local Systems Engineer of the results of the engineering and traffic investigation study, once it is completed.
  
- B. A county may also conduct its own engineering and traffic investigation, if it chooses to do so. This may be conducted by the county engineering staff or by an engineering consultant.
  
- C. Upon completion of an engineering and traffic investigation, the board of supervisors may enact a speed limit by resolution or ordinance. Attached to this I.M. are the following sample documents that may serve as a guide to the county when drafting a speed limit resolution or ordinance:
  - 1. [Speed Restriction Ordinance](#)
  - 2. [Amendment to Speed Restriction Ordinance](#)
  - 3. [Resolution for Establishing Speed Limits](#)