Administrative Policy Memorandum No. 431
Revised March 12, 2014
Supersedes APM dated October 26, 2012

TO: Bureau/Office Directors, Division Heads, Region Managers, Program Managers and all Supervisors

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF SPEED LIMITS IN WORK ZONES

I. Background

The State of Maine established double fines for speeding violations in a work zone on May 25, 1995 when Governor King signed LD 182, which amended 29-A M.R.S.A. §2075 (2). Since then, the Maine Department of Transportation has continued to promote and practice work zone safety. Speed limits and their enforcement, especially with double fines, are actions that can result in reduced vehicle speeds through work zones, thereby decreasing the frequency and severity of accidents. Rules and regulations to address the administration of these speed limits can provide uniform application while improving the safety of the worker and the traveling public.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a uniform set of rules and regulations for the proper application and administration of all regulatory work zone speed limits.

III. Scope

The provisions of Maine LD 182, "An Act to Increase Safety in Highway Construction and Maintenance Areas," amending 29-A M.R.S.A. §2075 (2), apply to the authority of the commissioner of DOT and the executive director of the Maine Turnpike Authority. This policy describes the rules and regulations for implementation and administration of regulatory work zone speed limits by MDOT personnel.
IV. Description

Temporary Work Zone speed limits are regulatory speed limits established for construction and/or maintenance projects. Signs must be posted prior to the actual work site or on a detour route being used during the construction phase. The speed limit goes into effect when the zone has been established and the signs are installed. The temporary work zone speed limit shall only be in effect (posted) when safety concerns and/or site conditions warrant.

Temporary Work Zone speed limits are intended for use in any of the following typical situations:

• Conditions may be hazardous to motorists or workers without reduced speed.
• Construction or maintenance has site conditions or flow obstructions that require reduced speeds.
• Construction or maintenance requires a detour using a road with a currently posted or un-posted speed limit that requires appropriate speed reduction.

V. Authority

29-A M.R.S.A. 2075 (2) allows the commissioner of Transportation to authorize the restriction of maximum speed limits in highway work zones without conducting a traffic speed zone study. The statutory authority permits the establishment of an enforceable speed limit which is lower than the current speed limit.

By approving this APM, the commissioner is authorizing a MaineDOT Licensed Professional Engineer who is knowledgeable in work zone traffic control to approve up to a 10 mph reduction in the existing speed limit on any roadway posted at 65 mph and below, a 15 mph reduction for a posted speed limit of 70, or a 20 mph reduction on roadways posted at 75 mph. A speed reduction of 15 mph can be authorized by the State Traffic Engineer, but anything over 15 mph on any roadway posted 65 mph or less, or greater than 20 mph on roadways posted over 65 mph, would have to be documented through commission record.

VI. Justification

The presence of workers shall not be the primary reason for a Temporary Construction Zone speed limit.

Temporary Construction Zone speed limits should be used when the roadway construction environment dictates the need for a reduced speed in order for motorists to navigate the length of the work zone or detour route in a manner that is safe for them and the personnel working. Crossovers, lane closures, drop offs, narrow lanes, poor road surface, or sight distance restrictions are examples of conditions that warrant Temporary Construction Zone speed limits. Severe or restricted conditions may require additional speed advisories within the Temporary Construction Zone.
VII. Sign Use, Mounting, and Locations

A. These speed limits shall be prudently applied only when a traffic engineer or licensed engineer knowledgeable in work zone traffic control concurs that site conditions warrant a reduction of the posted travel speed. Overuse of Temporary Construction Zone speed limits shall not be permitted, as it reduces the overall effectiveness of work zone speed limits.

B. Speed limit signs shall have a black legend on a retroreflective white background.

C. A black on orange "Work Zone" sign shall be mounted directly above the speed limit sign. A black on white "Fines Doubled" sign may be mounted directly below the speed limit sign.

D. The Temporary Construction Speed Zone should be a minimum of 1500 feet in length.

E. When the work zone calls for a reduced speed that results in a difference of 15 mph or greater from the preceding zone, a "REDUCED SPEED AHEAD" sign should be used. The sign may be used for a difference of 10 mph when deemed necessary by engineering judgment.

F. An "End Work Zone Speed Limit," "End Road Work," or "End Work Zone" sign shall be installed to indicate the end of the Temporary Construction Speed Zone.

G. When the signs are post mounted or attached to some other permanent fixture on the roadway, the bottom of the sign should be mounted a minimum of 7 feet (5 feet in rural areas) above the near edge pavement elevation. Signs shall be posted on both the left and right sides of a divided highway. The height to the bottom of a secondary sign mounted below another sign may be one foot less than the height specified above.

III. Standards

Before installation of Temporary Construction Zone speed limits signs, the following conditions must exist:

A. Construction or a maintenance project is ongoing or is imminent. (Any speed sign which is installed before actual work begins or site conditions warrant a reduction shall remain covered.)

B. Existing speed limit signs that conflict with those in the construction area, maintenance area, or detour route are removed or covered.
IX. Documentation

A. If the reductions are 10 mph or less on all roads posted 65 mph or less, 15 mph for roads posted at 70 mph or 20 mph on any road posted at 75 mph:

1. It is necessary to accurately document the application of all Temporary Construction Zone speed limits for enforcement and legal claims. This documentation should accurately describe sign location, times the signs were installed and removed, and the numerical value of the limit. The sign locations should be referenced to physical features of the roadway, such as the distance from an intersection or milepost marker. The form on the final page of this memorandum is a suggested method of documentation.

2. Approval by a Licensed Professional Engineer knowledgeable in work zone traffic control is required, and notification of the change shall be given to the Region Traffic Engineer and Work Zone Safety Engineer.

3. Whenever signs are vandalized, blown over, or otherwise obstructed, the times discovered and corrected must be recorded in construction records.

B. If the reductions are 15 mph on roadways posted 65 mph or less:

1. The State Traffic Engineer may, at the request of the Program Managers or Region Managers, approve up to a 15 mph speed reduction under extenuating circumstances. The State Traffic Engineer will review the situation and determine whether the increased speed reduction is warranted.

C. If the reductions are greater than 15 mph on all roads posted 65 mph or less, greater than 15 mph on roads posted at 70 mph, or greater than 20 mph on any road posted to 75 mph:

1. A Region Traffic Engineer (RTE) or other engineer trained in Work Zone Traffic Control must review and submit for approval through Commission action, and in all cases the RTE and Work Zone Safety Engineer shall be given notice of the action.

2. Whenever signs are vandalized, blown over, or otherwise obstructed, the times discovered and corrected must be recorded in construction records.
TEMPORARY WORK ZONE SPEED LIMIT FORM

The following changes in maximum speed limits are being posted to the roadway described below in order to perform the following work in a safe and efficient manner.

TOWN: __________________ ROUTE OR ROAD NAME: _____________________________
STARTING AT:_______________________________________________________________AND
EXTENDING TO: ____________________________________________________________________________
TEMPORARY SPEED POSTED ____________ * EXISTING SPEED LIMIT: ______________
DATE AND TIME POSTED _________________
SIGNATURE:________________________________ DATE AND TIME REMOVED ____________
SIGNATURE:________________________________ WORK PERFORMED: _______________________
COMMENTS: _____________________________________________________________________________

APPROVED: ____________________________ Traffic Engineer Date _____________________________

Use physical features such as project stationing, bridges, mile markers or intersections and distances from these features to describe locations. DO NOT USE SIGNS, BARRICADES, OR TEMPORARY DEVICES FOR REFERENCE.
Please note in comments if signs are vandalized, blown over, or otherwise obstructed, noting time discovered and time corrected.
Submit this form to the Region Traffic Engineer and Work Zone Safety Engineer.
* Reductions greater than 10 mph require review and recommendation from a MaineDOT Traffic Engineer and Commissioner approval.