

STATE OF NEW YORK

6808

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 10, 2023

Introduced by Sens. MANNION, ADDABBO, HELMING -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation

AN ACT to amend the vehicle and traffic law, in relation to establishing first responder safety zones and speed limits in such safety zones

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new
2 section 141-c to read as follows:

3 § 141-c. First responder safety zone. The area or space, not to exceed
4 six hundred sixty feet on a highway passing or abutting any facility or
5 parking area where fire vehicles, police vehicles, ambulances, or emer-
6 gency ambulance service vehicles are stationed, for use in responding to
7 emergencies. First responder zones shall be protected, marked or indi-
8 cated by lines or other markings on the surface and by adequate signs as
9 to be plainly visible at all times while set apart as a safety zone.

10 § 2. Section 1144-a of the vehicle and traffic law is amended by
11 adding a new subdivision (d) to read as follows:

12 (d) During an active emergency, every operator of a motor vehicle
13 shall yield the right of way to any fire vehicle, police vehicle, ambu-
14 lance, or emergency ambulance service vehicle displaying one or more
15 red, white, blue or green lights pursuant to the provisions of subdivi-
16 sion forty-one of section three hundred seventy-five of this chapter and
17 traveling within or entering a first responder safety zone. A first
18 violation of this provision shall be punishable by a fine of not more
19 than five hundred dollars. A second violation of this provision shall be
20 punishable by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

21 § 3. The section heading and subdivision (a) of section 1151 of the
22 vehicle and traffic law, subdivision (a) as amended by chapter 159 of
23 the laws of 2002, are amended to read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD02403-01-3

1 Pedestrians' right of way in crosswalks and first responder safety
2 zone. (a) When traffic-control signals are not in place or not in oper-
3 ation the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right of way, slowing down
4 or stopping if need be to so yield, to a pedestrian crossing the roadway
5 within a crosswalk or first responder safety zone on the roadway upon
6 which the vehicle is traveling, except that any pedestrian crossing a
7 roadway at a point where a pedestrian tunnel or overpass has been
8 provided shall yield the right of way to all vehicles.

9 § 4. Subdivision (d) and paragraph 4 of subdivision (h) of section
10 1180 of the vehicle and traffic law, subdivision (d) as amended by chap-
11 ter 432 of the laws of 1997, and paragraph 4 of subdivision (h) as
12 amended by section 7 of part C of chapter 62 of the laws of 2003, are
13 amended and a new subdivision (c-1) is added to read as follows:

14 (c-1) Except as provided in subdivision (g) of this section, whenever
15 maximum first responder zone speed limits have been established on a
16 highway adjacent to a first responder zone as authorized in section
17 sixteen hundred twenty, sixteen hundred twenty-two, sixteen hundred
18 thirty, sixteen hundred forty-three or sixteen hundred sixty-two-a, no
19 person shall drive a vehicle at a speed in excess of fifteen miles per
20 hour.

21 (d) 1. Except as provided in subdivision (g) of this section, whenever
22 maximum speed limits, other than school speed limits or first responder
23 safety zone speed limits, have been established as authorized in
24 sections sixteen hundred twenty, sixteen hundred twenty-two, sixteen
25 hundred twenty-three, sixteen hundred twenty-seven, sixteen hundred
26 thirty, sixteen hundred forty-three, sixteen hundred forty-four, sixteen
27 hundred fifty-two, sixteen hundred sixty-two-a, sixteen hundred sixty-
28 three, and sixteen hundred seventy, no person shall drive in excess of
29 such maximum speed limits at any time.

30 2. Except as provided in subdivision (g) of this section, whenever
31 maximum speed limits, other than school speed limits or first responder
32 safety zone speed limits, have been established with respect to any
33 restricted highway as authorized in section sixteen hundred twenty-five,
34 no person shall drive in excess of such maximum speed limits at any
35 time.

36 4. Every person convicted of a violation of subdivision (c) of this
37 section when such violation occurs in a school speed zone during a
38 school day between the hours of seven o'clock A.M. and six o'clock P.M.,
39 or subdivision (c-1) of this section when such violation occurs in a
40 first responder speed zone shall be punished as follows:

41 (i) Where the court or tribunal records or enters that the speed upon
42 which the conviction was based exceeded the applicable speed limit by
43 not more than ten miles per hour, by a fine of not less than ninety nor
44 more than three hundred dollars;

45 (ii) Where the court or tribunal records or enters that the speed upon
46 which the conviction was based exceeded the applicable speed limit by
47 more than ten miles per hour but not more than thirty miles per hour, by
48 a fine of not less than one hundred eighty nor more than six hundred
49 dollars or by imprisonment for not more than fifteen days or by both
50 such fine and imprisonment;

51 (iii) Where the court or tribunal records or enters that the speed
52 upon which the conviction was based exceeded the applicable speed limit
53 by more than thirty miles per hour, by a fine of not less than three
54 hundred sixty nor more than one thousand two hundred dollars, or by
55 imprisonment for not more than thirty days, or by both such fine and
56 imprisonment.

§ 5. The vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new section 1118 to read as follows:

§ 1118. Signs and markings in first responder safety zones. First responder safety zones shall be indicated with signage at each end of such safety zones, alerting motorists to the requirement that the right of way be yielded to pedestrians and emergency vehicles, and with white hash marks painted on the road surface between the curbs or, in the absence of curbs, between the edges of the traversable roadway. Such signage shall meet department of transportation standards and be installed properly so that they are clearly visible to motorists in accordance with the manual on uniform traffic control devices.

§ 6. Paragraph b of subdivision 2 of section 510 of the vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new subparagraph (xviii) to read as follows:

(xviii) for a period of one year where the holder is convicted of a third or subsequent violation of section eleven hundred forty-four-a of this chapter.

§ 7. Subdivision (a) of section 1620 of the vehicle and traffic law, as amended by chapter 563 of the laws of 2002, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The department of transportation with respect to state highways maintained by the state outside of cities having a population in excess of one million, and highways on Indian reservations, may by order, rule or regulation establish higher or lower maximum speed limits at which vehicles may proceed on or along such highways than the fifty-five miles per hour statutory maximum speed limit. No such maximum speed limit shall be established at less than twenty-five miles per hour, except that school speed limits may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour, for a distance not to exceed one thousand three hundred twenty feet, on a highway passing a school building, entrance or exit of a school abutting on the highway and further that speed limits may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour in first responder safety zones. Absence of signs installed pursuant to this section shall be presumptive evidence that the department of transportation has not established a higher maximum speed limit than the fifty-five miles per hour statutory limit.

§ 8. Subdivision 1 of section 1622 of the vehicle and traffic law, as amended by chapter 563 of the laws of 2002, is amended to read as follows:

1. Establish maximum speed limits at which vehicles may proceed on or along such highways higher or lower than the fifty-five miles per hour statutory maximum speed limit. No such limit shall be established at less than twenty-five miles per hour, except that school speed limits may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour, for a distance not to exceed one thousand three hundred twenty feet, on a highway passing a school building, entrance or exit of a school abutting on the highway, and further that speed limits may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour in first responder safety zones.

§ 9. Subdivision 5 of section 1630 of the vehicle and traffic law, as amended by chapter 563 of the laws of 2002, is amended to read as follows:

5. Establishment of maximum and minimum speed limits at which vehicles may proceed on or along such highways. No such maximum speed limit shall be established at less than twenty-five miles per hour, except that speed limits may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour in first responder zones, and except that school speed limits may be

1 established at not less than fifteen miles per hour, for a distance not
2 to exceed one thousand three hundred twenty feet, on a highway passing a
3 school building, entrance or exit of a school abutting on the highway,
4 and except that, with respect to bridge and elevated structures that are
5 a part of any such highway, a lower maximum speed limit may be estab-
6 lished if it is determined that such lower maximum speed limit is the
7 maximum speed limit which may be maintained without structural damage to
8 such bridge or structure, and except that, with respect to any highway
9 under the jurisdiction of the office of parks, recreation and historic
10 preservation, other than a parkway as defined in subdivision seventeen
11 of section 1.03 of the parks, recreation and historic preservation law,
12 the department of agriculture and markets or the industrial exhibit
13 authority, a maximum speed limit of not less than ten miles per hour may
14 be established on any portion thereof, if it is determined that such
15 lower maximum speed limit is necessary to assure the safety of the
16 public, and except that, with respect to any highway having toll plazas,
17 a maximum speed limit of not less than five miles per hour may be estab-
18 lished for passage through such toll plazas.

19 § 10. Section 1643 of the vehicle and traffic law, as amended by chap-
20 ter 496 of the laws of 2022, is amended to read as follows:

21 § 1643. Speed limits on highways in cities and villages. The legisla-
22 tive body of any city or village with respect to highways (which term
23 for the purposes of this section shall include private roads open to
24 public motor vehicle traffic) in such city or village, other than state
25 highways maintained by the state on which the department of transporta-
26 tion shall have established higher or lower speed limits than the statu-
27 tory fifty-five miles per hour speed limit as provided in section
28 sixteen hundred twenty of this title, or on which the department of
29 transportation shall have designated that such city or village shall not
30 establish any maximum speed limit as provided in section sixteen hundred
31 twenty-four of this title, subject to the limitations imposed by section
32 sixteen hundred eighty-four of this title may by local law, ordinance,
33 order, rule or regulation establish maximum speed limits at which vehi-
34 cles may proceed within such city or village, within designated areas of
35 such city or village or on or along designated highways within such city
36 or village higher or lower than the fifty-five miles per hour maximum
37 statutory limit. No such speed limit applicable throughout such city or
38 village or within designated areas of such city or village shall be
39 established at less than twenty-five miles per hour; except that in the
40 city of Long Beach, in the county of Nassau, speed limits may be estab-
41 lished at not less than fifteen miles per hour on any portion of the
42 following highways in such city: Cleveland avenue, Harding avenue, Mitc-
43 hell avenue, Belmont avenue, Atlantic avenue, Coolidge avenue, Wilson
44 avenue and Taft avenue. No such speed limit applicable on or along
45 designated highways within such city or village shall be established at
46 less than twenty-five miles per hour, except that school speed limits
47 may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour, for a
48 distance not to exceed one thousand three hundred twenty feet, on a
49 highway passing a school building, entrance or exit of a school abutting
50 on the highway, and except that speed limits may be established at not
51 less than fifteen miles per hour in first responder safety zones, and
52 except that within the cities of Buffalo and Rochester speed limits may
53 be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour for any portion
54 of a highway within a city park. No speed limits shall be established
55 pursuant to the provisions of this section except in accordance with the
56 engineering considerations and factors for speed limits set forth in the

1 manual and specifications for a uniform system of traffic control
2 devices maintained by the commissioner of transportation pursuant to
3 section sixteen hundred eighty of this title, as such manual and spec-
4 ifications may be amended from time to time, certified by a licensed
5 professional engineer who specializes in traffic operations.

6 § 11. Section 1662-a of the vehicle and traffic law, as amended by
7 chapter 496 of the laws of 2022, is amended to read as follows:

8 § 1662-a. Speed limits in certain towns. The town board of any subur-
9 ban town governed pursuant to article three-A of the town law and the
10 town board of any other town having a population exceeding fifty thou-
11 sand, with respect to highways (which term for the purposes of this
12 section shall include private roads open to public motor vehicle traf-
13 fic) in such towns outside any village, other than state highways main-
14 tained by the state on which the department of transportation shall have
15 established higher or lower speed limits than the statutory fifty-five
16 miles per hour speed limit as provided in section sixteen hundred twenty
17 of this title, or on which the department of transportation shall have
18 designated that such towns shall not establish any maximum speed limit
19 as provided in section sixteen hundred twenty-four of this title,
20 subject to the limitations imposed by section sixteen hundred eighty-
21 four of this title may by local law, ordinance, order, rule or regu-
22 lation establish maximum speed limits at which vehicles may proceed
23 within such towns, within designated areas of such towns or on or along
24 designated highways within such towns lower than the fifty-five miles
25 per hour maximum statutory limit. No such speed limit applicable
26 throughout such towns or within designated areas of such towns shall be
27 established at less than twenty-five miles per hour, except that in the
28 town of Hempstead speed limits may be established at not less than
29 fifteen miles per hour on any portion of a highway in the community
30 known as Point Lookout and on all or any portion of the following high-
31 ways in the community known as Lido Beach: Ocean Boulevard, Alleward
32 Street, Bath Street, Buxton Street, Cheltenham Street, Pinehurst Street,
33 Harrogate Street, Matlock Street, Nantwick Street, Biarritz Street,
34 Royat Street, Luchon Street, Woodhail Street, Leamington Street, Sarato-
35 ga Street, Kensington Street, and Prescott Street; provided, however,
36 that no such speed limit in such town may be established unless a major-
37 ity of the residents of each such community file a petition with the
38 town board of such town requesting such speed limit. No such speed limit
39 applicable on or along designated highways within such towns shall be
40 established at less than twenty-five miles per hour, except that school
41 speed limits may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour,
42 for a distance not to exceed one thousand three hundred twenty feet, on
43 a highway passing a school building, entrance or exit of a school abut-
44 ting on the highway, and except further that speed limits may be estab-
45 lished at not less than fifteen miles per hour in first responder safety
46 zones, and except further that in the town of Hempstead speed limits may
47 be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour on any portion of
48 a highway in the communities known as Point Lookout and Lido Beach;
49 provided, however, that no such speed limit in such town may be estab-
50 lished unless a majority of the residents of each such community file a
51 petition with the town board of such town requesting such speed limit.
52 No speed limits shall be established pursuant to the provisions of this
53 section except in accordance with the engineering considerations and
54 factors for speed limits set forth in the manual and specifications for
55 a uniform system of traffic control devices maintained by the commis-
56 sioner of transportation pursuant to section sixteen hundred eighty of

1 this title, as such manual and specifications may be amended from time
2 to time, certified by a licensed professional engineer who specializes
3 in traffic operations.

4 § 12. Severability. If any clause, sentence, subdivision, paragraph,
5 section or part of this act be adjudged by any court of competent juris-
6 diction to be invalid, or if any federal agency finally determines that
7 this act would render New York state ineligible for the receipt of
8 federal funds, such judgment or written determination shall not affect,
9 impair or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its
10 operation to the clause, sentence, subdivision, paragraph, section or
11 part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment
12 or written determination shall have been rendered.

13 § 13. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day
14 after it shall have become a law, and shall apply to violations commit-
15 ted on and after such date.