

Making School Zones Safer

Speeding, i.e. driving too fast for conditions, is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to traffic crashes. Nearly one-third of all fatal crashes are speed-related. [NHTSA, 2007]

In a school zone, staying alert and obeying the posted speed limit is imperative for public safety. Encouraging motorists to travel at safe speeds in school zones may be difficult using conventional traffic calming and enforcement techniques on certain roadways.

Maryland Law

Recognizing this situation, Maryland enacted a law, which takes effect on October 1, 2009, that allows for automated speed enforcement in designated school zones across the State (TR § 21-809). The State law authorizes each county and municipality to pass a local law authorizing the use of automated speed enforcement within its jurisdiction.

Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE)

Automated speed enforcement (ASE) systems, commonly known as speed cameras, are one of a wide range of measures that are effective at reducing vehicle speeds and crashes when used correctly and in the appropriate circumstances. Speed cameras should only be placed in school zones with documented speed-related safety problems.

Automated speed enforcement (ASE) systems use one or more devices to measure vehicle speeds and produce recorded images of motor vehicles traveling at speeds above a defined threshold. The date, time, and location of a violation, the vehicle speed, and images of the offending vehicle's license plate will be recorded. Following the proper identification of the registered owner of the vehicle using the license plate number, the owner will be mailed a civil citation, which will include violation photos and the recorded information.

Funding

Each jurisdiction and municipality is responsible for all costs associated with their ASE program. SHA provides no financial assistance for local speed camera programs.

Program Philosophy

Using an integrated approach that involves public education, attitude change and visible enforcement, local jurisdictions and municipalities should seek to encourage a change in driver behavior and to increase driver awareness of the potential life-altering impacts of speed-related crashes in school zones.

Local jurisdictions and municipalities should follow these principles when implementing an ASE program:

- ❗ Clearly identify and effectively communicate speed-related safety problems to the public.
- ❗ Make ASE sites visible to road users through signing and media outlets.
- ❗ Deploy ASE sites only where they fulfill a bona-fide need.
- ❗ Ensure a fair program by installing ASE sites only after careful consideration and study and not solely for the purpose of raising revenues
- ❗ Determine the effectiveness of the program through continuous, ongoing evaluations.



Traffic Safety Study

Appropriate site selection is essential to achieve the highest level of safety benefits and to ensure that public safety is the top priority of all ASE programs. A traffic safety study, which examines vehicle and pedestrian traffic data, crash history, speeds, previous enforcement efforts, and citizen concerns, should be conducted at each potential site to determine whether a speed camera is justified.

What's a School Zone?

Maryland law allows ASE systems in designated school zones. A clear definition of "school zone" must be established in order to implement an effective ASE program.

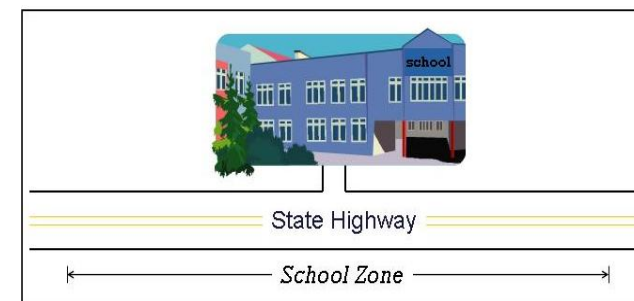
The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) defines a "School Area" as the area surrounding, and within one-half mile of, a school building or property and within which motor vehicle, pedestrian or bicycle traffic is substantially generated or influenced by the school. Within this "School Area", "School Zones" may be designated.

SHA defines a "School Zone" as a segment of highway located within a School Area that is:

- (1) Routinely used by pupils for access to or egress from school buildings or grounds,
- (2) Established by official action, and
- (3) Designated by appropriate signs.

The Maryland Annotated Code (TR § 21-803.1) allows School Zones to be established within a one-half mile radius of any school. However, this does not mean that all roads within a one-half mile radius of a school are considered School Zones. The SHA, or the local authority having jurisdiction over the road, must officially establish a School Zone and designate it with the appropriate signs before it becomes a School Zone.

School zones should not be established solely for the purpose of installing speed cameras. Similarly, all school zones do not automatically qualify for speed cameras. Speed camera deployments should be based on a traffic safety study.



**** Not all roadways within a ½ mile radius of schools are considered School Zones ****

SHA Authorization

Installing speed cameras along a State highway requires SHA approval. The local jurisdiction must complete an application and submit the appropriate documentation to SHA for review and approval. Typical documentation includes:

- ❖ A permit application and vicinity map,
- ❖ A traffic safety study,
- ❖ Plans for the ASE system, and
- ❖ A before-after evaluation plan.

Refer to SHA's *Guidelines for Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) Systems in School Zones*, located on the SHA website, for the application form and additional information.

Public Education and Outreach

Educating and communicating with the public regarding speeds, crashes and speed enforcement measures is critical for program success. Jurisdictions should hold well publicized kickoff events and issue periodic media announcements about the program implementation and effectiveness.

Signing

Maryland law requires that the appropriate signs be posted to alert motorists that they are in a school zone and that photo enforcement may be in use. Signs must conform to the MdMUTCD and be positioned far enough in advance of the speed camera to allow drivers to adjust their travel speed, if necessary.



Revenue

Revenue from the fines will be used to cover the costs incurred by the jurisdiction in implementing and administering the ASE program. The balance of any revenues may be used for pedestrian safety programs and other public safety purposes.

However, for any fiscal year, if the balance after recovering program costs is greater than 10% of the total revenue for that political subdivision, any funds that exceed the 10% total must be remitted to the Comptroller to be placed in the State's General Fund.

Facts

- ❖ Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) Systems must be certified and calibrated yearly. The systems must also undergo self-tests each day prior to deployment.
- ❖ The speed camera is triggered when a vehicle reaches a speed over a defined threshold. Per Maryland law, images may only be used to issue a citation if a vehicle is exceeding the speed limit by 12 mph or more.
- ❖ Photo violations do not result in points and cannot be used to increase a person's insurance rates.
- ❖ The maximum fine of \$40 for a photo-violation is lower than the typical fine for a similar school zone speeding violation.
- ❖ Recipients of citations may contest them in District Court.
- ❖ The operation of school zone cameras is restricted to Monday through Friday, from 6 AM to 8 PM.
- ❖ Only warnings may be issued for a period of at least 30 days after the first school zone speed camera is placed in the local jurisdiction.
- ❖ Maryland law requires local jurisdictions to publish notice of the location of all unmanned stationary speed cameras on their website and in a newspaper of general circulation in that jurisdiction.

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For additional information, refer to the Automated Speed Enforcement page on SHA's website at:
<http://www.marylandroads.com/>

Maryland State Highway Administration

SCHOOL ZONE AUTOMATED SPEED ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION



SAFER SPEEDS SAFER SCHOOLS

*AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CHANGING
DRIVER BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOL ZONES*

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