

Cracking down on speeding and reckless driving

Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and State Patrol team up

When Milwaukee County Acting Sheriff Richard Schmidt took office on September 1, one of his first steps was to launch saturation patrols to do speed enforcement on the county's freeway system.

Saturation patrol results

September 1 – October 11

- about 1,500 traffic citations
- 1,018 citations for speeding
- 545 for speeds 20-49 mph over limit
- 1 for going 100-104 mph in a 55 mph zone
- 107 arrests

During September, 29% more citations were issued than in August.

At an October 13 news conference, the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and the State Patrol Waukesha Post announced the launch of a two-month joint speed enforcement pilot project. Acting Sheriff Schmidt said that "speeding is a problem on the whole system. It's rampant." State Patrol Captain Timothy Carnahan noted that about a fifth of the crashes in Wisconsin occur in Milwaukee County. The WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety will provide \$20,000 in funding for deputies' overtime on these patrols, which will cover the county's entire 158 miles of freeway.



Lots goin' on in Milwaukee

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Trooper Timothy Kauffman explains speed enforcement, including use of a handheld laser speed and ranging device. Compared with the radar guns of previous years, laser devices use a much narrower beam that can easily target individual vehicles, which is especially helpful in busy traffic.

Deputies are teaming up with State Patrol troopers to achieve higher visibility and have greater impact on changing driver behavior. Saturation patrols ordinarily include a total of six deputies and troopers. One officer, using a handheld laser device, identifies speeders and radios ahead to other members of the detail who then make the traffic stop.

The [WisDOT Statewide Traffic Operations Center \(STOC\)](#), located in Milwaukee, handles traffic management for the state of Wisconsin. STOC staff will provide important help assessing the effectiveness of this pilot project. Hot spot corridors will be identified for saturation patrols, and then STOC staff will measure average speeds on these corridors both before and after boosted enforcement. They will also measure how long any lowering of average speeds lasts.

As of mid-October, Acting Sheriff Schmidt reported that the sheriff's office was receiving an overwhelmingly positive response from the public to the saturation patrols.

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Milwaukee County Acting Sheriff Richard Schmidt at the October 13 news conference announcing joint saturation patrols with the State Patrol. He alerted the public that "We are out there in force. Please slow down." Key goals are to raise public awareness and change driver behavior, and [local media](#) are helping out.