Headline: Speeding won’t make up for lost lives

Deckhead: No positive outcomes result from excessive speeding

We all have found ourselves racing to beat the clock. Whether it’s to get to work, the ballfield or some other event, it often leads to similar reaction: speeding.

Psychologically, the only option is driving above the speed limit. The speed-limit sign reads 55 mph, but you’re convinced 80 is your only option. Then, crash! So much for reaching your destination on time.

This a scenario that happens too often on our roadways, and drivers don’t have to reach speeds near the one previously mentioned to do significant damage to a vehicle; or worse, the driver and/or passengers suffered serious or fatal injuries.

It’s a misnomer that speeding results in drivers reducing the amount of time it takes to reach their destinations. A motorist would have to travel 100 miles to save approximately five minutes by traveling 5 mph faster than the marked speed limit.

Small increases to impact speeds higher than 50 mph can have significant effects on crash outcomes. AAA, IIHS and Humanetics crash testing found slightly higher impact speeds were enough to dramatically increase the driver’s risk of severe injury or death.

Researchers learned that more structural damage to the vehicle and greater forces on the dummy’s entire body amplified as crash speeds increased during tests.

At 40 mph, there was some intrusion into the driver’s space. But at 50 mph impact speed, there was noticeable damage to the driver’s-side door opening, the dashboard and foot area. At 56 mph, the vehicle’s interior was significantly compromised, with the dummy registering severe neck injuries and a likelihood of leg fractures.

Speeds of 50 and 56 mph might seem like you’re moving slowly, but that’s hardly the case. The steering wheel’s upward movement caused the test dummy’s skull to punch through the deployed airbag and smash into the steering wheel at those speeds, resulting in a high risk of facial fractures and severe brain injury.

Crashing at higher speeds also can impact a vehicle’s safety technology. Airbags are unable to deploy in time to protect the driver and/or passenger and improved structural designs are rendered useless.

Rising speed limits have cost nearly 37,000 lives the past quarter century. AAA and IIHS urge policymakers to factor in this danger from higher speeds when considering speed-limit changes.

Drivers often travel faster than posted speed limits, but they also go faster when officials increase limits to match those original travel speeds. Presently, 41 states allow speeds of 70 mph or higher on roadways, including eight states with maximum speeds of 80 mph or more on certain roads.

AAA and IIHS stringently believe the safety of road users should be considered when establishing speed limits. AAA recommends:

* States use engineering and traffic surveys when setting maximum speed limits and adopt limits that will degrade safety.
* Speed limits should not be raised only to manipulate traffic volume on a particular roadway.
* Policymakers also should consider infrastructure changes based on road type to calm traffic flow appropriately, so that posted speed limits are followed.

Facts prove speeding doesn’t enhance your hopes of reaching your destination any sooner. The odds of a crash greatly increase, as well as the impact it could have on your vehicle or life.

Don’t speed! It could cost you your life, or a large chunk of change from your bank account.

Cutline: FLY BY – A car is caught on a radar camera speeding on a highway. Driving above the speed limit not only can cost you money, it also can cost lives. Image: evgris. Adobe Stock.