

# Speed Humps – No!



From: "Road Access for Disabled Americans",  
www.digitalthreads.com/rada

Speed bumps slow down emergency vehicles. The maximum optimum response time for victims of sudden cardiac arrest is 4 minutes, at which time you have a 50-50 chance of survival. At 5 minutes, you have a 19% chance of survival. The average time for a fire to burn beyond its flashover point is 6 minutes.

In a study submitted to the City of Boulder, Colorado, it was determined that speed bumps would allow the death of 85 victims for every 1 they saved. They then assumed "a wildly optimistic posture" that still indicated speed bumps would cause 10 lives to be lost for every 1 saved.

In Gaithersburg, Maryland, a television station blamed speed bumps in the death of two boys in a fire.

A study for Austin, Texas, considered a 30 second delay in response time due to traffic calming devices. They estimated they would lose an additional 37 lives per year with patients of cardiac arrest. At best, only one pedestrian may be saved.

Unbeknownst to an Orange County, Florida, woman, she was airlifted by helicopter to a hospital. The fire-rescue report stated that she had fallen. The official story says that her injuries precluded an ambulance. But some neighbors think that the paramedics didn't want to drive over the nine speed humps in her neighborhood with her in the back.

Speed humps are usually installed in a series to be effective.

Heavy fire fighting vehicles cannot safely regain cruising speed between the humps.

Speed bumps increase air pollution and fuel usage. Research was carried out in Austria with 6 humps and a 40-kph speed limit over a mile stretch of road. Nitrogen oxide emissions increased 10 times, carbon monoxide 3 times, and carbon dioxide 25%. Fuel consumption rose 27%.

In Portland, Maine, speed bumps were installed along Stevens Avenue. Volatile organic compound emissions increased by 46%.

A study by the Transport Research Laboratory of the Department of Transportation, United Kingdom, showed that "Schemes with a 75 metre hump spacing...showed increases in CO and HC of around 70-80% and 70-100% respectively, and an increase in CO2 of around 50-60%."

Speed bumps harm the disabled and those with physical ailments. Cortney had a birth defect that caused brittle bones. One day her school bus hit a speed bump. Her arm and bones in her spine were broken.

The Commission on Disability at Berkeley wrote that "For some people with disabilities, the pain and injury

*"If you have a broken neck and need a fast smooth ambulance ride to the hospital, do you want to risk permanent paralysis or death from sudden slowing down for or bouncing over speed bumps?" – a Colorado Professional Engineer*



which can result from driving or riding over speed humps makes these 'traffic calming devices' into virtual barricades."

In the aviation community, some charitable flights with patients are given the identifier of "Compassion". These are flights like Mercy Mission, Angel Flight, etc. The reason for the identifier is to assist controllers in avoiding turbulence, even though they are not the priority handling "Lifeguard" flights. In a sense, with speed bumps, we are adding 'turbulence' to those less fortunate than most of us.

Speed bumps make snow removal difficult, as snowplow operators would have to raise their plows at the humps.

Speed bumps increase vehicle wear and tear. This applies not just to our personal vehicles, but also to emergency vehicles and buses. Speed bumps have caused fire equipment compartment doors to open and dump stored equipment onto the street, crack frames, break a truck tank, shear off a front axle assembly, and break body welds. A British bus company estimates that speed bumps cause it an additional 40,000 a year, with broken springs, skirting, exhausts, and a collapsed suspension. Sacramento, California, will not put bus routes on streets than contain speed humps.

What evidence do we have that vertical deflection devices have been tested and found safe for all persons with disability while traveling in a wide range of motor vehicles?

Speed bumps increase noise. The increased noise is due to additional braking, acceleration, and jarring truck beds. This especially holds true for larger vehicles.

Reportedly, although I'm still trying to confirm this with the city, there was an individual in Fort Collins, Colorado, who strongly pushed for speed bumps in her neighborhood. One of them was put in front of her home. She then successfully pushed to have the city spend thousands more to have that one moved because of the increased noise.

Speed bumps increase a community's liability for accidents associated with them. California courts have held those installing speed bumps liable for personal injuries resulting from faulty designs.

In one case, a bicyclist was awarded a \$125,000 settlement against a parking lot owner for an injury incurred after striking a speed bump.

Speed bumps increase neighborhood friction and road rage. Calling a speed hump a "traffic calming device" is worse than a misnomer or oxymoron. Are people calmed when others throw obstacles in their way?

Speed bumps can cause accidents. Amy sat in the back of a car to properly hold the flowers she had bought for her parent's anniversary. The car hit a speed bump. She was thrown from her seat, hitting her

*"People don't realize we have 500 gallons of water inside those fire engines. With that weight, we can't take bumps very fast. We have to come to almost a complete stop." – a Californian Firefighter [Some tankers have up to 2000 gallons.]*

head. She died about 4 months later as a result of the accident. Experimental devices placed on a street to protect children at local schools in Portland, Maine, resulted in an increase in accidents of 35%.

Speed bumps are retrogressive. Why install a technologically poor device that presents an additional obstruction and danger to community members?

Does your community have better uses for limited financial resources? Why spend thousands of dollars on speed bumps, when items such as road surfaces, pools, sewers, and landscaping need to be maintained? Do you want speed bumps, or is the money better spent on other items?

It punishes all for the transgressions of a few. Is it right to burden an entire community rather than the particular offenders? Check into whether or not off-duty sheriffs or private security guards could patrol the neighborhood. Although also costly, more paths and crosswalks could be utilized.

*"As a Firefighter/Paramedic for 15 years I know how hard it is to provide adequate care in a moving vehicle. Speed bumps make it almost impossible to do this. The ambulance either has to stop or treatment has to be postponed until after them." – from Santee, California*

As speed bumps are discriminating to the disabled, some consider the idea of voting on whether or not to install them invalid for discussion, equivalent to voting to segregate schools by race.

Bicyclists and motorcyclists are also physically impacted. Can you imagine the impact of an unwary motorcyclist hitting a speed bump? Or if snow is covering the speed bump sign or road? Imagine the lawsuit.

Speed bumps can cause accidental air bag deployment. One company confirmed four incidents of air bag deployment involving one of its models after striking speed bumps. Of the approximately 42 children killed by air bags, a clear majority has been in low speed accidents less than 15 miles per hour.

Speed bumps can injure emergency response members. One firefighter was awarded permanent disability status due to a cervical spine compression injury.

Yes, she was wearing a seat belt. Another firefighter, although returned to limited duty for ten months after a speed bump accident, was then awarded full disability due to head and neck injuries received.

Web Sites: For a site with many links pertaining to speed bumps, visit: [www.io.com/~bumper/ada.htm](http://www.io.com/~bumper/ada.htm). A well-researched report for Boulder, Colorado, is available at: <http://members.aol.com/raybowman/risk97/eval1.html>.

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Local Requirements: Check your local requirements. Where I live, the County Commissioners require 65% of the affected residents to approve a speed hump proposal. They also require 65% to remove them. Be aware of your local engineering guidelines and the associated expenses. Inquire as to who must meet the cost of installation. The humps must be correctly designed, painted, and signed.