

2674 SPEEDING: DRIVING TOO FAST FOR CONDITIONS UNDER § 346.57(3) OR AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING § 346.57(3)

Statutory Definition of the Crime

[Section 346.57(3)] [Ordinance _____, adopting § 346.57(3)]¹ of the Wisconsin Statutes, provides that no person shall drive a vehicle on a highway² at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the circumstances and that a person shall drive at an appropriate reduced speed when

[approaching and crossing (an intersection) (a railway grade crossing).]

[approaching and going around a curve.]

[approaching a hillcrest.]

[traveling upon any narrow or winding roadway.]

[passing (school children) (highway construction or maintenance workers) (pedestrians).]

[special hazard exists with regard to other traffic or by reason of highway or weather conditions.]

Burden of Proof

Before you may find the defendant guilty of this offense, the (identify prosecuting agency)³ must satisfy you to a reasonable certainty by evidence which is clear, satisfactory, and convincing that the following three elements were present.

Elements of the Offense That Must Be Proved

1. The defendant drove a vehicle⁴ on a highway.⁵

2. The defendant drove the vehicle at a speed⁶ greater than was reasonable and prudent under the conditions, taking into consideration the actual and potential hazards then existing.

[This element requires that the speed of the vehicle be controlled as necessary to avoid colliding with any (object) (person) (vehicle) (other conveyance) on or entering the highway in compliance with legal requirements and using due care.]

3. The defendant failed to drive at an appropriate reduced speed when
[approaching and crossing (an intersection) (a railway grade crossing).]
[approaching and going around a curve.]
[approaching a hillcrest.]
[traveling upon any narrow or winding roadway.]
[passing (school children) (highway construction or maintenance workers) (pedestrians).]
[special hazard exists with regard to other traffic or by reason of highway or weather conditions.]⁷

Appropriate reduced speed is a relative term and means less than the otherwise lawful speed. An appropriate reduced speed is that speed at which a person of ordinary intelligence and prudence would drive under the same or similar circumstances.⁸

Jury's Decision

If you are satisfied to a reasonable certainty by evidence which is clear, satisfactory, and convincing that all three elements of this offense have been proved, you should find the defendant guilty.

If you are not so satisfied, you must find the defendant not guilty.

COMMENT

Wis JI-Criminal 2674 was originally published in 1980 and revised in 1985, 1987, and 1995. This revision was approved by the Committee in June 2009 and involved adoption of a new format and nonsubstantive changes to the text.

With respect to the "justification" defense to speeding, see State v. Brown, 107 Wis.2d 44, 318 N.W.2d 370 (1982). Brown is summarized in Wis JI-Criminal 2672A Law Note: Justification Defense.

1. The use of brackets is intended to allow use of this instruction for cases charged either as violations of the state statutes or as violations of local ordinances in conformity with the statutes. Since ordinances may be adopted by a variety of governmental entities – county, city, town, etc. – the instruction refers only to "ordinance." Identifying the type of ordinance as, for example, a city ordinance may be helpful to the jury.

If a statutory violation was charged, the instruction would begin: "Section 346.57(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes is violated . . ."

If an ordinance violation was charged, the instruction would begin: "Ordinance _____, adopting section 346.57(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, is violated . . ."

2. Offenses defined in Chapter 346 apply exclusively to operation upon "highways" unless otherwise expressly provided. § 346.02(1). (An express provision does exist for reckless driving and operating under the influence offenses defined in §§ 346.62 and 346.63; § 346.61 provides that those statutes are applicable to "all premises held out to the public for use of their motor vehicles.")

The fact that the driving or operating took place on a highway is one that must be established before the defendant may be found guilty of this offense. However, the Committee concluded that in the typical case, it is not necessary to provide for the finding of this fact as a separate element of the crime. Rather, it is sufficient to combine it with the "drove or operated" element. However, in a case where the "highway" issue is contested, it may help clarify the issue for the jury if the instruction is modified to treat that fact as a separate element. Regarding the "on a highway" requirement, see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. I., and Wis JI-Criminal 2605.

3. The instruction has been revised to include a blank where the identity of the prosecuting agency can be provided: the State, the county, the municipality, etc.

4. If definition of "vehicle" is required, see Wis. Stat. § 340.01(74) which provides as follows:

"Vehicle" means every device in, upon or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except railroad trains. A snowmobile or electric personal assistive mobility device shall not be considered a vehicle except for purposes specifically applicable by statute.

5. See note 2, supra.

6. Regarding the measurement and estimation of speed, see note 7, Wis JI-Criminal 2676, and Wis JI-Criminal 2679, Radar Speed Measurement.

7. See Wis. Stat. § 346.57(3).

8. See Wis JI-Civil 1285.