

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, 1995, and 2010. This revision was approved by the Committee in June 2022; it added to the comment to reflect changes made by 2021 Wisconsin Act 115 [effective date: December 8, 2021].

This instruction is drafted for violations of § 346.57(3) where the penalty of forfeiture or fine applies. For violations of § 346.57(3) where criminal penalties may apply, see Wis JI-Criminal 2674A.

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.

Section 346.60 (3m) (a) 1. provides for doubling the forfeiture or fine for certain violations:

Except as provided in subd. 2., if an operator of a vehicle violates s. 346.57 (2), (3), (4) (d) to (h), or (5) where persons engaged in work in a highway maintenance or construction area, utility work area, or emergency or roadside response area are at risk from traffic or where sanitation workers are at risk from traffic and the operator knows or should know that sanitation workers are present, any applicable minimum and maximum forfeiture specified in sub. (2) or (3) for the violation shall be doubled.

Section 340.01(22e) provides that “Highway maintenance or construction area” means the entire section of roadway between the first advance warning sign of highway maintenance or construction work and an “END ROAD WORK” or “END CONSTRUCTION” sign or, in the case of a moving vehicle engaged in the maintenance or construction work, that section of roadway where traffic may return to its normal flow without impeding such work.

Section 340.01(73m) provides that “Utility work area” means the entire section of roadway between the first advance warning sign of work on a utility facility, as defined in s. 30.40 (19), or on a high-voltage transmission line, as defined in s. 30.40 (3r), and an “END UTILITY WORK” sign, where the signs are

placed according to rules of the department, or, in the case of a moving vehicle engaged in work on such a utility facility or high-voltage transmission line, that section of roadway where traffic may return to its normal flow without impeding such work.

Section 340.01(15pu) provides that “Emergency or roadside response area” means the section of roadway within 500 feet of an authorized emergency vehicle giving a visible signal or a tow truck displaying flashing red lamps, as required by s. 347.26 (6) (b).

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.