

STATEWIDE BRIEFING FOR POLICE CHIEFS

Speed Enforcement Capability and Accountability

Summary of agency survey results • 200 responses • 21 New Jersey counties

200 Agency responses	82% Say speeding is a significant problem	20% Have a formal written strategy	72% Cite staffing as a top barrier
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Purpose of this briefing

This report summarizes results of the Speed Enforcement Capability and Accountability Survey completed by New Jersey police agencies between May 5 and July 15, 2026. It is written for chiefs and command staff. The survey asked whether agencies treat speeding as a public-safety problem, how they deploy enforcement, whether supervisors and data actually drive that work, and what stands in the way.

The picture is consistent across agency size. Most departments recognize speeding as a real threat and report some daily or weekly directed enforcement. Far fewer have a written strategy, crash-timed deployment, supervisory review beyond informal checks, or systems that can tell leadership whether the work is changing driver behavior. That gap, not a lack of concern, is the central finding.

Headline findings

- 164 of 200 agencies (82%) have identified speeding as a significant public-safety problem in their jurisdiction. Only 41 (20%) have translated that concern into a formal written strategy. Another 132 (66%) rely on an informal approach.
- Nearly half of agencies (47%) say speed enforcement is a clear and ongoing priority, and 52% report directed speed enforcement daily outside grant mobilizations. At the same time, 43% of agencies describe their program as “active, but inconsistent.”
- Only 39% routinely time enforcement to when and where speed-related crashes actually occur. Forty-one percent do not regularly review speed-related crash data.
- Agencies do not believe they have closed the deterrence gap: 42% say current enforcement is not sufficient to change driver behavior; 31% say they are not doing enough to deter speeding before serious crashes; 25% are unsure.
- The three dominant barriers are staffing shortages (72%), competing calls for service (69%), and officer motivation or culture (52%). Equipment and data gaps matter, but they are secondary.
- When asked what would most improve results, agencies most often named more dedicated time and people (traffic units, patrol capacity, uninterrupted enforcement time), followed by motivation/culture change, equipment (LIDAR, speed trailers/signs), and data tools.

The key operational insight is that agencies are not neglecting speeding. Instead, they are tackling it through complaint-based actions, undirected patrol periods, and informal oversight. This approach generates activity but does not consistently lead to crash-preventive, lasting deterrence. To effectively

close this gap, agencies need clear written expectations, consistent supervisory follow-up, and dedicated resources.

Who responded

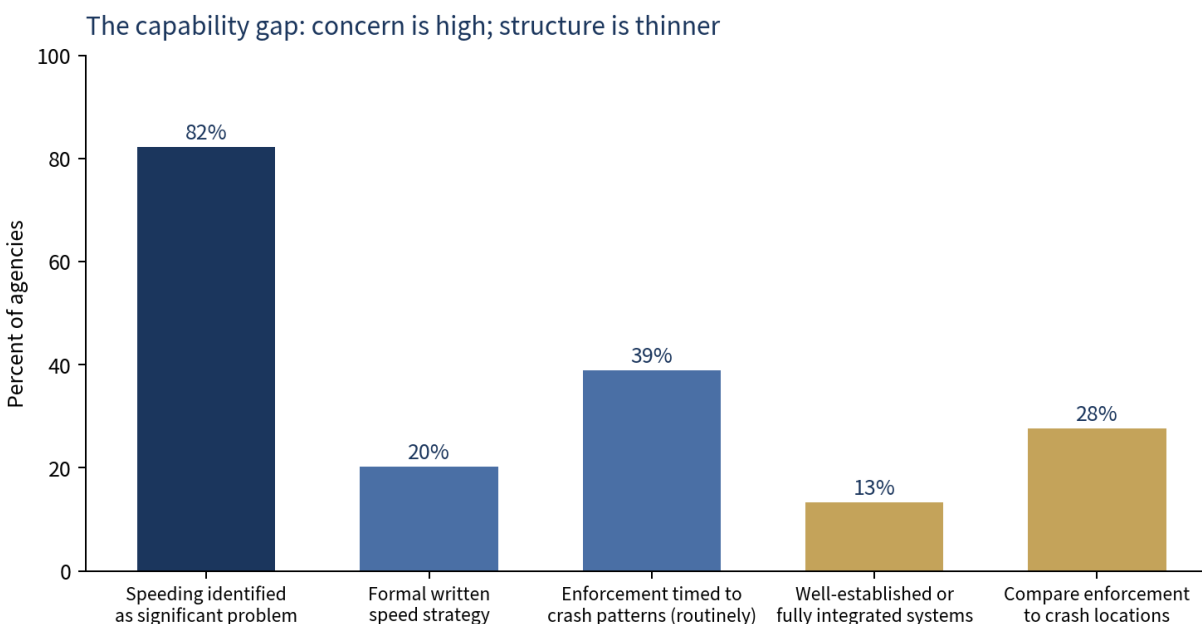
Two hundred responses were received from agencies in 21 counties. One hundred thirty-four respondents named their agency. Four named agencies submitted two responses; figures below treat each completed survey as one agency response. Small departments are well represented.

Agency size (sworn officers)	Responses	Share
1–25 officers	86	43.0%
26–50 officers	58	29.0%
51–100 officers	41	20.5%
100 or more officers	15	7.5%
Total	200	100%

Traffic safety responsibility is assigned to a supervisor or commander in 76% of agencies and is not formally assigned in 24%. That assignment gap shows up later in the accountability results.

County coverage (normalized): Bergen 28, Monmouth 24, Camden 23, Atlantic 15, Ocean 14, Gloucester 14, Burlington 12, Morris 10, Somerset 9, Warren 9, Cape May 7, Middlesex 6, Hunterdon 5, Passaic 4, Essex 5, Union 5, plus smaller counts from Cumberland, Sussex, Mercer, Hudson, and Salem.

Problem recognition versus strategy



The survey documents a recognition-to-structure drop-off:

Capability	Agencies	Share
Speeding identified as a significant problem	164	82%
Any strategy (formal or informal)	173	87%
Informal strategy only	132	66%
Formal written strategy	41	20%
No strategy	27	13%
Identify recurring problem corridors and act on them	143	71%
Identify corridors, but action is limited/inconsistent	45	23%

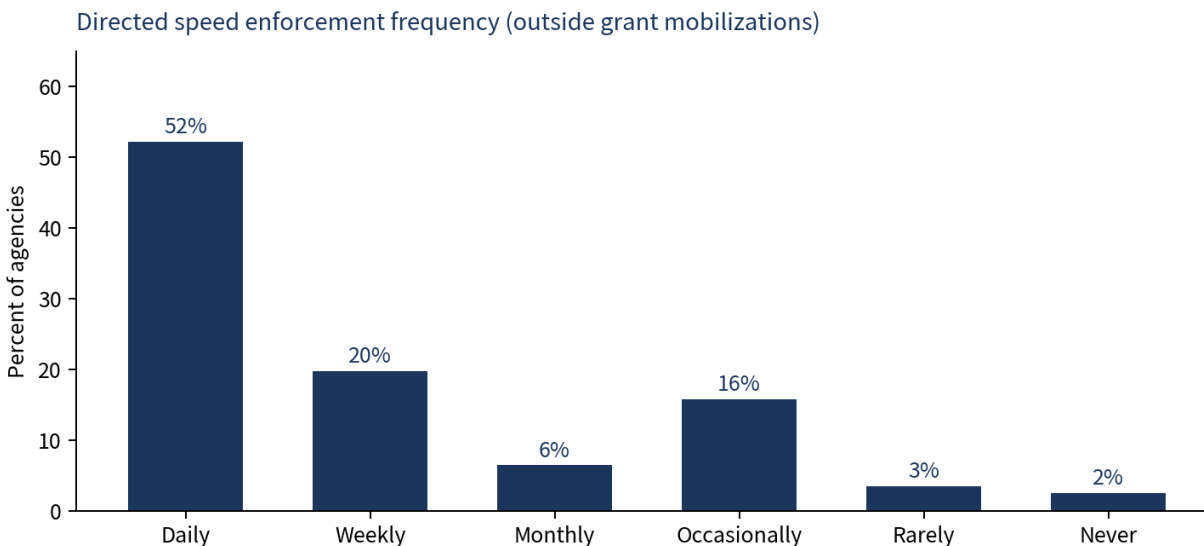
Among the 164 agencies that call speeding a significant problem, 120 still use only an informal approach, and 5 have no strategy at all. Concern is widespread. Codified, inspectable strategy is not.

How agencies describe today's posture

Statement that best describes speed enforcement today	Share
It is a clear and ongoing priority	47%
It is emphasized at times, but not consistently	31%
It is mostly reactive to complaints or crashes	20%
It is rarely a meaningful operational focus	1.5%

Approach to the problem itself: 43% call their approach proactive and data-informed; 27% proactive but not data-informed; 27% mostly reactive; 3% minimal or inconsistent. In other words, about seven in ten agencies claim a proactive stance, but only four in ten say that stance is actually data-informed.

How enforcement is actually deployed



Directed work is more common than the strategy numbers suggest. Outside grant-funded mobilizations, 52% conduct directed speed enforcement daily, and another 20% do so weekly. About 28% do it only

occasionally, monthly, rarely, or never. Frequency is not the same as focus: daily, complaint-driven details interrupted by calls for service do not constitute a program.

Typical deployment methods (select all that apply)

Method	Agencies	Share
Complaint-driven	180	90%
Routine patrol activities	166	83%
Special directed patrols ordered by supervisors	163	82%
High-risk corridors or known problem locations	129	65%
Grant-funded details	86	43%
Crash-driven	71	36%
No structured deployment	4	2%

Complaint-driven work is nearly universal. Crash-driven work is not. That imbalance matches the finding that citizen complaints (96%) and officer observations (86%) guide enforcement far more often than crash reports (45%).

Eighty-three percent say they routinely send officers to locations already identified as speeding problems. Only 39% say they routinely conduct enforcement at the times and locations where speed-related crashes are most likely. Another 47% do so only “sometimes.” Problem-location deployment is common. Problem-time deployment is not.

Accountability, supervision, and systems

This is the weakest part of the statewide picture, and the part chiefs can change without new statute or new headcount.

Accountability practice	Share
Supervisors expected to review/direct — routinely	39%
Supervisors expected to review/direct — only informally	40%
Supervisors not expected to review or direct	20%
Directed patrol assignments used	92%
Supervisor review of deployment locations	51%
Review of speeding citations or warnings	34%
Compare enforcement activity to crash locations	28%
After-action review after enforcement initiatives	23%

Monitoring systems:

Systems to monitor meaningful speed enforcement	Share
Fully integrated and consistently applied	2%
Well-established systems	11%
Moderate systems	34%

Limited systems	38%
No systems in place	14%

Thirteen percent of agencies have well-established or fully integrated systems. More than half have limited systems or none. Directed assignments exist on paper in nine of ten agencies; closed-loop review against crashes exists in fewer than three of ten.

Agencies' own description of their program tracks that pattern: 26% structured, supervised, and data-driven; 43% active but inconsistent; 23% present but mostly reactive; 7% limited or minimal.

Data and information used to guide work

Information used to guide speed enforcement	Share
Citizen complaints	96%
Officer observations	86%
Speed studies or roadway data	67%
Crash reports	45%
Calls for service	45%
Do not regularly use data	1.5%

Regular review of speed-related crash data is the clearest data gap: 41% do not review it; 30% review it but action is limited or inconsistent; only 25% both review it and act on it. Speed studies are more common than crash analysis. Complaints are almost universal. A program steered by complaints will look busy and still miss the corridors and hours that produce serious injury.

Tools, training demand, and public messaging

Tools currently in use

Tool or resource	Share
Radar	98%
Speed trailer or driver-feedback sign	80%
Directed patrol staffing	64%
Data analysis support	44%
Dedicated traffic unit	42%
LIDAR	34%
Supervisory review process	31%
Written deployment plans	12%

Hardware is not the primary shortage. Radar is nearly universal and speed trailers are common. What is scarce is written deployment plans, supervisory review processes, LIDAR, and a dedicated traffic unit. That matches the training request list.

Training topics agencies say would most help

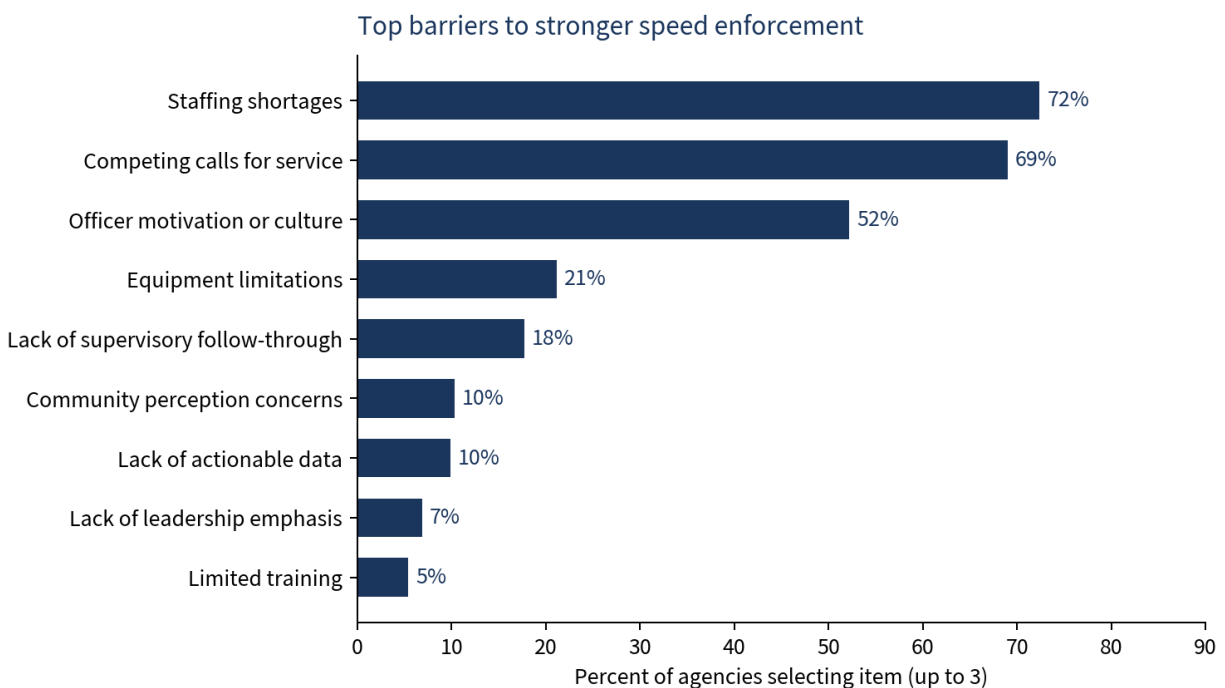
Training topic requested	Share
Speed management strategies	59%
Radar	53%
Speed trailer/feedback sign operation	46%
Data analysis support	46%
Written deployment plans	34%
Supervisory review process	30%
LIDAR	28%

Public communication

Only 25% regularly tell the public that speeding enforcement is an active safety priority. Half do so only occasionally; 25% rarely or never. When enforcement happens, 39% consistently explain that the purpose is to prevent crashes, injuries, and deaths; 42% do so only sometimes. Methods in use: social media 76%, roadside boards/trailers 62%, community meetings 41%, publicized campaigns 37%, press releases 20%. Nine percent use no public messaging.

Eighty-four percent say they would benefit from additional speed-related education and public messaging resources. Communication is an easy, low-cost lift relative to staffing, and most agencies want help with it.

Barriers chiefs named



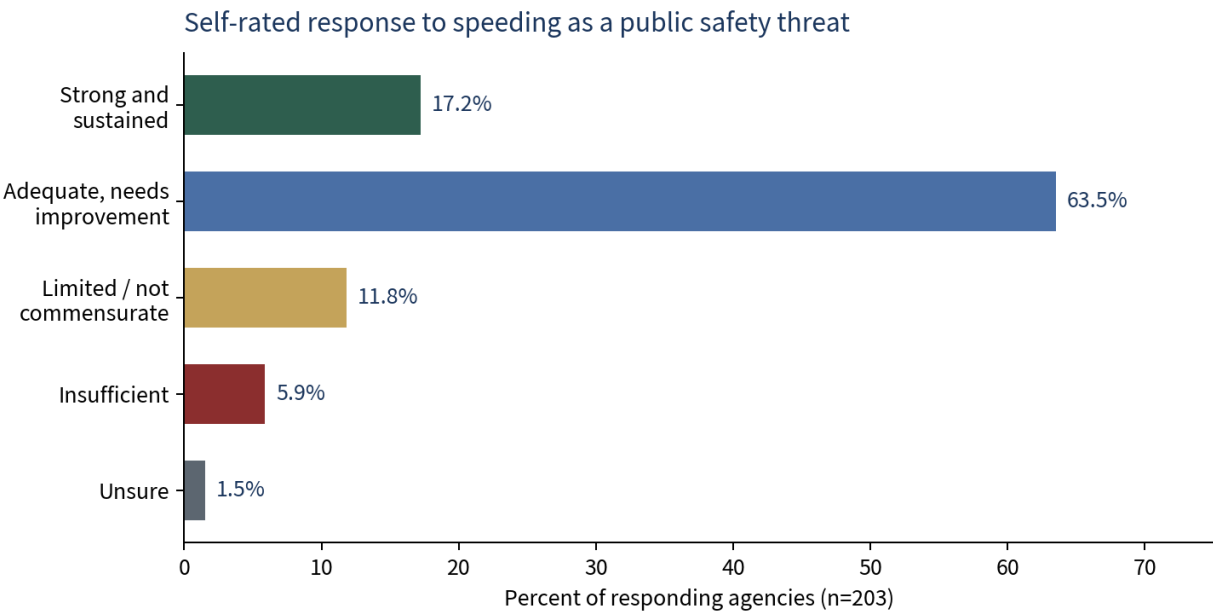
Respondents could select up to three barriers. Three items dominate by a wide margin:

- Staffing shortages: 72%. Named across every size category (67% of mid-size agencies to 80% of agencies with 100+ officers). Small agencies lack a traffic officer; large agencies cannot pull patrol from call load.
- Competing calls for service: 69%. Highest in larger agencies (80–83% of agencies with 51 or more officers). Enforcement is what happens when the radio is quiet.
- Officer motivation or culture: 52%. This is not a small-town problem. It appears across all size bands and in free-text responses from younger officers, including reluctance to write moving violations, “be the nice guy,” and the effect of evaluation/promotional limits on counting enforcement activity.

Secondary barriers: equipment limitations 21%, lack of supervisory follow-through 18%, community perception concerns 10%, lack of actionable data 10%, lack of leadership emphasis 7%, limited training 5%.

Free-text additions included court/prosecutor downgrading of summonses, legislation limiting the use of tickets and arrest activity in evaluations and promotions, congestion that makes stops unpopular, the cost of speed-feedback signs, and the fact that traffic units carry too many other duties.

How agencies rate themselves



Self-rating of current response to speeding	Share
Strong and sustained	17%
Adequate, but needs improvement	64%
Limited and not commensurate with the problem	12%
Insufficient	6%
Unsure	1.5%

Is current enforcement sufficient to change driver behavior? Yes 43%, no 42%, unsure 15%. Is the agency doing enough to deter speeding before serious crashes or deaths? Yes 45%, no 31%, unsure 25%.

Read together: a large majority call their response only “adequate,” and a majority either say they are not doing enough or are not sure. Confidence is highest among the 17% who rate themselves strong and sustained. Almost none of the agencies that rate themselves insufficient or limited also claim they are doing enough.

What agencies say they need most

The final open-ended question asked for the single most critical change or resource. Two hundred agencies answered. Themes, with approximate counts of responses that mentioned each idea:

Need named in open-ended responses	Approx. mentions
Staffing, manpower, dedicated traffic officers/units	85
Officer motivation, culture, buy-in, willingness to write	38
Equipment and technology (LIDAR, trailers, signs)	33
Funding or grants	21
Data, analytics, hot-spot tools, deployment plans	14
Supervision, leadership emphasis, follow-through	13
Court, prosecutor, or statewide policy constraints	12
Training and certification	10
Engineering / traffic calming	4

Representative themes from chiefs and commanders, paraphrased:

- “Uninterrupted time dedicated to speed enforcement”; enforcement fitted into leftover patrol time does not change driver behavior.
- “Patrol officers need to conduct more radar enforcement”; traffic units cannot carry the load alone.
- Leadership emphasis and culture: officers want to be perceived as the “nice guy”; COVID-era and political pressure, plus limits on using performance in evaluations, have shifted norms.
- Equipment is a real constraint in smaller towns (cost of feedback signs, aging radar, few LIDAR-certified officers), but most respondents with equipment still name staffing and culture first.
- Several agencies asked for statewide help: grant access for small departments, messaging resources, and relief from policies that discourage holding officers accountable for enforcement activity.
- A minority argued that engineering and traffic calming are required because enforcement is only a temporary fix on problem roads.

Implications for chiefs

Three conclusions follow from the numbers.

1. Activity is not the same as a program. Daily details, complaint response, and radar on the belt are widespread. Written strategy, crash-timed deployment, citation review, after-action review, and monitoring systems are not. Chiefs who only ask “how many speed details did we run?” will miss the quality problem the survey documents.

2. The binding constraints are capacity and culture, in that order. Staffing and calls for service explain why enforcement is inconsistent. Motivation and culture explain why agencies don't use

available minutes. Equipment and training requests are real and should be funded, but they will not substitute for directed time and supervisory expectation.

3. Supervision is the lever most chiefs already own. Forty percent of agencies expect supervisors to direct this work only informally; 20% do not expect it at all. Only 12% have written deployment plans. A chief can issue a written speed-enforcement expectation, name the corridors and hours from crash data, require squad-level follow-through, and review results against crashes.

Recommended actions

These actions are scaled for both a 20-officer agency and a 200-officer agency.

- 1. Put a one-page written speed strategy on paper.** Name the problem locations, the crash-based times, the expected weekly directed work, who reviews it, and how you'll inform the public. Informal strategy is what 66% already have; it is not inspectable.
- 2. Steer by crashes, not only by complaints.** Forty-one percent of agencies do not regularly review speed-related crash data. Require a quarterly overlay of speed-related crashes, citations/warnings, and directed-patrol hours. Deploy to the hours that produce harm, not only the streets that produce phone calls.
- 3. Make supervisory review routine, not informal.** Squad supervisors should assign locations, look at the product (stops, warnings, summonses), and compare it to the crash map. Informal expectation is the most common current model and tracks with “active but inconsistent” programs.
- 4. Protect a sliver of capacity.** When a full traffic unit isn't possible, carve out directed speed enforcement time that isn't the first thing canceled for routine calls. For example: grant details, a rotating “traffic car,” or a scheduled corridor block each shift. Agencies of every size said leftover time is not enough.
- 5. Treat culture as an operational problem.** More than half of agencies named officer motivation or culture as a top barrier. Brief why speed kills, require the actual offense rather than a downgraded equipment ticket when the facts support it, and have supervisors ride with and recognize officers who do the work. Do not outsource this to the traffic unit.
- 6. Say out loud that the purpose is crash prevention.** Most agencies already use social media and roadside boards. Only one in four regularly tells the public that speed enforcement is a safety priority, and only 39% consistently explain the life-safety purpose at the stop. Pair every detail with a short public message. Eighty-four percent want more messaging resources; use what you have now.
- 7. Ask the State for what local budgets cannot buy.** Shared speed-trailer pools, LIDAR and radar certification seats, small-agency grant set-asides, crash-data products that do not require a crime analyst, and model public-messaging kits. Those were the most common resource requests after people.

How to use this report inside your agency

- Share the headline findings and the self-rating table with command staff and the patrol/ traffic supervisors.
- Score your own agency against the six capability items in the gap chart (problem identified, written strategy, crash-timed deployment, monitoring systems, enforcement-to-crash comparison, public messaging).
- Pick two items you do not currently do well; almost every agency has at least two. Build a plan, assign ownership, and establish a 90-day feedback loop.

- If you submitted an email address on the survey, retain this briefing as the statewide context for your own results.

Notes on the data

Source file: Speed Enforcement Capability and Accountability Survey (Responses). Field period: May 5–July 15, 2026. N = 200 completed responses. Percentages are of all 200 responses unless noted. Multi-select items sum to more than 100%. Open-ended “most critical need” counts are theme codes, not exclusive categories; one answer can touch more than one theme.

This briefing does not identify individual agencies. It is intended for circulation among New Jersey police chiefs and command staff.

End of briefing

Prepared as a statewide summary of submitted survey responses for use by police chiefs and command staff. Please contact the authors for assistance in any of these categories.

Thank you for participating in this survey

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