

Drivers opposed to speed limit change

NEW YORK (AP) — A majority of Americans frequently drive faster than 55 mph on highways, but most oppose changing the nationwide speed limit, according to a Media General-Associated Press poll.

Eighty-five percent of the 1,365 adults in the nationwide telephone poll said they had exceeded the federally-mandated 55 mph speed limit, and 56 percent of them said they did so at least half of the time, according to the poll.

Nevertheless, 54 percent of the respondents opposed changing the 55 mph speed limit, which was mandated by Congress in 1974 and is facing increasing opposition. Forty-four percent said the limit should be increased, 1 percent said it should be decreased, and 1 percent wasn't sure.

Not surprisingly, slower drivers were more likely than faster drivers to oppose changing the highway speed limit. Eight in 10 of those who rarely exceeded 55 mph opposed a change, while the

speeders were evenly split on the issue.

In the West, where long, empty stretches of highway seem endless at 55 mph, a 56 percent majority favored increasing the speed limit. Only 35 percent of Easterners, 39 percent of Midwesterners and 47 percent of Southerners favored an increase.

The 55 mph speed limit was imposed as a fuel conservation measure following the Middle East oil embargo. But with supplies plentiful and prices low, there has been an increased effort to have it repealed.

Earlier this month, President Reagan endorsed "in principle" the repeal of the nation's 55 mph speed limit to allow states to set their own speed laws.

Supporters of the speed limit cite safety reasons for keeping the speed limit at 55 mph.

Respondents in the Media General-Associated Press poll included a random, scientific sampling of 1,365 adults across the country June 20-28.

Crash

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International Airport's worst air disaster.

Sixteen houses burned, 10 of them destroyed by flames and/or falling wreckage.

Fire Battalion Chief Gordon Pearson said damage was estimated at \$2.7 million. A sheriff's spokesman said 10 residents, five firefighters and a deputy received minor injuries.

Greg Colvett of the coroner's office said at a command post in Cerritos, 20 miles southeast of Los Angeles, "There's no confirmed (dead) on the ground. It's just too much of

a mess . . . We're talking bits and pieces of everything."

Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block, on his first tour of the scene Monday, said, "It's complete devastation. Until you see it, it's hard to visualize what the level of destruction was."

Michael Riddle, a coroner's senior investigator, said, "Two or three weeks down the road, we'll probably have a judge declare some of these (missing) people dead, whether we prove them dead or not. Our biggest hassle will be to find out how many people were in the houses and separate the ones who were home from the passengers."

Investigators from the National

Transportation Safety Board recovered the jetliner's cockpit voice recorder, NTSB spokesman Ira Furman said.

The voice recorder will be tested in Washington, "and if it's functioning they'll assemble a team to listen to it," Furman said.

The flight data recorder was recovered Monday in the rubble of a house that was destroyed, said Capt. Harry Oversby of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Departments.

Lauber said he understood that when the crash occurred, the jet was in the Los Angeles airport's Terminal Control Area, or TCA, at an elevation of 6,000 to 7,000 feet. He said no aircraft is supposed to enter

the area without specific clearance from approach controllers.

The NTSB was trying to determine "whether the small plane was in the TCA," Lauber said, adding that his understanding they were in touch with anyone "to obtain the required permission."

The Federal Aviation Administration said earlier the smaller plane was flying under visual flight rules, which means it was not under direct radio control.

Mayor Tom Bradley said, "This is a terrible tragedy. I trust that a thorough examination by the federal government of how future air collisions can be prevented

Victims

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terminate the citizenship of two other passengers listed as traveling with Americans.

Aeromexico's chief spokesman, Enrique Gutierrez, said seven teams of Mexican technicians and inspectors went to Washington and Los Angeles to assist the National Transportation Safety Board and Federal

Aviation Administration in the investigation.

One team was to help identify victims' remains, which were being sent to the University of Southern California, Gutierrez said. Once identified, the bodies of Mexican victims will be returned home, he said.

The head of Aeromexico's national employees' union, in a statement carried by the Excelsior

national news wire, said investigators must determine if California flight controllers treated the Aeromexico plane with the same care "that the government of Mexico (guarantees) to planes of whatever nationality."

Reves, however, said there was insufficient information yet to assign blame.

"There is a new phenomenon in

the United States of this form of 'hobby' flying," Reves said in a telephone interview.

"It can be very risky because of such tremendous congestion, and add to that these men who like to out and fly their planes, and they do not have full knowledge of the rules of the air lanes," he said.

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