

# facts

## World report on road traffic injury prevention - Recommendations

The *World report on road traffic injury prevention* provides recommendations on how to improve road safety. These recommendations should be considered as flexible guidelines for adaptation to local circumstances, and should be applied across a wide range of sectors and disciplines.

### 1. Identify a lead agency in government to guide the national road traffic safety effort

Each country needs a lead agency on road safety. This agency should engage all significant groups within the country concerned with road safety. It should have the authority and responsibility to make decisions, control resources and coordinate efforts by all sectors of government – including health, transport, education and the police. The lead agency should be adequately financed and should be publicly accountable for its actions.

Many different models of lead agency can be effective but each should be tailored to the country's own circumstances. For example, the agency might be a designated, stand-alone bureau, or a committee or cabinet representing several different government agencies. It might undertake projects itself or delegate work to provincial and local governments, research institutes or professional associations.

### 2. Assess the problem, policies, institutional settings and capacity relating to road traffic injury

An important element in addressing road safety is ascertaining the magnitude of the problem and how countries are able to deal with it. This entails assessing the number of traffic deaths, injuries and crashes, as well as understanding which road users are most at risk, which geographic areas are most affected and contributing risk factors such as poor road conditions or unenforced drink-driving regulations.

Useful information can often be obtained from police, ministries of health or transport, health care facilities, insurance companies, motor vehicle manufacturers, or government agencies. Data should

comply with international standards and should be collected in simple, cost-effective information systems. It should be shared widely among relevant authorities and concerned groups.

Where available, data on the economic impact of road traffic injuries should be collected and disseminated to help increase awareness of the scale of the problem.

### 3. Prepare a national road safety strategy and plan of action

Each country should prepare a road safety strategy that involves transport, health, education and law enforcement agencies, among others. The strategy should call on the expertise of road safety scientists, engineers, urban and regional planners and health professionals. It should take into account the needs of all road users—including pedestrians, drivers and passengers in cars, trucks, two- or three- wheeled motorized and non-motorized vehicles, and users of public transport. It should involve groups from government, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, the mass media and the general public.

A national road safety strategy should have sufficient funding to develop, implement, manage, monitor and evaluate actions over at least five years. Once the road safety strategy is prepared, a national action plan—which specifies actions, time-frames, and resource allocation to implement the strategy—should be developed.

### 4. Allocate financial and human resources to address the problem

Well-targeted investment of financial and human resources can reduce road traffic injuries and deaths considerably. Information about other countries' experiences is useful in assessing the costs and benefits of specific interventions, and in setting priorities for the use of scarce financial and human resources.



Where there is a lack of expertise in developing and implementing effective road safety programmes, appropriate training in fields such as statistical analysis, road design, trauma care, urban and regional planning, and health planning should be a priority. International networks and conferences provide valuable opportunities to exchange knowledge, establish alliances and potential partnerships, and strengthen country capacity. Efforts should be made to increase the involvement of representatives from low-income and middle-income countries in setting global and regional agendas for road safety at these and other forums. Possible income sources to finance these and other investments in road safety include fuel taxation, road and parking charges, vehicle registration fees and fines for traffic violations.

## **5. Implement specific actions to prevent road traffic crashes, minimize injuries and their consequences and evaluate the impact of these actions**

Specific actions to prevent road traffic crashes and to minimize their consequences should be based on sound evidence and analysis of road traffic injuries. They should be culturally appropriate and tested locally. There is no standard package of interventions suitable for all contexts and countries. However, all countries can follow several good practices.

These practices include setting and enforcing laws requiring seat-belts and child restraints for all motor vehicle occupants, and helmets for riders of bicycles and motorized two-wheelers. Appropriate speed limits should be set and enforced. Blood alcohol concentration limits should be established and enforced using random breath-testing at sobriety checkpoints. Law enforcement programmes should be reinforced with public information and education campaigns.

Daytime running lights should be required for two-wheeled vehicles and obligatory daytime running lights for four-wheeled vehicles should be considered. Motor vehicles should be designed for crashworthiness to protect occupants and vulnerable road users.

The management of existing road infrastructure to promote safety is essential. Safety features should be incorporated into land-use and transport planning, and new road projects should be subject to road safety audits.

The chain of help for road crash victims should be strengthened, from care at the crash scene to treatment at the health facility and on through rehabilitation.

## **6. Support the development of national capacity and international cooperation**

Several United Nations agencies and other inter-governmental organizations are active in promoting road safety. However, there is little large-scale, coordinated planning among them, and no single agency has the responsibility to ensure such coordination. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly assigned to ensure a firm, collective commitment from the UN family and other organizations to create and implement a global plan for road safety.

The donor community urgently needs to dedicate more resources to helping low-income and middle-income countries improve road safety. Currently, the level of funding and support given to road safety is far below that allocated for other health problems of comparable magnitude.

Finally, international nongovernmental organizations and the private sector should help spark action and raise awareness locally and globally, as committed employers and socially responsible corporate entities.

