

GLOBAL STATUS ON ROAD SAFETY-FACT SHEET

A global problem

Over 90% of the deaths on the roads occur in low-income and middle-income countries, which have only 48% of the world's registered vehicles.

High proportion of vulnerable road users

Pedestrians, cyclists, and riders of motorized two-wheelers and their passengers (who are collectively known as "vulnerable road users") account for around 46% of global road traffic deaths. This proportion is greater in low-income countries than in high-income countries.

Speed

Controlling speed is an important way of reducing road traffic injuries, particularly among pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Less than one-third of countries have taken necessary measures - for example low-speed zones - to reduce speed in urban areas.

Drinking and driving

Drinking and driving increases the risk of a crash, which could result in death or serious injury. WHO recommends a blood alcohol concentration limit of 0.05 gram per decilitre (g/dl) for adult drivers. Less than half of countries worldwide have drink-driving laws set at this limit.

Helmet use

Wearing a good-quality helmet can reduce the risk of death from a road crash by almost 40% and the risk of severe injury by over 70%. Only 40% of countries have motorcycle helmet laws that cover both riders and passengers, and mandate quality standards for helmets.

Seat-belt use

Wearing a seat-belt reduces the risk of death among front-seat passengers by 40-65% and can reduce deaths among rear-seat car occupants by 25-75%. Only 57% of countries require seat-belts to be used in cars by both front-seat and rear-seat passengers.

Child restraint use

The use of child restraints (infant seats, child seats and booster seats) can reduce deaths of children by between 54% and 80% in the event of a crash. Less than half of all countries have laws requiring the use of child restraints in vehicles.

Pre-hospital care

Prompt, good-quality pre-hospital care can save many people injured in road traffic crashes. About 76% of countries have pre-hospital care systems, ranging from those with highly qualified staff to those that rely on bystanders. Around the world there are about 90 different pre-hospital care access telephone numbers that need to be harmonized into one global number or a few regional numbers.

The potential for progress

Road traffic injuries can be prevented. A number of countries, mainly high-income countries, have made significant progress over the last few decades in reducing their road traffic death rates. But more can be done to reduce these rates further.

Now is the time to act

Road traffic injuries are predicted to become the fifth leading cause of death by 2030, resulting in 2.4 million deaths a year. This projected ranking would be the result of an increase in road traffic deaths and reductions in deaths due to other health conditions.