



DISCUSSION DOCUMENT
SUMMARY

**HAVE YOUR SAY ON
OUR NEXT ROAD
SAFETY STRATEGY**

AUGUST 2009

The government intends to release the new road safety strategy, *Safer Journeys*, in December 2009.

But first we want to hear what you think.

This summary provides an overview of the *Safer Journeys* discussion document.

For a copy of the full discussion document, to make a submission or take part in our online discussion about *Safer Journeys*, go to www.saferjourneys.govt.nz or email saferjourneys@transport.govt.nz

Alternatively you can write to:

Safer Journeys
Ministry of Transport
PO 3175
WELLINGTON 6140

The deadline for submissions is Friday 2 October 2009

NEW ZEALAND'S PROGRESS IN IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY

We have made some major gains in road safety – the road toll has more than halved since its peak in 1973, while at the same time kilometres travelled have more than doubled. But despite these gains, around 400 New Zealanders are killed on our roads every year.

Alongside them almost 2,900 people are seriously injured. We also know that each year approximately 13,000 New Zealanders suffer minor injuries as a result of road crashes. These statistics show we have more work to do.

PROPOSED VISION AND THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH



Our proposed long-term road safety vision is:

A safe road system that is increasingly free of road deaths and serious injuries

This vision acknowledges that while we cannot prevent all road crashes from happening, we can prevent many of them.

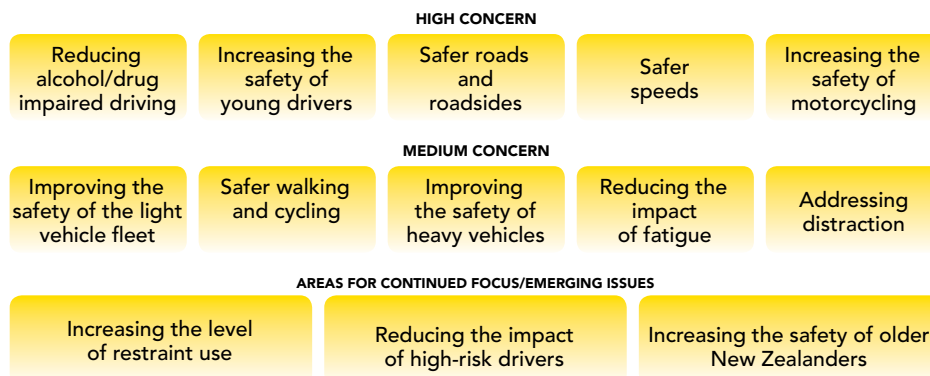
To achieve our vision we propose a system-wide approach to road safety. This would focus on improving all parts of the road system that impact on safety (ie the road, the vehicle, the travel speed and the road user).

This approach recognises that improving road safety is everybody's responsibility. It requires road users, road authorities, planners, policy makers, enforcers and vehicle manufacturers and importers to all work together.

WHAT SHOULD OUR ROAD SAFETY PRIORITIES BE?

Our research shows five major areas of concern and five areas where we could do much better.

We also need to focus on three other current or emerging areas. These are the proposed priority areas:



While there are more than 60 initiatives proposed in the discussion document, it is not the intention to introduce anything like that number. The purpose of this document is to outline all possible actions and have a public discussion about which are most important to adopt.

This is your roading system and we want to hear your ideas about how we can make it safer. We must strike a balance that meets the expectations of road users who have widely differing views about how many road rules there should be and what constitutes a road safety initiative. We must also consider the resources available and the kinds of interventions that can make a real difference to the road toll.



HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE IMPACT OF ALCOHOL/DRUG IMPAIRED DRIVING?

- In 2008, 31 percent of fatal crashes and 21 percent of serious injury crashes were caused by drivers who were under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. These crashes resulted in 119 deaths, 572 serious injuries and 1,715 minor injuries.
- In 2008 it is estimated that the social cost of crashes where alcohol/drugs were a factor was \$833 million.

Reduce the legal adult blood alcohol limit (BAC) to 50 mg alcohol per 100 ml blood (BAC 0.05)

The alcohol limit for drivers over 20 is 80 mg alcohol per 100 ml of blood (BAC 0.08). This allows the average male to consume around six standard drinks within 90 minutes. This means that people can legally drive while being significantly impaired.

Overseas experience shows major improvements can be made to road safety by lowering this to 50 mg (BAC 0.05).

If the legal blood alcohol limit is lowered, then introduce infringement penalties for offences between BAC 0.05 and BAC 0.079

Maintain the current legal blood alcohol limit and increase the severity of penalties (this is an alternative to lowering the BAC to 0.05)

Instead of lowering the legal limit, we could make the penalties for breaking the current limit more severe. Experience shows that this may not be as effective as lowering the blood alcohol limit.

Inform New Zealanders about the impact of alcohol on driving

Giving people better information about how their ability to drive is affected by increasing levels of alcohol consumption would help them to make better decisions about drink driving.

Introduce a zero BAC limit for certain drivers (drivers under 20 years, adults without a full licence, and commercial drivers)

Address recidivism (repeat drink driving) through a zero BAC for recidivists and move towards mandatory alcohol interlocks

We could make the drink driving limit zero for repeat drink drivers, and require them to have alcohol interlocks (these are breathalyser devices that prevent a car from being started if the driver is over a set alcohol limit).

Promote the use of alcohol interlocks

We could also encourage other drivers to use alcohol interlocks, such as commercial drivers, employers and parents of young drivers.

Random roadside testing for illegal drugs (as technology allows)

This would be similar to the current random testing for alcohol.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF YOUNG DRIVERS?

- In 2008, young drivers were involved in around 37 percent of all fatal crashes and 37 percent of all serious injury crashes.
- Crashes where young drivers were deemed at fault resulted in 122 deaths and 800 serious injuries in 2008. The social cost of these crashes was approximately \$1.1 billion.
- Our 15-17 year olds have the highest road death rate in the OECD.

Raise the driving age to 16 or 17 and extend the length of the learner licence period to 12 months

The Land Transport (Driver Licensing) Amendment Bill is currently before Parliament. The Bill proposes raising the minimum driving age to 16 years and extending the length of the learner licence period from six to twelve months. We are interested in your views on this and

whether the minimum driving age should be increased to 16 or 17 years old.

Strengthen the restricted licence test to encourage 120 hours of supervised driving practice

If the learner licence period is extended, we could also encourage young people to have more supervised practice by strengthening the restricted licence test.

Raise public awareness of young driver crash risk and the graduated driver licensing system restrictions

This would better explain why we have licence conditions for novice drivers (eg restrictions on night time driving and carrying peer passengers) and why drivers should follow these conditions.

Increase the benefit of professional driver training

We could require that the content of professional driver training courses be in line with best practice, have a greater practical component, and provide incentives for young people to do more training.

Increase the benefit of school road safety education

We could develop a specific road safety education programme for secondary schools. It could complement professional driver training.

Introduce vehicle impoundment for drivers in breach of the graduated driver licensing system licence conditions

Police could impound the vehicle driven by a young driver for 28 days if they are caught breaching the graduated driver licensing system licence conditions twice in a three-month period.

Introduce compulsory third party insurance

Compulsory insurance could ensure that everyone who might cause damage to other people's property can pay for it, eg drivers who have a higher crash risk could pay more in insurance to reflect that greater risk. Recent research found that the level of vehicle insurance in New Zealand is comparable to countries with compulsory vehicle insurance schemes, so the benefits will need to be looked at closely.

Introduce vehicle restrictions

We could ban the use of certain powerful vehicles for young people.

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER?

- Road improvements contributed to almost an 11 percent drop in rural road deaths and a 15.8 percent drop in urban road deaths between 1997 and 2005, but we can do much more.
- Head-on crashes account for 23 percent of all fatal crashes. Yet over 90 percent of them could be avoided by installing a median barrier.
- Loss of control contributes to 40 percent of all fatal crashes. These crashes would be less severe if there were median barriers present and roadside objects were protected or removed.
- 21 percent of our fatal crashes occur at intersections (this figure includes some of the above types of crashes). These crashes could be prevented by using methods such as skid-resistant road surfaces and traffic calming.

Implement targeted programmes for high volume high-risk rural roads

We could introduce a targeted programme of engineering methods like rumble strips and median barriers to prevent the most common types of crash on these roads, in particular head-on, loss of control and run-off road crashes.

Initiatives to improve safety at urban intersections:

a) Support a targeted programme of treatments at high-risk urban intersections

Many intersection crashes are preventable with good intersection design, speed management and enforcement of road rules (eg red-light running). Various engineering methods could be used to treat high-risk intersections. These include more traffic control signals, roundabouts, advance stop boxes for cyclists, raised pedestrian crossings and speed control treatments.

To support this initiative, we also propose two changes to the give way rules.

b) Change the give way rules for turning traffic

We could change the current give way rule to require traffic turning right to give way

to traffic turning left into the same road. Changing this give way rule would make intersection decisions much easier (including at T-junctions) and could reduce intersection crashes by at least seven percent.

c) Change the give way rules for pedestrians

We could also require all turning vehicles at intersections with no traffic lights to give way to pedestrians crossing the road the vehicle is turning into.

Develop and support new approaches to safety on urban mixed-use arterials

Many arterial roads have high traffic volumes, cross many intersections and carry a variety of road users, including pedestrians trying to cross the busy road. We could look at a programme of demonstration (or pilot) projects that would assist local authorities to improve safety on these roads.

Implement treatments to make high-risk roads more self-explaining

We could use engineering methods (eg signage, lane width, road markings, and footpath width) to help people understand the appropriate speed for a road.

Carry out more crash reduction studies

Our crash reduction studies could be better targeted at particular black spots or black routes (ie sections of the road that have high numbers of fatal and serious crashes), or on particular types of engineering methods, or to a particular user group.

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR SPEEDS SAFER?

- In 2008, speed contributed to 34 percent of New Zealand's fatal crashes and 20 percent of serious injury crashes. These crashes resulted in 127 deaths, 560 serious injuries and 2,049 minor injuries.
- Our progress in reducing speeding has stalled. Many drivers still exceed speed limits or drive too fast for the conditions.

Reinvigorate our education and advertising efforts to improve understanding of the risks and consequences of speeding

Many people do not understand the consequences of speeding and the importance of driving to the conditions. We could reinvigorate our education and advertising in these areas.

Improve the effectiveness of enforcement

Enforcement works best when it is highly visible and where drivers can expect speed limits to be strongly enforced ‘anytime, anywhere.’ The following are ways of improving the effectiveness and consistency of our enforcement:

a) Improve detection coverage by increasing the number of road safety cameras

New Zealand has relatively few road safety cameras (this term includes speed cameras and red-light cameras). We could employ more road safety cameras, and place them where they will have the most effect.

b) Change the penalty system to deter speeding (higher demerit points and lower fines)

Our current penalty system for speed enforcement is based more on fines rather than demerit points. Demerit points and fines are currently awarded when a Police officer issues a ticket, but camera-detected offences attract only a fine. This gives the public mixed messages.

We could reduce fines and increase demerit points for speeding and apply the same penalties for offences detected by a speed camera and those detected by a Police officer.

Create more speed zones to establish the criteria for what roads with different speed limits should look like (eg 80 km/h, 90 km/h)

This initiative focuses on roads where speed-related crashes are a big problem and the existing 100 km/h limit is clearly unsafe. On these roads a number of 80 km/h or 90 km/h speed zones would be created, supported by engineering treatments and other signage where possible.

Review speed limits on mixed-use urban arterials

Moderating speeds on arterials (main urban roads) would reduce crashes, because when crashes do occur they would not be as serious. This initiative would be integrated with the proposal to develop new engineering approaches to safety on mixed-use arterial roads.

Increase the adoption of lower speed limits in urban areas

In New Zealand, 30 km/h or 40 km/h speed zones are beginning to be introduced for safety reasons. These are mainly on central city streets (such as shopping centres) and in residential neighbourhoods. We could build on this momentum and continue to improve the way we target and treat these areas.

Investigate the introduction of an Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) system in New Zealand

Intelligent Speed Assistance is a device in a vehicle that alerts the driver when they are speeding. It can also slow the vehicle automatically.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF MOTORCYCLING?

- **Motorcyclists are over-represented in the crash statistics. In 2008, 50 motorcyclists were killed, 456 were seriously injured and a further 940 suffered minor injuries. This equates to 14 percent of all road deaths and 18 percent of all serious injuries.**
- **The total social cost of crashes involving motorcyclists in 2008 was \$586 million.**

Improve rider training and licensing

The basic handling skills test, and the restricted and full motorcycle licence practical tests could all be upgraded to ensure motorcyclists are better tested for key skills. Alternatively, we could introduce competency based skills training and assessments.

We could make restrictions to ensure that novice motorcyclists do not ride bikes that are too powerful for them. We could

also make learner licences valid for only three years. This would encourage riders to progress through the graduated driver licensing system and gain safe riding skills.

Create a more forgiving road

Potential motorcycle black spots (areas of high crash risk) could be targeted for improvement.

Require all new large motorcycles to have anti-lock brake systems (ABS) by 2015

Some motorcycles have ABS as standard but for others it is an optional extra. We could require all new motorcycles of 600cc and greater (due to their increased level of risk) to be fitted with ABS brakes by 2015.

Promote high visibility and protective clothing

Motorcycle retailers and testing officers could be encouraged to promote the benefits of protective clothing in reducing the impact of crashes. We could also introduce a star rating system for the performance of protective clothing.

Introduce a differential levy system based on engine size

Riding a motorcycle with a large engine is riskier than riding a less powerful bike. ACC is developing a mechanism for calculating its levy rates for motorcycles based on the risk associated with different engine capacities.

Licence moped riders and require warrant of fitness (WoF) tests

Currently, holders of a car licence may ride a moped or scooter of 50cc without any specific testing. We could require all new moped riders to pass a basic practical and theory test. We could also require mopeds to pass a warrant of fitness test.



HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF OUR LIGHT VEHICLES?

- Since 2000, the safety of our light vehicle fleet has improved by four percent each year as safer vehicles have replaced less safe ones.
- The average age of our light vehicles is 12 years which means the road safety gains are much less than other countries are obtaining.

Promote advanced vehicle safety systems

The government could provide consumers with more safety information. Incentives such as lower insurance premiums for safer vehicles could be developed. Motor vehicle dealers could give buyers safety information when they buy vehicles (this could be optional or mandatory).

Reduce the average age of the light vehicle fleet

As well as promoting safer vehicles we could also provide incentives (eg scrappage schemes), or restrict the entry of older vehicles. For example, we could only allow cars eight years old or less to be imported.

Make electronic stability control (ESC) compulsory on all new vehicles entering the fleet by a particular date

Promotional activities will increase the uptake of ESC over the next decade, but we could also make it compulsory for all new light vehicles entering the country to have ESC fitted as standard by a particular date.

Revise WoF standards to ensure that advanced vehicle safety systems continue to function for at least the design life of the vehicle

We could strengthen the WoF inspection to make sure that advanced vehicle safety features are working properly.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS?

- **In each year over the period 2003-2007:**
 - **an average of 671 pedestrians were hospitalised and 43 were killed.**
 - **an average of 280 cyclists were hospitalised and 10 were killed from crashes involving a vehicle.**

Improve techniques to integrate safety into land use planning

It can be difficult for people in residential areas to safely walk or cycle to services, such as shops and schools. There are various methods we can use to identify and resolve these local safety issues (eg neighbourhood accessibility plans (NAPs)).

The key elements of a NAP are that roads, pavements, intersections, signs and facilities are improved where possible so that they are safe for local people, particularly children and the elderly. These engineering improvements can be supported by education and enforcement campaigns. We could strengthen and build on these methods.

Strengthen requirements in the driving licence test so drivers are more aware of pedestrians and cyclists safety needs

We could test novice drivers on road rules regarding pedestrians and cyclists. This would encourage specific driver training on how to safely share the road with pedestrians and cyclists.

Stronger promotion of road user education on pedestrians and cyclists, including targeted messages and more national promotion

We could strengthen road user education around the safety needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Greater promotion of cyclist skills training in schools

Children who have taken cyclist skills training are less likely to have a crash. Christchurch has run a successful programme (Cycle Safe) for several years. We could increase the coverage of this type of training in schools.

Support the roll-out of strongly enforced variable speed limits around schools and address the issue of school bus safety

Variable speed signs remind road users to consider the needs of school children. The default speed limit of 50 km/h around some schools is lowered to 40 km/h before and after school and at lunchtime. We could expand this programme.

We also need to address the issue of rural school safety, especially around school buses.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF HEAVY VEHICLES?

- **In 2008, crashes involving heavy vehicles accounted for 18 percent of the road toll and 19 percent of total injuries. This equates to 65 deaths, 258 serious injuries and 1,144 minor injuries.**

Publish operators' safety ratings

The Operator Safety Rating System (OSRS) will give operators safety ratings based on their safety performance. The ratings would help customers choose heavy vehicle operators with good safety records. The ratings will also allow Police to focus on the most risky operators.

Encourage the use of electronic stability control

Electronic stability control (ESC) helps the driver to maintain control of the vehicle when it begins to skid or slide. We could promote ESC and perhaps make it mandatory at some point in the future.

Assist companies to reduce road risk

The Commercial Driver Programme aims to raise commercial driver and company awareness of significant road safety issues like fatigue and speeding. Companies are informed when one of their vehicles receives a ticket for a road safety offence. We could implement the Commercial Driver Programme nationally, which would improve productivity as well as safety.

Adopt a 'safe and fuel efficient' driving programme

Driving with a fuel efficient style gives drivers more time to identify hazards and reduce speeds. The Ministry of Transport is developing a Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving programme which will provide a standard for safe and fuel efficient driver training for the heavy commercial vehicle sector.

HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FATIGUE?

- Over the period 2004–2008 fatigue contributed to 7 percent of serious injury crashes and 12 percent of fatal crashes. In 2008 these crashes resulted in 190 serious injuries and 42 deaths.
- It is believed that fatigue causes far more road deaths and injuries than these statistics show.

Increase the range of information

We know there is widespread understanding that fatigue is a road safety issue, but people often do not recognise the signs of fatigue and when to stop driving. We could provide information on how to recognise the signs of fatigue and how to deal with it.

Promotion to increase the use of roadside stopping places

Although we have a network of rest areas, their location, attractiveness, safety and signage may make drivers reluctant to use them. We could also assess whether we have enough suitable rest areas.

Consider introducing an offence for driving while fatigued

Some overseas jurisdictions have an offence for driving while fatigued (eg drivers can be prosecuted if they have been awake for more than 24 consecutive hours before a crash causing death). We could investigate making driving while fatigued an offence.

HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CRASHES CAUSED BY DISTRACTION?

- Over the period 2004–2008 distraction contributed to at least 10 percent of fatal crashes and 9 percent of serious injury crashes. In 2008, these crashes resulted in 243 serious injuries and 42 deaths.

Common distractions include passengers, cellphones and eating and drinking.

The government has confirmed it will ban hand-held cell phone use while driving from 1 November 2009.

Raise public awareness and improve education

Information on preventing distraction could be made more widely available and specifically added to road safety education. Distraction could then be included in driver testing.



HOW CAN WE INCREASE THE LEVEL OF RESTRAINT USE?

Bring our child restraint laws in line with international best practice

New Zealand has one of the highest child road fatality rates in the OECD. Child deaths and serious injuries could be reduced by bringing our laws in line with international best practice. This could mean requiring children to use appropriate child restraints until they are a certain height or age.

Additional possible initiatives are to:

- **Ensure the correct use of child restraints through education**
- **Improve rear seatbelt use in regions below the national average**
- **Improve wearing rates for commercial drivers**

HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE IMPACT OF HIGH RISK DRIVERS?

Initiatives proposed for reducing alcohol/drug impaired driving, speeding, and improving the safety of young drivers will also help reduce the impact of high risk drivers.

A recently introduced Bill will also give Police, the courts and local authorities greater powers to tackle illegal street racers.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY FOR OLDER NEW ZEALANDERS?

After young people, older road users have a higher rate of road trauma than other age groups. Their road fatality rate is around 15 deaths per 100,000 population. This compares with the rate of 10 deaths per 100,000 for the entire population.

Possible initiatives are to:

- **Target road and roadside improvements to cater for older New Zealanders**
- **Encourage the use of safer vehicles by older road users**
- **Expand road safety education for older New Zealanders**



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR SUGGESTED INITIATIVES?

Please go to www.saferjourneys.govt.nz to fill out the online submission form by **2 October 2009**.

Alternatively you can call us on 04 439 9000 or write to us at:

Safer Journeys
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This is your chance to have your say on road safety in New Zealand and help create *Safer Journeys to 2020*.



NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

New Zealand Government

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