



Speed



Key issues

1. Excessive speed (driving above the speed limit) and inappropriate speed (driving too fast for the road or traffic conditions, but within the speed limit) are major causes of traffic crashes that result in death and serious injury. This is a major road safety problem for all countries.ⁱ
- The faster a vehicle is traveling the greater the impact in a crash. As a result speed affects not only the risk of being involved in a crash, but also the severity of injuries resulting from a crash.ⁱⁱ
 - A 5% cut in average speed can reduce the number of fatal crashes by as much as 30%.ⁱⁱⁱ
 - Speed limits can often be set too high for the type of road, roadside conditions and the volume and type of road users.
 - On roads where there are high concentrations of pedestrians and/or cyclists there is an increased risk of injury as a result of excessive vehicle speeds.^{iv}
 - Pedestrian fatality risk increases significantly from around 35 to 40 km/h with very high likelihood of death for crashes at 50 km/h or higher.^v

Key Messages

- Setting and enforcing speed limits are two of the most effective measures in reducing road traffic injuries.^{vi}
- Excessive speed and inappropriate speed are illegal and unacceptable, and are major causes of traffic crashes resulting in death and serious injury.
- Speed limits should be appropriate for the type of road, roadside conditions and the volume and type of road users. Particular attention should be paid to the speed limits on urban roads and roads with high concentrations of pedestrians, such as around schools or residential areas.^{vii}
- Where there are many pedestrians and/or cyclists using a road, measures need to be taken to reduce vehicle speeds in order to improve safety for these vulnerable road users.
- Appropriate penalties are needed for excessive and inappropriate speeds
- Targeted social marketing campaigns when conducted together with effective police enforcement can help to reduce excessive speeding.



Components for Strong Speed Policies

- Speed limits need to be set at levels that take account of the type of road, roadside conditions and the volume and type of road users. They can be variable to adapt for different times of traffic density.
- Urban speed limits should be set at 50 km/h or less, with the ability to reduce this to at least 30 km/h where there are high concentrations of pedestrians, such as around schools or residential areas.^{viii}
- Road design regulations and guidelines need to allow for the use of a wide range of engineering treatments to effectively manage speed. These include treatments designed to:
 - slow vehicles down, such as speed humps and raised platforms at pedestrian crossings
 - allow for separation of vulnerable road users, such as footpaths for pedestrians or bicycle lanes for cyclists.
- Penalties for excessive speed need to be set at levels that are serious enough to deter people from breaking the law.

Components Required for Effective Enforcement

- Consistent and highly visible enforcement by police is required to send a message to drivers that speeding is illegal, unacceptable and against the interests of the community.
- The community needs to be educated to understand the crash risks associated with speeding and they should be informed that police are targeting speeding drivers. Drivers need to understand that they can be caught “anywhere and anytime” if they speed.^{ix}
- The use of fixed and mobile speed cameras and other hand-held or car-mounted speed detection devices (such as laser or radar) allow for effective speed enforcement. The use of covert mobile speed cameras has been shown to be highly effective.^x
- Speed enforcement activities should be targeted at locations where and at times when drivers are likely to be speeding. Knowing where and when to target speeding relies on good intelligence, and ensures that the use of police resources is maximised.
- Speed enforcement activities need to be repeated often and conducted in a way that provides a visible deterrence to speeding.
- It is important that data on speeding is collected and analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programmes, and for planning purposes.



References

- ⁱ *Speed management: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners*. Geneva, Global Road Safety Partnership, 2008 (http://www.who.int/roadsafety/projects/manuals/speed_manual/en/ accessed 28 February 2014)
- ⁱⁱ Aarts, L. & Schagen, I. van (2006). *Driving speed and the risk of road crashes: A review*. In: *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, vol. 38, nr. 2, p. 215-224.
- ⁱⁱⁱ 10 Facts on Global Road Safety, Geneva, World Health Organisation, 2013. (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/ accessed 3 March 2014)
- ^{iv} *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013: Supporting a Decade of Action*. Geneva, World Health Organisation, 2013 (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/ accessed 23 January 2014)
- ^v Archer, J., Fotheringham, N., Symmons, M. and Corben, B. (2008), *The Impact of lowered speed limits in urban and metropolitan areas*, Report No. 276, Monash University Accident Research Centre, Clayton
- ^{vi} *Speed management: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners*. Geneva, Global Road Safety Partnership, 2008 (http://www.who.int/roadsafety/projects/manuals/speed_manual/en/ accessed 28 February 2014)
- ^{vii} *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013: Supporting a Decade of Action*. Geneva, World Health Organisation, 2013 (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/ accessed 23 January 2014)
- ^{viii} *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013: Supporting a Decade of Action*. Geneva, World Health Organisation, 2013 (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/ accessed 23 January 2014)
- ^{ix} *Speed management: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners*. Geneva, Global Road Safety Partnership, 2008 (http://www.who.int/roadsafety/projects/manuals/speed_manual/en/ accessed 28 February 2014)
- ^x *Speed management: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners*. Geneva, Global Road Safety Partnership, 2008 (http://www.who.int/roadsafety/projects/manuals/speed_manual/en/ accessed 28 February 2014)