

REVIEW OF ROAD SAFETY ISSUES FOR FUTURE INQUIRY

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NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA .

Media Enquiries

Michael Lane

National Media Spokesperson



Recommendation for future investigation.

Crash Cause Investigation

The most significant area for the Staysafe Committee to examine is the assessment of crash causes as this forms the basis for an effective strategy to reduce road trauma.

The “Gold Standard” in crash cause analysis is the UK standard where each area Police Force/Service has a number of dedicated specialist officers who examine in detail the causes of serious crashes determining not only what happened but an in-depth examination of the causes to ascertain the direct causes and contributory causes. For example, excess speed may be a contributory cause but this itself could be result from intoxication, driving a stolen vehicle, escaping apprehension etc. It also clearly distinguishes between causes of “exceeding speed limit” and “excessive speed for conditions”.

It is noted that investigating officers do not make recommendations for prosecution; this is done by senior officers after review of reports. There is no pressure on investigators to prosecute as an outcome of their work.

This system is based on work by the UK Transport Research Laboratory report No. 323 and a simple version is used by non-specialist officers for minor crashes as first responders.

This system is also used in air crash investigations internationally and has been a significant contributor to the record of zero fatal airline crashes in 2017.

The Committee should examine this as a matter of high importance because of the high level of impact on future directions.

Consolidated results at the initial level are published on an annual basis by the UK Government. The Committee should consider publishing the consolidated outcomes of the full investigations and publication of the methodology. This open information would provide a broad understanding of the relative importance of issues and in the development of effective strategies.

The information arising from such a detailed investigation is invaluable in developing strategies for crash minimisation as it will show where improvements can be made and which causes are of lesser importance. This would necessarily affect driver training systems.

It could also lead to a review of offences and corrective measures – it may show that some offences should be re-structured and corrective measures changed including the application of demerit points.

Enforcement strategies could be reviewed; for example well marked police cars could be deployed in a high visibility role as a deterrent rather than in infringement collection role; unmarked “Q cars” could be used to detect aggressive or sloppy driving standards.

Publication of the investigation methodology would create more confidence in the system. Publication of the consolidated outcomes of the investigations would be useful as an educational tool and deter unreasonable demands for action and inappropriate use of statistics by specialist interest groups. For example, the present system of adding crashes caused by inappropriate speed for conditions to crashes involving exceeding the speed limit has been used to argue for more speed enforcement instead of focusing on the actual causes of road crashes.

Attachment.

Crash cause summary UK 2005 to 2009. From UK Institute of Advanced Motorists summary of crash causes published by UK Government. NB most crashes have multiple causes hence % total is more than 100%.

Table 1 Contributory factors and accident severity

Contributory factor reported in accident	Accident severity			All accidents
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	
Driver/ Rider Error or Reaction	65.3%	61.8%	68.6%	67.5%
Failed to look properly	20.5%	29.3%	36.3%	35.0%
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	11.6%	14.0%	20.0%	18.9%
Loss of control	34.0%	19.7%	13.4%	14.7%
Poor turn or manoeuvre	12.0%	13.8%	14.1%	14.1%
Sudden braking	3.0%	4.5%	7.7%	7.2%
Swerved	6.2%	4.2%	3.7%	3.8%
Junction overshoot	1.7%	1.9%	2.4%	2.3%
Failed to signal or misleading signal	0.6%	1.3%	2.0%	1.9%
Junction restart (moving off at junction)	0.9%	1.1%	1.8%	1.7%
Passing too close to cyclist, horse rider or pedestrian	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
Injudicious Action	31.4%	25.0%	26.1%	26.0%
Travelling too fast for conditions	15.9%	11.3%	9.9%	10.2%
Following too close	1.3%	2.8%	7.5%	6.7%
Exceeding speed limit	13.9%	7.2%	4.6%	5.2%
Disobeyed 'Give Way' or 'Stop' sign or markings	2.1%	2.8%	3.5%	3.4%
Disobeyed automatic traffic signal	1.0%	1.4%	1.8%	1.8%
Cyclist entering road from pavement	0.5%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%
Illegal turn or direction of travel	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%
Disobeyed pedestrian crossing facility	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%
Vehicle travelling along pavement	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Disobeyed double white lines	0.9%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%
Behaviour or Inexperience	28.0%	25.8%	24.4%	24.7%
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	17.2%	16.7%	16.1%	16.2%
Learner or inexperienced driver/rider	5.3%	5.5%	5.2%	5.3%
Aggressive driving	8.3%	5.1%	3.6%	3.9%
Nervous, uncertain or panic	1.1%	1.3%	1.8%	1.7%
Unfamiliar with model of vehicle	1.4%	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%
Inexperience of driving on the left	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Driving too slow for conditions or slow vehicle (e.g. tractor)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Road Environment	10.9%	13.3%	15.6%	15.1%
Slippery road (due to weather)	5.9%	7.9%	10.6%	10.1%
Road layout (e.g. bend, hill, narrow carriageway)	3.2%	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%
Deposit on road (e.g. oil, mud, chippings)	0.8%	1.7%	1.5%	1.5%
Animal or object in carriageway	0.8%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Poor or defective road surface	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%
Inadequate or masked signs or road markings	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%
Temporary road layout (e.g. contraflow)	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Defective traffic signals	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Traffic calming (e.g. speed cushions, road humps, chicanes)	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%

Contributory factor reported in accident	Accident severity			All accidents
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	
Pedestrian only (casualty or uninjured)	18.2%	20.4%	11.5%	13.0%
Pedestrian failed to look properly	10.5%	14.8%	8.5%	9.5%
Pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry	3.4%	6.3%	3.6%	4.0%
Pedestrian crossing road masked by stationary or parked vehicle	1.9%	4.4%	2.4%	2.7%
Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle's path or speed	5.2%	4.5%	2.4%	2.8%
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	4.1%	3.5%	1.5%	1.9%
Dangerous action in carriageway (e.g. playing)	2.2%	1.9%	0.9%	1.1%
Pedestrian wrong use of pedestrian crossing facility	1.2%	1.4%	0.7%	0.8%
Pedestrian wearing dark clothing at night	3.3%	1.3%	0.5%	0.7%
Pedestrian disability or illness, mental or physical	1.9%	0.8%	0.3%	0.4%
Pedestrian impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal)	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
Impairment or Distraction	19.6%	14.2%	11.1%	11.7%
Impaired by alcohol	9.6%	7.4%	4.7%	5.2%
Distraction in vehicle	2.6%	1.7%	2.1%	2.1%
Fatigue	3.1%	1.8%	1.3%	1.4%
Distraction outside vehicle	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%	1.4%
Illness or disability, mental or physical	3.6%	1.8%	1.2%	1.3%
Impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal)	2.2%	0.9%	0.4%	0.5%
Not displaying lights at night or in poor visibility	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Cyclist wearing dark clothing at night	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Driver using mobile phone	0.8%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Uncorrected, defective eyesight	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Vision Affected by:	7.5%	9.2%	10.5%	10.3%
Stationary or parked vehicle(s)	1.1%	2.9%	3.2%	3.1%
Dazzling sun	1.5%	1.8%	2.2%	2.2%
Rain, sleet, snow, or fog	1.5%	1.5%	1.9%	1.9%
Road layout (e.g. bend, winding road, hill crest)	1.7%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Vehicle blind spot	1.0%	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%
Vegetation	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Dazzling headlights	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Buildings, road signs, street furniture	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Spray from other vehicles	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Visor or windscreen dirty or scratched	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Special codes	6.1%	5.2%	4.5%	4.6%
Other	4.4%	3.3%	2.7%	2.8%
Stolen vehicle	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	0.8%
Emergency vehicle on a call	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%
Vehicle in course of crime	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Vehicle door opened or closed negligently	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Vehicle Defects	2.8%	2.2%	1.9%	1.9%
Tyres illegal, defective or under inflated	1.5%	0.9%	0.7%	0.7%
Defective brakes	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Overloaded or poorly loaded vehicle or trailer	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Defective lights or indicators	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Defective steering or suspension	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Defective or missing mirrors	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total number of accidents	11,968	104,760	576,959	693,687