

S A F A R

(Safety Always For All Roads)

*An initiative to improve Road Safety
in Andhra Pradesh State*

IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

an approach paper

In view of the anxiety expressed by the Hon'ble Chief Minister on the spate of road accidents in the State resulting in loss of life, serious injuries and loss of property, the Transport Department undertook the task of preparing an approach paper to set in motion a series of measures by various stake holding departments to improve road safety. The emphasis of the approach paper is on immediate temporary measures, which are preventive in nature and do not cost much to the exchequer.

It is proposed to prepare a comprehensive policy delineating the medium and long term measures and the financial support that is required to improve road safety with the following goals.

- To bring down the number of accidents.
- To earmark separate funds for road safety programmes.
- To draw up specific programmes to improve major roads for safe travel, to protect vulnerable road users and to improve driver training, licensing and monitoring procedures.
- To obtain better co-ordination between various departments and NGOs.
- To create information system on accidents and to suggest post-accident relief and other remedial measures.

As an immediate measure, it is also proposed to run an awareness campaign which not only involves the education and sensitization of the stake holders like drivers, vehicle owners and the pedestrians but also involving the Government Departments and public representatives to undertake immediate ameliorative steps. It is also proposed to take the assistance of M/s HUBERT EBNER PVT LTD., an Indo-Austrian Joint Venture, which offered to help improve the situation after their recent tour in the State.

The Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 mandates constitution of ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL at State level and district levels to ensure road safety. As per Section 215 of Motor Vehicle Act these councils shall discharge such functions relating to the road safety programmes.

I. DRIVER RELATED MEASURES:

A. Effective training

- *Monitoring and encouraging driving schools*

While there was no statutory requirement of specific training for obtaining a DL till 1988, the M.V. Act, 1988 specified training for a period of one month only for obtaining a DL for driving a transport vehicle by creating a framework for establishment of Driving Schools. However, the functioning of these driving schools, except in two or three cases, is very disappointing. There is need to tighten the inspection regime for these schools which are authorized to issue certificates.

The user organizations like lorry owner's organizations auto drivers associations, motor vehicle manufacturers and dealers will be encouraged to get involved in this exercise. The existing infrastructure in the Polytechnics, ITI's and APSRTC Zonal Training Centres will also be tapped for this purpose.

- *Training the trainers:*

It should be made compulsory for all the trainers to undergo training in premier organizations like KDLOA Driving school, near Vijayawada, NAVATA Driving School, Jaggayapet and from the manufacturing companies of automobiles. The services of APSRTC will also be utilized for this purpose.

B. Effective testing for licence:

There is need to strengthen the DL testing mechanism WITHOUT COMPROMISE. Infrastructure needs to be improved by creating and upgrading the scientific testing tracks in every DTC/RTO office. Similar arrangements shall be made in all other sub offices of the Transport Department. Efforts shall be made to tap the ROAD SAFETY FUNDING from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, GOI.

C. In-service (refresher) training :

With the continuous up-gradation of vehicle and road technology, there is need to upgrade the skills of the in-service drivers also by offering packages of refresher training programmes. The ROAD SAFETY CELL of Min. of RTH has been funding hugely any government initiatives or proposals from reputed NGOs with respect to such refresher training for heavy vehicle drivers. Properly publicized these training modules which include compensation for attending the 2 or 3 days module, one year free insurance and free medical

check-up for the attendees. Organizations like Krishna District Lorry owners Association and NAVATA transport have been successfully tapping these funds in Krishna district. Similar potential organizations shall also be identified and encouraged in other parts of the State.

Similar training programmes can be extended to other drivers in unorganized sector like auto-rickshaw drivers, taxi drivers and tractor & trailer drivers in rural areas who are no less important in this respect. Funds available for training purposes with agencies like DRDA, AP USP, SC Corporation and BC Corporation can also be tapped for this purpose. The transport department itself can also undertake such campaigns by allocating some fund from the user charges collected by the Department.

The existing infrastructure in the Polytechnics and ITI's also can be tapped for this purpose.

D. Offence/Punishment recording measures:

Enforcement agencies like Transport Department and Traffic Police generally resort to compounding of various driving related offences by collecting prescribed compounding fee, which also has become a major source of revenue. It should be made compulsory to launch prosecution in case of serious offences as a deterrent. It may require creation of Mobile/Fast Track Courts to help the prosecutors from running around the local courts and to help in fast disposal of cases.

A graded system of noting down the serious offences committed by the DL holders in the office record and the DL document shall be evolved which shall help the DL holder progressively improve his driving skills or face suspension or cancellation of the DL.

The graded system of noting down and punishing will work if the entire DL database in the State is networked in which case it is not possible for a DL holder to obtain a DL somewhere else in the State. Protection and networking of the entire DL database in the State shall be taken up immediately.

E. Care of drivers of transport vehicles by owners and government:

The cadre of driving workforce is the most disorganized lot financially, physically and socially. It is but natural that a sort of social and financial security will bring in a lot of discipline and belongingness among them.

Schemes like group insurance shall be revived by the Government. The condition of 2 drivers in the National Permit vehicles shall be strictly enforced with the active involvement of lorry owners association. The Primer oil companies can be asked to establish rest rooms near petrol bunks.

F. Tackling Young drivers:

Ever growing number of two-wheelers in the State presents a disturbing trend leading to traffic congestion and pollution. It also is a sad pointer to the failure of public transport system in the State to cater to the needs of traveling public. Another disturbing trend is that most of these two-wheelers are being recklessly driven by young and minor citizens.

Educational and enforcement campaigns shall be simultaneously run in all colleges and schools to sensitize the youth and their parents about the ill effects of such early adventures in life. Lessons on road safety, over speeding and consequences of drunken driving, etc., should be incorporated as curriculum in school and college levels.

II. VEHICLE RELATED MEASURES:

A. Special attention to school buses/autos:

Fitness testing of the school buses shall be done on priority basis without compromising on any of the fitness and safety standards. The Transport department had already made the issue of annual fitness certification coterminous with the end of the academic year to allow the owners of these vehicles to get these vehicles repaired/serviced properly without causing inconvenience to the students. Any lapse in fitness testing of these vehicles on the part of MVIs shall be dealt with severely.

Autos carrying school children shall not be allowed to be overloaded. This item shall be in the agenda of parent meeting being conducted by the management.

B. Effective F.C. testing with emphasis on old vehicles:

Presently there is no infrastructure worth the name with the Transport Department to effectively test the fitness standard of a vehicle as prescribed in the M.V.Act and Rules thereon.

As a first step the MVIs shall be sensitized to effectively test some of the aspects with the available infrastructure. As a second step, efforts should be made to lay Brake Testing tracks and Testing pits at every office in the

State. Technical infrastructure can be arranged as a long term and sustained measure.

Thorough physical testing shall be undertaken by the executive staff till such time.

C. Updating the skills of the MVIs:

Regular interface shall be arranged with the Vehicle Testing Agencies, Vehicle Manufacturers and their aggregates to keep the MVIs abreast of the latest developments in vehicle technology.

D. Policy of phasing out old vehicles:

Old vehicles with out dated technology are a cause for accidents. They also contribute large amounts of atmospheric pollutants.

Action should be taken to phase out old vehicles in view of road safety and pollution control.

E. Campaigns to train and sensitize the owners, drivers and mechanics:

Most of the surveys conducted on cause of accidents highlighted the dominance of the human factor particularly the negligent and rash driving of the driver. It is also a fact that an efficient and well-trained driver can prevent the impact of the other factors, which cause accidents. A series of campaigns shall be conducted to sensitize the owners, drivers and mechanics about the new technologies and also about maintenance of the condition of the vehicles. In the first phase the transport operators, drivers and mechanics would be covered.

F. Prevention of overloads and projections:

The Motor Vehicle Act allows letting off of offenders in road-safety related offences by compounding with small amounts of fee. This should be discouraged. Prosecutions shall be resorted to in serious but simple looking offences like driving the vehicle with one front light, carrying the goods like sand and dusty materials without top cover and carrying overloads of goods with huge side projections. An overloaded or incompletely equipped vehicle shall not be allowed to proceed further even after the offence is recorded.

G. Special measures for danger prone vehicles like autos :

The Government has banned the use of Auto rickshaws on National Highways. This should be implemented.

H. Specifying speed limits/ speed governors:

Efforts shall be made to discourage over-speed driving particularly on vulnerable routes. This can be achieved by making it statutory for the manufacturers of autos to fix speed governors on the vehicles. It also can be achieved through techniques like speed breakers along with cautionary boards. It also can be done by noting the time of travel of a particular vehicle in identified accident-prone strips and warning the speeding drivers.

Speed limiting built into vehicles are also effective. Speed limiting governors in Auto Rickshaws and other small vehicles could reduce the incidence of road traffic injury.

III. ROAD RELATED MEASURES:

A. Steps to increase road space to catch up with growth of vehicles:

In the long term, efforts to increase road space can be undertaken by Six lane or Four lane and by constructing road dividers along all the National High ways and State High Ways.

Short term measures include lane markings, hazardous location indicators, reflective traffic signs, road dividers and medians, intersection islands, bus bays, sight distance maintenance, road side development, sign boards, signs and other facilities, parking bays.

B. Identification of accident-prone spots:

Identification of accident-prone spots and erection of cautionary signs at a sufficiently early distance will surely resulting reduction of accidents with out much expenditure. Special attention shall be paid at culverts and blind curves and for berm improvements, junction improvements and barricading wherever necessary.

C. Service Roads/Access Roads :

There is every need to restrict or control the free and easy entry of vehicles from approach roads to highways. Service roads/Access roads should

be developed. Speed breakers or entry barriers shall be arranged on the approach roads.

D. Seeking assistance from the Road Safety funding from Govt of India:

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India offers assistance under HIGHWAY ACCIDENT RELIEF SCHEME for purchase of ambulances and cranes for accident relief measures like saving the lives of victims of accidents and easing traffic congestion after accidents. Proposals shall be sought from reputed NGOs with experience in the area and from Police department, Transport Department and the R&B Department to utilize the offer of the Government of India in this regard.

IV. TRAFFIC RELATED MEASURES:

A. Emphasis on traffic flow in towns and cities:

Emphasis shall be on smooth flow of traffic in high density areas like cities and towns. In every city or town the TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEES shall be given more teeth to adopt policies of one-ways or staggered timings to allow plying of different types of vehicles like goods vehicles, school buses, two- wheelers and autos as found appropriate by these committees. The timings of schools, markets and offices shall be allowed to be staggered accordingly.

V. Measures on Road Traffic injury prevention.

A. Usage of Helmets.

Head injuries are main cause of death among the riders of two wheelers. Helmets protect the rider very effectively against such injuries. Among moped and motor cycle riders, head injuries account for about 75% of deaths in Europe and 55-88% in Malaysia. One study found that riders without helmets were 3 times more likely to sustained head injuries than those with helmets. A study in India found that motor cyclists benefited from any time of helmet with padding. The usage of helmets shall be implemented.

B. Usage of Seat belts.

Seat belt use has been one of the success stories of road injury prevention and has saved many lives in several countries. Seat belts were introduced as optional features in vehicles till recently. At present, all new

vehicles have seat belts. The use of seat belts reduces the risk of all injuries by 40-50%.

C. Enforcing Alcohol limits in driving.

Alcohol consumption by vehicle drivers is one of the major reasons for accidents and deaths or serious injuries. The wide spread random breath testing achieves highest compliance with loss. Breath testing devices that provide objective evidence of blood alcohol concentration are the most effective tools.

D. Overspeed and speed limits.

The higher the speed, the shorter the time a driver has to stop and avoid a crash. The higher the speed, the more severe the impact is when a crash occurs. Vulnerable road users, other motor vehicles are at especially high risk of injury from speeding motor vehicles. Speed limits that road users perceive as realistic and those that are self-enforcing have the greatest chance for achieving compliance.

Speed cameras or radar can catch the drivers who are exceeding speed limits. Recent analysis of experience in several countries found that instruments that automatically catch drivers reduced traffic deaths and serious injuries by 14%. Publicizing the presence of speed cameras or radars has been found to increase the compliance with speed laws and to reduce the incidence of crash and injury substantially.

E. Improving care before reaching a hospital.

A study comparing road traffic deaths across a range of countries found that the vast majority of deaths in low income and middle-income countries occur before reaching the hospital. National, State highways and other roads have few emergency services nearby to the scene of road crashes. By-standers, relatives or other road users evacuate injured people from the scene and transport them to a hospital. Ambulances need to be placed on all important highways and roads with suitable personnel on a 24 hour basis for immediate rescue of persons involved in road accidents. Corporate hospitals and NGOs could be involved in this programme.

IMMEDIATE ACTION PLAN

District Administration

- Meeting of Road Safety councils at the State and district levels at regular intervals.
- Identification of accident-prone spots to be done immediately on priority basis.
- Involve non-officials in road safety campaigns.
- Supervision and co-ordination of Action plans of all stake holding departments.

Transport Department

- Regular inspection and revamping of Driving Schools.
- Identification and use of existing training facilities in ITIs, Polytechnics, APSRTC and local NGOs for effective in service training for drivers of Goods vehicles, School Buses and Contract carriages including Auto Rickshaws.
- Identifying and contacting associations of Owners and Drivers and other target groups like School Managements.
- Planning awareness camps drawing resource persons from Doctors, Consumer activities and Traffic experts.
- Identification of accident-prone spots and list of immediate temporary remedial measures to be completed.
- Initiate offences recording system in D.L. database.
- Networking of D.L. database.
- Laying of scientific driving testing tracks in all important places including Unit Offices.
- Preparing campaign material.

R&B Department/Panchayatraj Department/NHAI

- Completion of immediate temporary remedial measures like erection of signs, barricades and sight distance maintenance.
- Compliance of measures undertaken to district road safety council.
- Display of phone numbers of Ambulances and Hospitals available nearby at each location on the road at regular distance intervals.

Police Department

- Convening of Traffic Advisory Councils in all Cities and Towns on a monthly basis involving public representatives and local NGOs and Citizens.

- Implement laws relating to helmets, seat belts and enforcement of alcohol limits.
- Consolidation of requirement traffic regulatory devices and submission of budget proposals.
- To obtain a list of Hospitals near to each important location on the road and of Ambulances available in Government and Private sector and circulate to NHAI, R&B and Panchayatiraj Department.

Medical & Health Department

- To prepare a list of phone numbers of Hospitals and Ambulances available near each location on the road and co-ordinate with Police Department in this regard.
- Provide emergency care on all important highways and roads in association with corporate hospitals and NGOs

TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER