

## Should drivers renew licence once in 5 years?

Written by 3K Admin

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By NG SI HOOI

KUALA LUMPUR: The Transport Ministry will study the existing practice of allowing drivers to renew their licence once in every five years, said the minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat.

He said the drivers involved in accidents would not be easy to detect they went to renew their licence.

◆ This is the loophole in law enforcement we must study thoroughly. We want to know how many of them really pay their fines and what is the general attitude of the people when they are served with summonses, he said after launching the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) Malaysia Report at Hilton Hotel here Tuesday.

He said the ministry needed to go through the driving test and lesson again.

Earlier, Ong in his speech, said the key cost-effective counter measures with the biggest potential to save lives and reduce injuries were removal of roadside hazards, putting up central hatching to separate high speed opposing flows on undivided roads and the provision of exclusive and non exclusive motorcycle lanes based on the iRAP report.

◆ The full iRAP Malaysia programme has the potential to prevent almost 32,000 deaths and injuries over 20 years, which equals to more than a 30% reduction in trauma levels on the initial iRAP network of 3,700km of roads, he said.

He said the iRAP was an initiative to help improve road infrastructure safety in low and middle income countries in order to drive down global road death toll.

Under the iRAP pilot programme, which started in March, 2007, Ong said 3,700km of expressways and federal roads in Malaysia were surveyed and rated.

He said 6,527 people died on roads as a result of road crashes with motorcyclists recording 60% of that fatality.

◆ As for serious injuries, about 20 to 30 road users fall victim daily with about 50% of this group sustaining permanent disabilities requiring lifelong social and welfare support.

Even though injury as a result of accidents had dropped almost 40% from 54,091 in 2004 to 32,294 in 2008, Ong said these figures were still a far cry from the international benchmark achieved by developed countries.

In economic terms, Ong said the social cost of road crashes was estimated at about RM9bil annually over the past 10 years, including hospitalisation and medical costs, insurance payouts and vehicle repair costs and loss of income.

To enhance road safety in Malaysia, Ong said the government had formulated the Zero Fatalities Vision and the Road Safety Plan of Malaysia 2006 - 2010, which addresses a wide range of road safety and sets out a comprehensive and balanced approach in implementing road safety initiatives that were built around 4E's - Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Environment.

◆ Make Roads Safe Campaign

◆ global ambassador Datuk Michelle Yeoh, who was also present at the launch, said she was very proud Malaysia had in participation with iRAP to carry out the assessment programme as it was important to know the shortcomings of the roads in the country.

◆ We need our roads to be safe for our people, for our children, for our breadwinners. A few seconds in a road crash will cause them a lifetime of grief, she said.

Source: <a href="http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/9/29/nation/20090929160217&sec=nation">http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/9/29/nation/20090929160217&sec=nation</a>