

ROAD SAFETY POLICY FOR KERALA



natpac

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1. THE PREAMBLE

The Government of Kerala is deeply concerned about the relatively higher number of road accidents occurring in the State, as compared to the National average. The State registered an all-time high number of accidents (41678) and injuries (51225) in 2005. In order to promote road safety, Government of Kerala has initiated several innovative steps and the most important is being the establishment of Kerala Road Safety Authority (KRSA). Governmental efforts in terms of enforcement of helmet and seat belt use, speed regulations, observance of yellow line markings, check on drunken driving, etc. have provided positive results. Consequently 2006 to 2010, there was gradual decline in the number of accidents and injuries and reached 35013 and 40997 respectively in 2010. From 2011 to 2014, there are ups and downs in the number of accidents. In 2015, Kerala recorded a remarkable increase in number of road accidents as 39040 and number of victims as 47614 with 4052 fatalities and 43562 injuries.

The Government also recognizes that road safety has to be improved to the level of developed countries by undertaking all tangible actions. The Government considers road safety as a major public health issue, which adversely affects the disadvantageous section of the society and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, senior citizens, cyclists, two-wheeler riders and people with varying disabilities.

The Government of Kerala further recognizes that road safety has to be addressed in holistic manner by providing safer roads, safer vehicles, safer drivers, and effective and efficient enforcement of safety rules/regulations.

In the light of this, and keeping in mind the Government of India Road Safety Policy & UN General Assembly resolution proclaiming 2011-20 as a decade of road safety and WHO guidelines, the Government of Kerala intends to reduce the accidents to 50% by 2025 and to zero level by 2030.

2. POLICY FOR VISION ZERO TOLERANCE

The WHO slogan, "Road Safety is no Accident" actually means zero tolerance of all causes/factors of accidents. Such an approach of zero tolerance should be based on the following principles:

- i) **Priority** - Human life and health are paramount, and safety consideration should take priority over mobility.
- ii) **Pardoning Human Errors** - Human beings are prone to make errors due to their physical, mental and driving limitations. Therefore, transportation system should be designed to such level of safety so that the scope for human errors is minimized and the harm is reduced when they occur.
- iii) **Public Concern** - Safety of all segments of road uses must be the main concern of any road safety policy. Providers, enforcers and health authority must guarantee the best safety standards for all citizens, be they motorist, pedestrians, school children, elderly people, disabled persons, females or any other group.

Further under zero tolerance, accidents control measure would involve following four steps:

- i) Reduce the exposure to traffic - efficient transportation, and controlled land use are the important step to reduce exposure to traffic.
- ii) Reduce the chances of accidents - it would require the three Es, Viz., Traffic Engineering, Traffic Enforcement and Traffic Education.
- iii) Reduce the harm done when accident occur - it would require better safety standards of vehicles and use of safety equipment's by occupants/drivers of vehicles, such as seat belts, helmets airbags, etc.
- iv) Reduce the post-accidents harm - it would require efficient and effective emergency medical response system i.e. quick treatment of accident victims.

In this background the State would attempt to reduce the annual frequency of accidents to 50% by 2025 and to zero level by 2030. Further, road safety issues would be taken in a holistic manner by covering accident abatement measures, accident insurance and compensation, quicker settlement of accident cases and rehabilitation programs for accident victims. Special consideration

would be given to the disadvantageous section of the society and vulnerable road users.

3. KEY ACTION AREAS OF ROAD SAFETY POLICY

The protective efforts of the Government would be pursued vigorously in order to realize zero accident vision by 2030. For this purpose, following 15 key action areas have been identified:

- i) Coordination and Management,
- ii) Crash Data Collection and Management System,
- iii) Sensitization of stakeholders and Raising Awareness about Road Safety Issues,
- iv) Road Safety Publicity and Campaigns,
- v) Road Safety Education and Training,
- vi) Ensuring Safer Road Infrastructure,
- vii) Traffic Legislations and Enforcement of Traffic Laws,
- viii) Emergency Medical Assistance to Crash Victims,
- ix) Upgrading of Vehicle Safety Standards and Testing Procedure,
- x) Strengthening of Traffic Police, MVD and Improving Law Enforcement,
- xi) Ensuring Safer Drivers and Setting up of Driver Training, Testing and Licensing Centers,
- xii) Undertaking Road Safety Research and HRD,
- xiii) Ensuring safety of Vulnerable Road Users,
- xiv) Strengthening Institutional and Financial Resources for Road Safety works, and
- xv) Implementation Strategy.

Following sections provide a brief action plan for the above key areas.

3.1. Coordination and Management

A number of agencies including PWD, Transport, Police, Health, Development Authorities etc. are involved in road safety related activities. Kerala Road Safety Authority (KRSA) has been entrusted with the task of coordination and management of road safety activities in the State. In this direction, suitable

steps would be taken to further enhance the inter-departmental coordination at State, district, Taluk and Panchayat levels. District road safety committees would be strengthened and a group of volunteers would be created at "Community levels" to assist accident victims. Safe community programs at Panchayat levels would be initiated.

3.2. Crash Data Collection and Management System

The Government has to implement an online software for accident reporting and data analysis in all the Police Stations. The application of this software should be expanded to every traffic police, MVD & PWD officials & it should have the access of viewing it and modifying their part as per the improvement/action. Accident data from insurance companies, Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT), Hospitals/Trauma care centers and other sources should also be collected and compiled in the said software. Ultimately, at the end output would be in form of GIS platform which should be handled by a research agency like NATPAC. Special need based surveys would be conducted to supplement this database.

3.3. Sensitization of stakeholders and Raising Awareness about Road Safety Issues

The Government would take necessary steps to raise awareness about the various issues of road safety including social, economic and human suffering implications of road accidents. It would sensitize all the stakeholders about what needs to be done to curb the menace of road accidents. This should result in effective involvement of different stakeholders so that they can play meaningful role in promoting road safety.

3.4. Road Safety Publicity and Campaigns

The Government has identified key unsafe behavioral elements of road safety such as not using helmet/ seatbelt, dangerous overtaking, over speeding, not observing central yellow marking etc. Public Safety Campaign would be launched for mass education on these issues. Publicity campaigns would be scientifically designed and investigative studies would be conducted to evaluate the impact of such campaigns.

3.5. Road Safety Education and Training

Road Safety Education would be made a part of the curriculum for enhancing road safety awareness at an early stage. The Department of Public Instruction, NATPAC, KSTP, Department of Transportation and other agencies would be involved in developing school based road safety education programs for school children. Production of education material for school children, teacher's guide and teacher training programs are also to be undertaken. The provision of pedestrian subways/over bridge near schools would be made as per the need.

Road safety publicity campaigns will be used to propagate good road safety practices among the community. The Government would encourage all professionals associated with road design, road maintenance, traffic management, traffic enforcement etc. to attain adequate knowledge of road safety issues.

Road safety community programs at Panchayat, school neighborhood area, work centers, etc. would be formulated and implemented.

3.6. Ensuring Safer Road Infrastructure

PWD, with the help of NATPAC and KHRI would review safety issues with respect to road planning and design and maintenance of roads. A Manual for the State on "Safety-conscious Highway Design Standards" would be adopted and specific sections on "Safety at road Works" would be incorporated. Road Safety Auditing of existing roads and new roads would be carried out in a phased manner. The provision of cycle tracks would be made in areas having high use of cycles.

Accident prone Locations would be identified and improved in phased manner for all important roads in the State. PWD, NATPAC, and other agencies would carry out "Before and After" studies for all remedial works and evaluate the effectiveness of Safety Schemes. Speed breakers, zebra lines, reflectors etc. would be used wherever found necessary.

Application of Intelligent Transport System (ITS) to establish a safe and efficient transport system would be encouraged. Enforcement Authorities would

be provided modern/automated traffic management equipment for smoother and safer flow of traffic.

3.7. Traffic Legislations and Enforcement of Traffic Laws

The Police and MVD engaged in traffic law enforcement are to enhance their operational efficiency with in the current legislation and identify additional legislations amendments needed. Introduction of graduated licensing system and hazard perception test for driving license candidates will be explored and adopted.

3.8. Emergency Medical Assistance to Crash Victims

The Government would strive to ensure that all persons involved in road accidents benefit from speedy and effective trauma care and management. The current practice in emergency medical assistance is to be reviewed. Thereafter a plan would be developed to strengthen the emergency medical services including communication, transportation, on the spot medical aid, new trauma care centers, rehabilitation centers etc. Hospitals, both under public and private sectors, alongside the major roads would be adequately equipped to provide for trauma care and rehabilitation.

3.9. Up gradation of Vehicle Safety Standards and Testing Procedure

A review of current vehicle testing system, standards and practice would be conducted. Training programs need to be conducted for police and staff of Motor Vehicle Department on road side vehicle inspection. A long-term plan to implement an effective, professional and well-resourced vehicle testing center and issuance of fitness certificate would be undertaken. Suitable legal provisions would be made for proper and safer use of different types of vehicles including school buses, heavy vehicles and vehicles carrying hazardous materials.

3.10. Strengthening of Traffic Police and MVD and Improving Law Enforcement

The Government would take steps to improve quality of enforcement to ensure effective and uniform implementation of safety laws. The steps would be undertaken to establish and strengthen highway patrolling on major roads.

Training programs for traffic police in effective law enforcement, use of modern equipment, and dealing with traffic law offenders need to be undertaken. Task force headed by a Circle Inspector would be formed in areas having high accident rate. Task force members would be given training at PTC, Drivers training Institute etc. Modern equipment to control and regulate traffic would be made available to traffic police.

3.11. Ensuring Safer Drivers and Setting up of Driver Training, Testing and Licensing Centers

The Government would strengthen the system of driver licensing and training to improve the competence and capability of drivers. In each district driver training and testing centers would be planned and developed in a phased manner.

3.12. Undertaking Road Safety Research and HRD

NATPAC, Engineering Colleges, KHRI, Institute of Driver Training and Research and design wing of PWD would be encouraged to undertake road safety research. Funding for research projects would be provided by the KRSA, in accordance to the needs of KRSA and availability of funds.

The Government would establish centers of excellence in road safety research in regional and academic institutions. Steps would be undertaken to disseminate the results of research and examples of good practices through publication, training, conferences/workshops, and websites.

3.13. Ensuring Safety of Vulnerable Road Users

The design and construction of all road infrastructure and supporting facilities will take into account the needs of non-motorized transport, pedestrians, vulnerable and physically challenged in an appropriate manner. Steps would be taken to disseminate "best practices" in this regard to town planners, highway/traffic engineers, architects and others.

3.14. Strengthening Institutional and Financial Resources for Road Safety Works

The Government would take suitable steps to ensure that, the required institutional and financial environments for road safety works are further

strengthened. The reforms in these areas would provide for the active and the extensive participation of the community at large, private sector, academic institutions, NGOs and road safety activities.

Newer sources for generating financial resources for road safety works would be explored. The concerned Department would be encouraged to provide enough financial resources for road safety activities of their Department. KRSA would also properly supplement the Departmental efforts in funding road safety works.

3.15. Implementation Strategy

The Government has established Kerala Road Safety Authority to coordinate and oversee the works related to road safety. The authority would take suitable steps to implement the Road Safety Policy and Action Plan. A review of role and activities of KRSA would be undertaken to further strengthen the effectiveness of KRSA and amend the KRSA Act as per the need.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Accident situation in the State has improved substantially. The proactive steps such as enforcement of helmet/seatbelt use, control on over speeding, observance of traffic signs/markings, lane discipline, control on drunken driving, improvement of accident prone location, road safety education and better enforcement all have resulted in better safety level on roads. These efforts would be strengthened to maintain this down trend in accidents.

Action as identified under 15 key areas would be taken up on priority basis. Road safety situation would be monitored on regular basis and corrective steps taken to improve safety level for all segments of road users. The current road safety policy would be updated based on the feedback received from various road safety programs as envisaged in 15 key areas of action plan.