



Road Safety

With Frederick Mubanga



DAILY NATION Friday February 26, 2021 - Road Transport and Safety Agency -

DRIVING SPEED AND ACCIDENT RISK

DRIVING speed is an important factor in road safety. Speed not only affects the severity of a crash, but is also related to the risk of being involved in a crash. The higher the speed, the greater the stopping distance required, and hence the increased risk of a crash.

According to a Road Safety Manual on Speed produced by the World Health Organisation (WHO), it is clear that as more kinetic energy must be absorbed during a high-speed impact, there is a higher risk of injury should a crash occur.

Speeding is one of the major causes of road traffic crashes in Zambia. A baseline survey on speeding conducted by the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR) on behalf of the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) in 2016, revealed that over 39 percent of vehicles sampled in Central, Lusaka, Southern and Copperbelt provinces were speeding on public roads. This entails that most of the

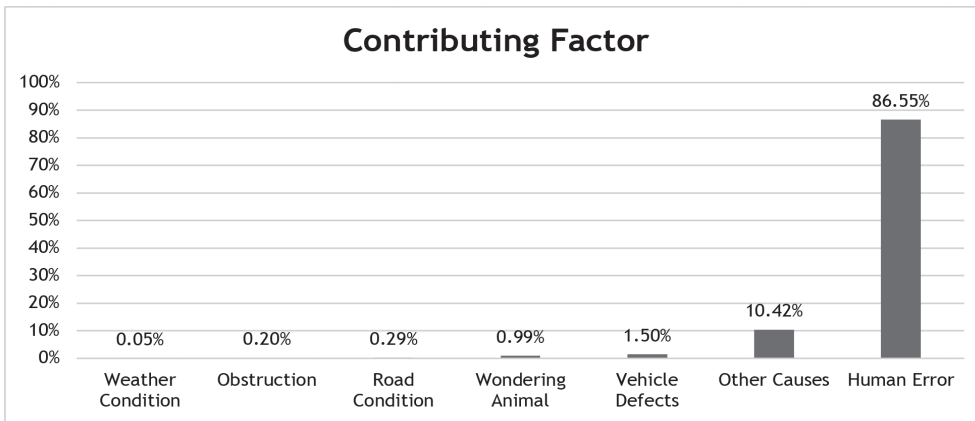
an over-speeding vehicle.

The frequency of speeding vehicles is so prominent along the major highways in Zambia. Accidents statistics also reveal that road traffic crashes involving speeding drivers are prominent on the Great North Road (Livingstone to Nakonde).

Research has shown that drivers driving at high speed have the greatest risk of being involved in a road crash than drivers driving at lower speed. Additionally, the impact, chances of sustaining serious injuries and death are very high as compared to a driver moving at slow speed.

Additionally, the extent of the damage to the vehicle, property and road furniture is equally extensive in a road crash involving a vehicle moving at high speed. Apart from the trauma and human suffering associated with road traffic crashes, the impact on the economy is enormous.

Speeding has many disadvantages than advantages on the road. The following are some of the disadvantages of



Road Traffic Crashes contributory factors

vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists is especially important and should be followed by all motorists. Excessive and inappropriate speed is causing a serious and worsening road safety problem in Zambia, and a call for change in bad driver behaviour in this regard cannot be over emphasised.

A number of research projects conducted globally have clearly identified inappropriate speed as being a particular problem. Thus, as a country we will equally have a portion of this problem which need to be addressed immediately.

As a country, we have started drawing lessons from successful and non-successful initiatives used to illustrate the advice provided, and put in place practical speed management strategies such as speed zoning, speed culming, and speed limit measures including the installation of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices on long distance public transport such as buses and trucks.

RTSA is ensuring that all bus operators implement the Road Safety Fleet Management Policy of 2017 which is underpinned by the following five factors namely:

- Driver Management;
- Vehicle Management;
- Journey Management (including installation of the Global Positioning System – GPS);
- Health and Safety at the Workplace; and
- Organisational Management. This is in a bid to manage speed related factors.

Additionally, there is need to consider the potential role of measures involving engineering and enforcement, as well as using education to change speed related behaviour.

To actualise this personal responsibility of road safety, all stakeholders are encouraged to participate in road safety matters.

Public and private institutions, Public Service Vehicle

Operators and drivers, the media, policy makers and all stakeholders should take up initiatives to promote road safety

at all levels.

Finally, there is urgent need for motorists to change the bad driver attitude being exhibited

on the road which is characterised by a trend of speeding especially along the major highways, a situation which has been cited as one of the major causes of accidents on the Zambian roads.

Motorists should therefore follow appropriate speed limits. Those that will be found wanting will have their Driving Licences suspended or cancelled as provided for under the Road Traffic Act No. 11 of 2002.

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Speeding Public Service Vehicle killing over 21 passengers along the Kabwe – Lusaka road in 2017

drivers on the Zambian roads are driving above the prescribed speed limit, a situation that has contributed to road crashes, resulting into deaths and injuries.

Speeding is ranked as the second cause of road traffic accidents in Zambia. If motorists observe appropriate speed limits, the country is projected to reduce the number of road traffic accidents by 35 percent.

Further, it was established that speeding prevalence was high among male motorists with 58 percent of them being observed as over-speeding than their female counterparts. The speeding prevalence among female motorists was 42 percent. The 2020 road accident statistics reveal that 50 percent of road traffic fatalities involve passengers and cyclists. Passengers and motorists are equally at risk of being involved in a road traffic crash involving

over-speeding:

- Reduced reaction time,
- Poor judgement of distance, and
- Increased severity of injury.

Therefore, motorists and passengers have the responsibility to ensure that vehicles move at appropriate speed. Speed management is a very important tool for improving road safety. However, improving compliance with speed limits and reducing unsafe driving speed are not easy tasks as many drivers do not recognise the risks involved and often the perceived benefits of speeding outweigh the perceived problems that can result. Thus, the management of speed calls for a concerted, long-term, multi-disciplinary response by all stakeholders.

Reducing motor vehicle speed where the road user mix includes a high volume of

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