



Fact Sheet: Speed Management

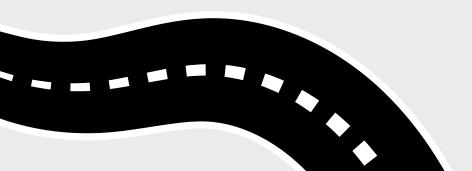
Why Speed Management Matters

- Speed is the most significant risk factor in road traffic crashes, affecting both the likelihood of a crash and its severity.
- In 2021, the World Health Organisation estimated about 1.19 million people died globally from road traffic injuries, of these, an estimated 259,601 road traffic deaths occurred across 54 countries of the African continent, accounting for 24 percent of the global burden of deaths resulting from road traffic injuries¹.
- Speed affects both energy levels and impact force. The amount of kinetic energy a
 vehicle has determines the force of impact. Even small increases in speed can
 significantly heighten road crash risk.
- Although road crashes are not inevitable, they are preventable through safer infrastructure, safer vehicles and road user behaviour.
- Lower speeds also bring additional benefits such as less air pollution, reduced fuel use, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and quieter, more liveable cities².

The Safe System Approach

- Recognizes that humans are vulnerable and errant and will make mistakes.
- Roads and vehicles must be designed as a system that anticipates mistakes and keeps crash forces below survivable limits; around 30 km/h for unprotected road users.
- · The 30 km/h Threshold
- 30km/h is recommended as the safe limit in areas with high interaction between vehicles and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and children.
- Human bodies can generally only tolerate impact speeds up to approximately 30 km/h before the likelihood of death or serious injury decreases dramatically³.
- The risk of death is almost five times higher for a pedestrian hit at 50 km/h compared to 30 km/h and at 65 km/h, the pedestrian fatality risk rises dramatically.
- African countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda and Tunisia have already adopted to 30 km/h speed limit in urban centres, school zones, and residential areas.

³International Transport Forum (2018), Speed and Crash Risk





¹Africa Status Report on Road Safety 2025, SSATP (World Bank Africa Transport Policy Program), 2025 ²GRSP Speed Fact Sheet







Why Speed Increases Risk

- An increase in average speed is directly related both to the likelihood of a crash occurring and to the severity of the consequences of the crash. For example, every 1% increase in mean speed produces a 4% increase in the fatal crash risk and a 3% increase in the serious crash risk.
- Reduced Reaction Time: At higher speeds, drivers have less time to perceive hazards and react.
- Increase in Stopping Distance:
 - At 30 km/h it takes 12 meters to stop.
 - At 40 km/h it takes 26 meters to stop.
 - At 50 km/h it takes 35 meters to stop.
 - At 60 km/h it takes 45 meters to stop.
- Narrowed Field of Vision: Higher speeds reduce peripheral vision, making it harder to detect pedestrians and cyclists.

Key Messages

- Excessive speed is one of the leading causes of road traffic deaths globally
- Setting and enforcing safe speed limits, particularly 30 km/h in urban areas, is one
 of the most effective and low-cost interventions to save lives.
- Speed management is both a public health measure and a sustainable development tool, aligned with Africa's Road Safety Action Plan 2021–2030 and the global target of halving road deaths by 2030.

References:

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