



ROAD SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET

CHILDREN'S SAFETY ON THE ROADS

Information Sheet 3

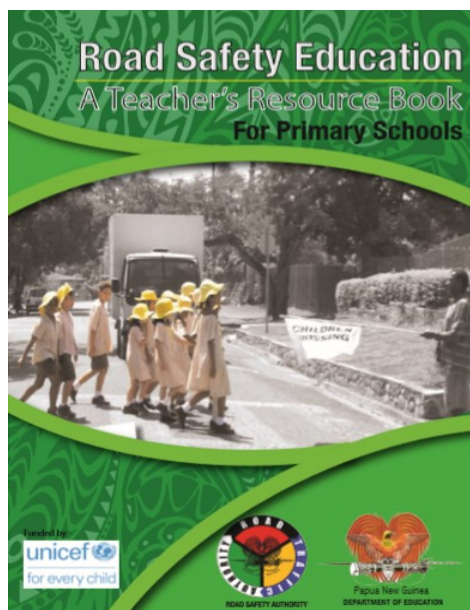
2019

CHILD ROAD SAFETY

The Road Traffic Authority (RTA) has prepared this Road Safety Information Sheet with respect to children's safety when using roads and roadsides. It is based on the most recently available collated crash and casualty information (2010–2014)¹ reported to and by the Police and contained in the RTAs crash database, along with scientific fact and research from overseas that is applicable to PNG. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues related to crashes involving children to the Government, the public and professionals working in areas that affect road safety and to identify possible ways to reduce the number of children being killed and/or injured in PNG.

Between 2010 and 2014, over 20% of road deaths involved children aged 15 years or younger. This is more than twice as high as elsewhere in high-income countries where children account for 5-10% of all road deaths². Boys and girls aged 6-10 years are particularly vulnerable as pedestrians.

Children get injured and/or killed in road crashes as both pedestrians (see Figure 1.1) and passengers in a motor vehicle.

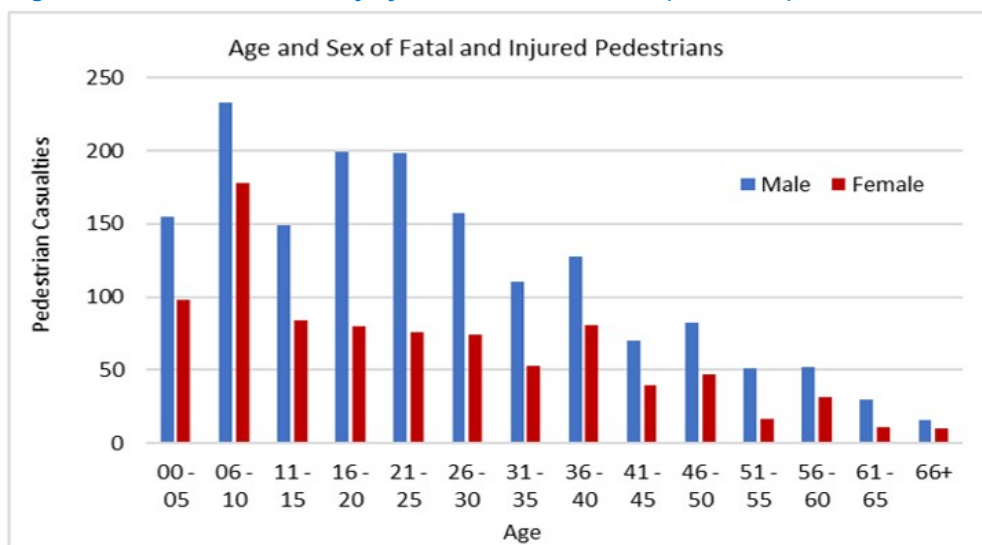


Education and awareness has a key part to play in improving child road safety, particularly when using the road as a pedestrian. Engineers also need to provide appropriate and safe facilities alongside the road to separate out road users as well as to assist with pedestrians crossing the road.

2010 to 2014 Child Involvement - Data at a Glance

- Over 300 children aged 15 years and younger were killed and a further 1,620 injured in reported road crashes over the five year period between 2010 to 2014.
- 13% of all road crash casualties, regardless of the severity, involved a child up to the age of 15 years. This increases to 21% of all road crash deaths.
- Almost half (47%) of all children aged 15 years and under killed or injured in a road crash were pedestrians. This increases to almost three quarters (73%) for deaths alone. The remainder are typically passengers.
- 36% of all pedestrians killed or injured in a road crash were aged 15 years or younger. Pedestrians under the age of 11 years are particularly at risk, representing over a quarter of all pedestrian deaths.
- 16% of children aged 15 years or younger that are injured in a road crash die. This compares with 9% for all casualties aged 16 years and above.
- Almost 40% of children aged 15 years or under killed or injured in a road crash were female. This compares with 29% for all casualties regardless of age.

Figure 1.1 Fatal and Serious Injury Pedestrian Casualties (2010-2014)



Source: RTA. 2010-2014 Road Safety Data Report. Papua New Guinea

1. The database is consistently being updated with more recent crash information. Data reports with more updated information will be prepared as and when more recent data has been entered and each year's records finalised.
 2. WHO and UNICEF. Children and Road Traffic Injury. World Report on Child Injury Prevention.



The Problem...

There are a number of reasons for children being more at risk than adults in road crashes, particularly as pedestrians:

- Children lack the skills and experience of safe road use with a resulting poor understanding of traffic behaviour.
- Children are more likely to have poor judgement when estimating speed and distance with not fully developed observation and listening powers.
- Small bodies make children less likely to be seen by approaching drivers.
- Children are often impulsive and unpredictable, and may lack appropriate supervision when near a road.
- Children often travel in vehicles without any restraint (seatbelt). A parent holding their child is insufficient to restrain a child in the event of a collision.
- Roads are often treated by users as a shared space for playing, sitting, walking, working and driving on.

What can we do?

Education (and awareness/encouragement) is particularly important for children given that many of their attitudes and beliefs are developed in the early years of their life from their parents, carers and educators. It is vital therefore that road safety be taught in schools as part of the curriculum rather than as one-off visits by the RTA or Police.

In particular, children need to be taught how to walk along the road safely, how to use protected crossing points as well as how to cross when no facilities are provided, how to choose safe routes, such as to and from school, and have awareness of the road environment.

Engineers must also assist by providing suitable separated facilities for pedestrians, particularly children travelling to/from school. Pedestrian fatalities and casualties on a weekday typically peak at the start and end of the school day.

Children (as should adults whenever possible) must be seated inside vehicles and wear an appropriate restraint such as a seatbelt with support to sit on given limited access to child car seats.

Required Knowledge and Skills

PRE-SCHOOL

Children at this age are too young to be responsible for their own safety. As such, they need to:

- Recognise that roads are dangerous places that are primarily for traffic and that small children cannot always be seen by drivers.
- Know that traffic may come from unexpected places and recognize the direction of approaching traffic by sight and sound.
- Walk only on footpaths or the edge of the road if they don't exist and know the safest places to cross the road near home.
- Know that they have to stop at the edge of the road, look around and listen before walking directly across the road.
- Play in safe places away from roads that have been identified and chosen by an adult.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL (YOUNGER)

Children at this level are typically given more responsibility for their own safety. As such, they need to know:

- That crashes can lead to injury and death.
- How to get to and from school safely.
- The direction of traffic by sight and sound.
- About the dangers of not being seen or not being able to see other traffic in all types of weather and conditions.
- How and where to play safely.
- That children should ideally be accompanied near busy roads.
- Where to stop, look and listen before crossing and to use the shortest distance when walking directly across the road.

PRIMARY SCHOOL (OLDER)

Children at this age are often expected to deal with traffic risks themselves. As such, they should:

- Set a good example to other children and subsequently identify and recommend safe places to play to other children.
- Know the need to be seen when near and/or in traffic and judge hazards of stationary vehicles and the risks associated with playing in or crossing the road near them.
- Understand traffic lights, road signs and markings and signals given by drivers and the Police.
- Understand the concept of differing vehicle speeds by observation, and subsequently be able to judge speeds and distances.
- Understand the dangers of controlling animals near roads.

The above text and information has been adapted from TRL Overseas Road Note 17, Road Safety Education in Developing Countries. Guidelines for Good Practice in Primary School with particular focus on the Situation in Ghana. 1997. DfID, UK; as well as the draft PNG Road Safety Education Teachers Resource Book for Primary Schools. 2019.



Our vision:

Road transport in PNG that is customer oriented, safe, efficient and environment friendly within an efficient and sustainable system

Be our partner ...

The RTA is a regulatory statutory authority and is bound by the Road Traffic Act, which established the Authority and defines its functions as well as providing for regulations and rules for road traffic. This 2-page Information Sheet forms part of a series of background road safety documents aimed at improving road user awareness.

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