



ROAD SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET



Information Sheet 7

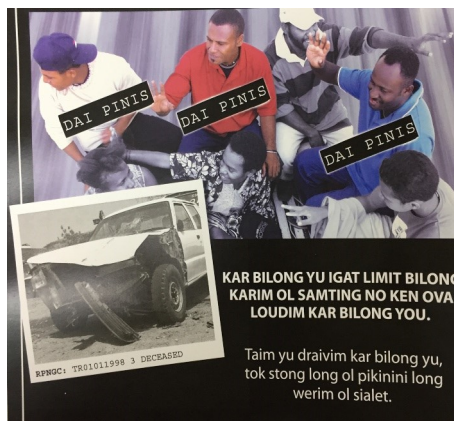
PASSENGERS IN UTES, TRUCKS AND PMVs

2019

Passenger Safety

The Road Traffic Authority (RTA) has prepared this Road Safety Information Sheet with respect to the safety of passengers in motor vehicles. It is based on the most recently available crash and casualty data contained in its road crash database (2010 to 2014)¹, along with scientific fact and research from overseas that is applicable to PNG. The intent of this Information Sheet is to highlight the key road safety issues related to crashes resulting in passenger casualties, particularly those travelling in the rear trays of utility vehicles (utes), sat outside in trucks and in public motor vehicles (PMVs), and to identify possible ways to reduce the number of such casualties in PNG.

Between 2010 and 2014, almost half (45%) of all fatalities were passengers in motor vehicles, the vast majority of them being unsecured passengers in PMVs, trucks and in the rear of utes. As shown in Figure 1.1, this increases to over 70% for all fatalities and casualties involved in a road crash.

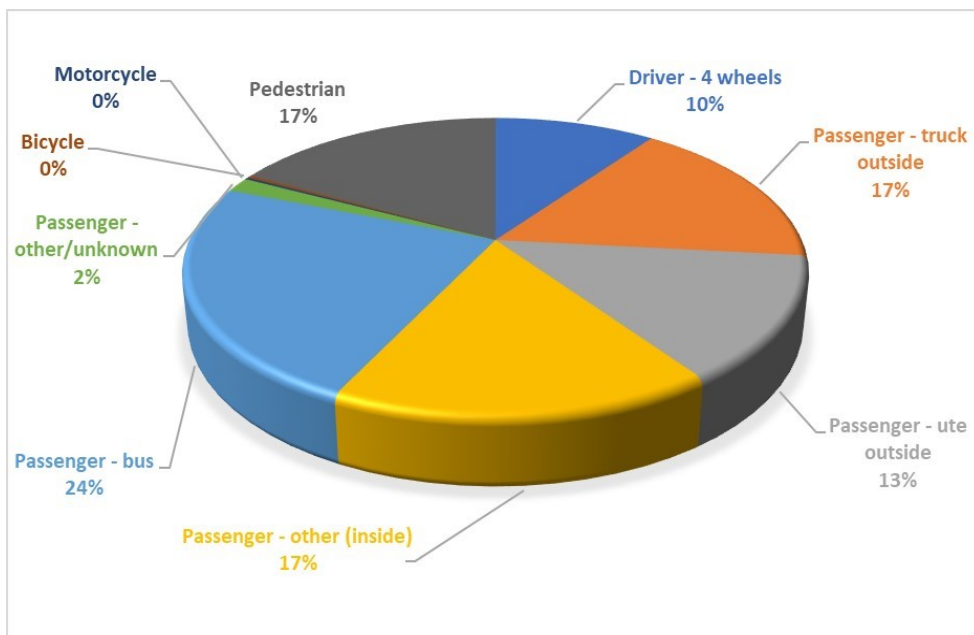


Whilst a higher number and percentage of passengers sitting or standing outside in the rear of a truck were recorded as being injured compared to the rear of a ute, a higher number of people sitting outside in the rear of a ute were actually killed in a crash compared to a truck. A higher number of passengers sitting or standing outside in the rear of a truck or ute were killed compared to bus passengers sitting inside.

2010 to 2014 Passenger Casualties - Data at a Glance

- 73% of all casualties killed or injured in a road crash were passengers in a motor vehicle.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of all passengers killed or injured in a road crash were using a bus or standing/sitting in the rear of a truck/ute.
- 315 (44%) of the 722 passengers killed in a road crash were sitting or standing outside of a truck or ute.
- 66% of all passenger casualties sitting/standing outside a ute were killed or seriously injured, compared with 59% of occupant casualties sitting inside a ute.
- 271 collisions were recorded where 10 or more vehicle passengers were killed or injured in a single crash. These incidents resulted in 3,963 passengers (i.e. excluding other road users such as drivers or nearby pedestrians) being killed or injured.
- 75% of all passenger fatalities and casualties occurred in crashes in rural areas - where access to health care and ambulances is extremely limited.
- 64% of all passengers killed in a road crash were a result of the vehicle either overturning or hitting an object off the road.

Figure 1.1 Percentage of Road Users Killed or Injured by Type



Source: RTA. 2010 - 2014 Road Safety Data Report. Papua New Guinea. 2019

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.



Seat Belt Wearing/Passenger Loading and the Law

Whilst the level of seatbelt wearing is not currently known in different parts of PNG, a 2009 study at Port Moresby General Hospital Emergency Department indicated that 57% of fatal and seriously injured drivers examined had not worn a seat belt in the crash they were involved in. Whilst seatbelts don't stop crashes from occurring, they can stop you from being killed and/or more seriously injured.

Section 26 of the Road User Rule requires that occupants of motor cars must wear seatbelts where they are provided. Seat belts must be fitted to both the front and rear seats of cars.

Whilst the law permits passengers to sit in the rear tray of utes without any restraints, the result is such that in the event of a ute being in a crash and overturning, the chances of passengers being ejected from the vehicle and hence suffering greater injuries or

death is much increased. If passengers are sitting in the rear tray, they must sit within the tray rather than on the rail.

Similarly, whilst the law currently does not require passengers in buses or trucks to wear a seat belt, the risks of people being ejected from such vehicles in the event of a crash and seriously injured are very high.

Unless specifically and formally approved or exempted, motor cars can only carry a maximum of 8 persons (including the driver) per vehicle. Approved vehicles may include PMVs, whereby a specific limit on the number of permitted passengers that can be carried is given. On most buses in use in PNG, this typically amounts to 25 people sitting down.

Given the risks associated with travelling in PMVs, the Road User Rule states that passengers standing in trucks or standing on the running boards or partly outside a



Unsafe and illegal behaviour on a PMV by a Crew Member and a passenger standing up partly outside the door

vehicle such as a PMV are committing an offence as they are more likely to be thrown out of the vehicle resulting in death/injury.

Overloading vehicles with excessive numbers of passengers or goods can contribute to crashes as braking systems aren't designed to cope with such weights, resulting in brake failure when the brakes are applied. Overloaded vehicles also damage the road surface resulting in other road safety concerns.

Recommendations and Safety Tips

The need for people to travel around in order to do business, travel to/from market, go to work/school or visit friends is acknowledged. This is how we will grow the economy of our country. At the same time, it is noted that there are limited numbers of private motor vehicles for use at present in PNG compared to the population size. PNG has a low level of motorization.

Whilst other motorized travel options include public motor vehicles, many vehicles used to transport people and goods are old and unroadworthy. However, at present, it simply isn't viable to stop using such vehicles. Accordingly until our vehicle fleet improves and increases, the following simple rules may help save lives:

- Don't overload the vehicle - if the

vehicle already has the maximum of number of passengers, or appears overcrowded, don't get on it.

- Whenever possible, sit inside the cab of a ute and use the seatbelt rather than the rear tray.
- Where provided, always wear your seatbelt and ensure that any children in the vehicle are buckled up and properly restrained inside. Whilst seatbelts can't prevent the crash from occurring, they can greatly reduce the severity of any crash that occurs.
- Don't hold or sit your children on your knee without using the seatbelt around them - in a serious crash, it is physically impossible to hold on to an unrestrained object such as a child due to the forces involved.

In order to better understand the problem, it is vital that :

- Seatbelt surveys are carried out to better understand the problem and allow targeted enforcement and monitoring to occur.
- Traffic Enforcement Officers such as the Police to strongly enforce the wearing of seatbelts.
- Discourage passengers sitting in the rear trays of utes and to discourage their sale/purchase as a vehicle intended to carry passengers outside the vehicle in the rear.
- Encourage the purchase of new imported buses to have seat belts already fitted with changes to the Road User Rules for mandatory seat belt use in all motor vehicles.



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 Information Sheet forms part of a series of background road safety documents aimed at improving road user awareness in PNG.

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