



**ROAD SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET**



Information Sheet 2

**SPEEDING**

2012

## Speed Related Accidents

The National Road Safety Council (NRSC) has prepared this Road Safety Information Sheet with respect to speed related accidents. It is based on the most recently available accident data contained in its accident database (2006 and 2007), 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 excessive and/or inappropriate speeding, and to identify possible ways to reduce the number of such accidents in PNG.

Between 2006 and 2007, inappropriate and/or excessive vehicle speed was reported by the Police to be contributory factor in almost 30% of all fatal accidents. It should be noted that a 2009 study of road accident casualties treated at the Port Moresby General Hospital Emergency Department reported that speed was considered to be a factor in over 60% of the collisions.

Research has shown that higher speeds



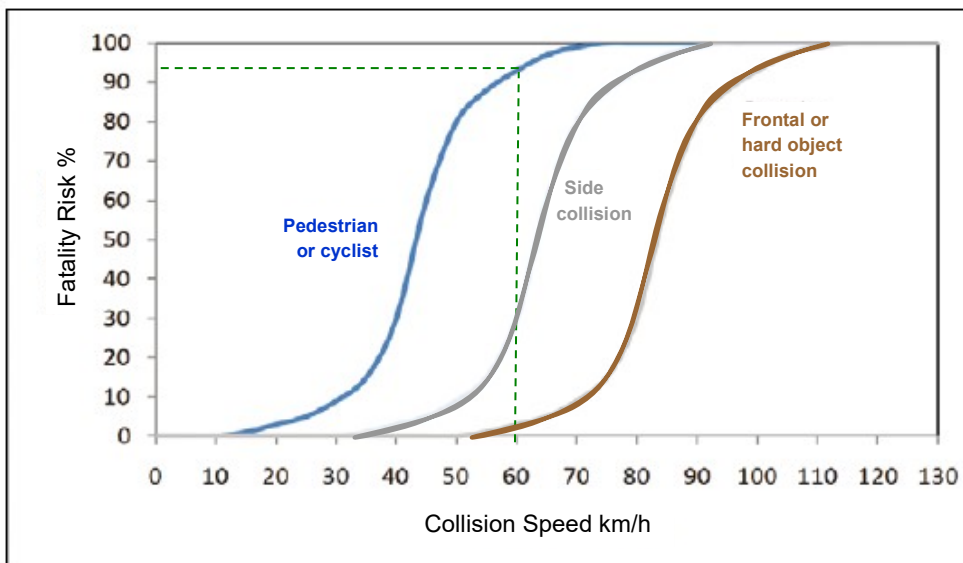
lead to an increased risk of an accident occurring, and when an accident does occur, there is a higher probability of it being of a more serious nature.

As shown in Figure 1.1, the likelihood of death in a road accident is dependent upon both vehicle speed as well as the type of collision that occurs. Pedestrians are particularly vulnerable to higher speeds, with a 95% chance of death if hit by a vehicle travelling at 60km/h.

### 2006 and 2007 Speed Related Accident Data at a Glance

- Speed (too fast for conditions) was reported as a contributory factor in 29% of all fatal accidents.
- 785 speed related accidents were reported during 2006 and 2007, resulting in 151 deaths and 850 injuries to road users.
- 58% of all fatal and injury speed related accidents occurred in rural areas - reflecting the high speed nature of such roads.
- 39% of all fatal and injury speed related accidents involved a collision with one or more pedestrians.
- 26% of all fatal and injury speed related accidents resulted in a vehicle overturning or running off the road and hitting a road side object.
- Pick-ups, buses and trucks were the most prevalent vehicle types involved in speed related accidents. Occupants of such vehicles typically get fatally or seriously injured in an accident given the lack of seatbelts or restraints for passengers.

**Figure 1.1 Collision Speed—Fatality Relationship**



Source: Safe Roads for Development. A Policy Framework for Safe Roads on Major Road Transport Networks - taken from Wramborg P. A new approach to a safe and sustainable road structure and street design for urban areas. 2005. Road Safety on Four Continents Conference. Warsaw, Poland.

## Speed Limits

Unless signed otherwise, the default speed limits are:

- 75km/h on rural roads (outside a town);
- 60km/h in urban areas (in a town); and
- 25km/h when passing a school or playground when children are entering or leaving.

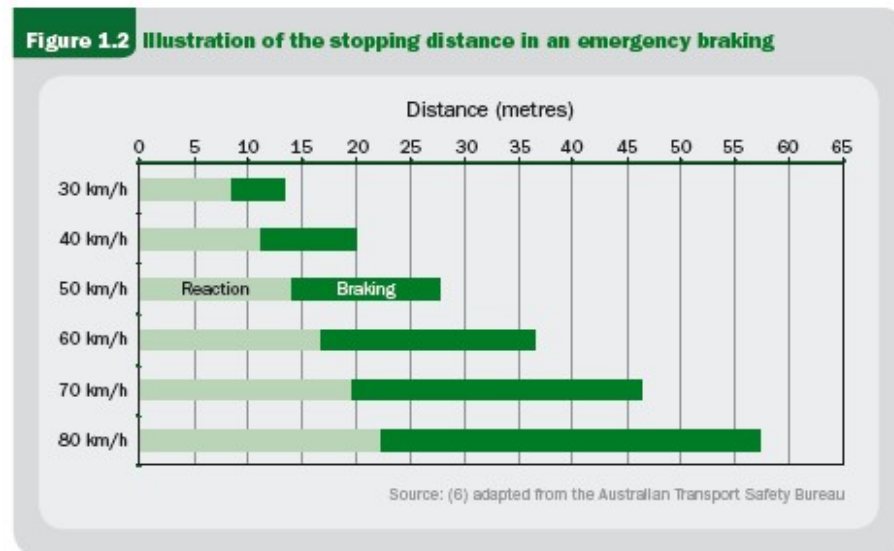
These speed limits and their associated signs indicate the maximum permitted speed that a vehicle can travel at. The Traffic Police can enforce both inappropriate (i.e. too fast for conditions, but within the speed limit) and excessive (i.e. in excess of the speed limit) speeding. Speeding drivers caught by the Police face fines and/or imprisonment.

When comparing speed limits with the collision speeds shown in Figure 1.1, pedestrians have over a 90% chance of being killed when hit by a motor vehicle in a traffic accident at the current 60km/h urban speed limit.

## Stopping Distances

As shown in Figure 1.2, at higher speeds, the distance travelled by a vehicle whilst a driver reacts to an unsafe situation (i.e. between realizing a problem and pressing the brake pedal) increases - thereby increasing the stopping distance. In addition, it also takes longer to stop whilst applying a vehicle's brakes at higher speeds. There is therefore less time and opportunity to take evasive action and the likelihood of an accident occurring increases with higher speeds.

Higher vehicle speeds make it more likely that a driver will lose control of their vehicle, fail to appropriately anticipate oncoming hazards and can pose a danger to other road users in terms of unexpected differences in vehicle speed.



(Source: Speed management: a road safety manual for decision makers and practitioners. GRSP. Geneva. 2008 - taken from OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre: Speed Management Report. Paris. 2006.)

## Recommendations and Safety Tips

There are many reasons why a driver may choose to speed - shorter journey time, peer pressure, 'fun', late for a meeting or pressures on PMV drivers to complete more journey's.

Accordingly, there is a need to address speeding issue through a number of measures - such as enforcement, engineering and education/awareness.

The following speed management techniques need to be implemented to help reduce speed related accidents:

- Encourage drivers to travel at an appropriate speed for the conditions - this may be less than the maximum permitted or signed speed limit.
- Review and set appropriate speed limits, particularly in urban areas where large numbers of pedestrians and vehicle mix.
- Encourage greater active enforcement of vehicle speeds and driver behavior by Traffic Police, rather than focusing on vehicle defects and/or driver licensing issues.
- Design and construct roads such that the expected operating speeds of vehicles are self-explaining, for instance through 'gateways' at the entrances to villages coupled with speed limit signs and/or 'traffic calming' such as road humps so that speed limits are 'self-enforcing'. Relocate nearby roadside objects that may be a hazard if hit by a driver.
- Raise driver and public awareness of the dangers of speeding - and support such campaigns with enforcement.



**Our vision:**

**To make PNG roads the safest in the Western Pacific**

**Be our partner ...**

The NRSC is a statutory authority set up by the NRSC Act 1997 to coordinate, promote and report on road safety. 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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