



# KEEPING PEDESTRIANS SAFE



## The bigger picture

- Globally, about 1,2 million people die and about 50 million are injured in traffic crashes each year.
- In South Africa, about 18 000 people die annually. Our death rate of 43 per 100 000 population is twice the world average.
- If concrete action is not taken now, these figures are predicted to increase by 65% between now and 2020.
- Pedestrian injury is the leading cause of traffic-related death in South Africa (44%).

## Pedestrian risk

- Who: Males (77%) and Blacks (82%) dominate. Children (0–14 years) account for 15% of all pedestrian deaths.
- When: Pedestrian deaths peaked in the early evening (18h00–21h00, 34%) and over weekends (Fri–Sun, 53%), with one-fifth (21%) of cases occurring on a Saturday.
- Alcohol: Pedestrians had the highest percentage of cases that tested positive for alcohol as well as the highest levels of alcohol consumption. Sixty percent of them were intoxicated at the time of the collision and their average blood alcohol level was 0,21 g/100 ml (over four times the legal limit for driving).

## Challenges in pedestrian safety

- The mismatch between rapid urbanisation and provision of adequate facilities for these migrants is a key challenge to urban planning and development in many South African cities. This is compounded with migrants being relatively unfamiliar with urban traffic.
- Many cities have inadequate separation of people and vehicles, making it necessary for people to use the roads for various other activities such as vending, playing and walking.
- Road design and urban planning tends to focus on the needs of vehicle users at the expense of pedestrians

## What needs to be done?

### General considerations

- Afford pedestrians greater priority in urban and transport planning by recognising them as equal users of the traffic environment.
- Use comprehensive injury prevention initiatives that embrace mixed land use and traffic systems, as well as socio-economic and environmental upliftment of the low-income informal sector.
- Embrace a systems-oriented approach that seeks to identify and rectify sources of design weakness in order to mitigate the severity and consequences of injury.



UNISA

Contact Details: Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme,  
Medical Research Council  
Tel: 021-9380216  
Fax: 021-9380381  
<http://www.mrc.ac.za/crime/crime.htm>  
<http://www.safety2006.info>

- Facilitate and encourage community-level initiatives to empower communities to identify local traffic problems and advocate for changes.
- At Government level, a thorough review of the challenge is required. Sufficient resources need to be dedicated to 'good practice' interventions, which need to be adequately evaluated for effectiveness.

### **Specific measures**

- Separate people and vehicles, especially around informal developments, by providing physical barriers and convenient over- and underpasses.
- Optimise on environmental speed control through the use of area-wide traffic calming such as speed humps, rumble strips, raised areas, narrowings and staggerings.
- Provide the necessary 'furniture' and infrastructure for pedestrians, for example, adequate crossings and avoiding the use of 'free' left turns when the traffic light is green.
- Improve the visibility of pedestrians by improving general visibility in the traffic environment through adequate road illumination and traffic signage and by promoting widespread use of reflective clothing.
- Ensure proper enforcement of laws against high-risk behaviours such as speeding and alcohol with strategies that are frequent and random in order to increase the perceived risk of being caught.
- Optimise on skills development and social marketing strategies that encourage safe and responsible traffic behaviour for both pedestrians and drivers.



## **8th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion**

**ICC, Durban  
South Africa  
2 – 5 April 2006**



**SAFETY 2006**  
SOUTH AFRICA  
2-5 APRIL

**Secretariat Office**  
PO Box 74790  
Lynnwood Ridge  
Pretoria, South Africa

T: +27-12-4812094  
F: +27-12-4812112  
E: [sec@safety2006.info](mailto:sec@safety2006.info)  
W: [www.safety2006.info](http://www.safety2006.info)