Ministry of
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The Road Safety Action Plan 2025 - 2026

Go safe

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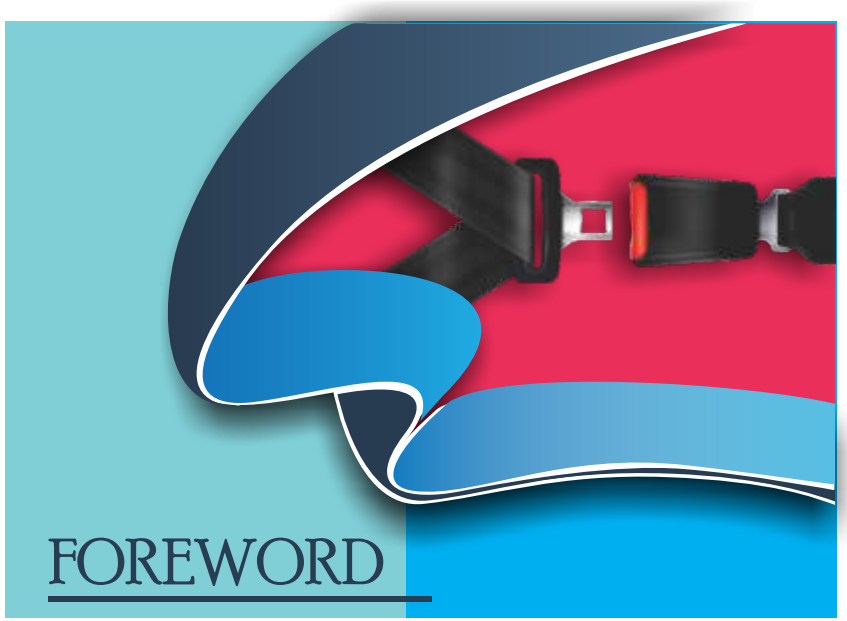

Sri Lanka, as a nation, must refuse to accept that deaths and serious injuries are an inevitable price of mobility and transportation. The **"Go Safe - Road Safety Action Plan 2025–2026"** has been developed as an operational framework to address this issue in a new and innovative manner through sustainable and well-coordinated efforts.

The short-term Action Plan for 2025 -2026 that we present serves as a crucial first step. With this, we formally recognize the need to build institutional capacity to obtain desired results. We are confident that this would help establish stronger governance, transparency and accountability by all levels of government, and that adopting a social model approach would deliver road safety action which fosters a road safety culture across Sri Lanka.

Our approach is founded on three core principles :

- Adoption of the globally recognized Five Pillars framework,
- The implementation of a clearly defined set of planned processes,
- The execution by accountable individuals and institutions.

Through this comprehensive, system-wide action plan, we aspire to generate an unprecedented level of awareness, engagement, and investment in road safety, and foster strong, long-term partnerships that will carry this mission forward.

By implementing this action plan and drawing upon the experiences and opportunities it embraces, we hope to design a long-term, National Road Safety Strategy, made possible through the collective participation of government institutions, the private sector, and road users under relevant international guidelines.

Ministry of Transport, Highways, Ports & Civil Aviation
June 2025

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01 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Challenge of Road Safety in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka continues to grapple with the persistent and deeply concerning crisis of road traffic injuries and fatalities, despite having passed through the First Global Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011–2020) and now being midway through the Second Decade (2021–2030). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2021), road traffic deaths in Sri Lanka have shown a gradual decline, falling from 13.6 to 11.5 deaths per 100,000 population between 2010 and 2021. More recent data, based on annual average of 2,467 deaths for 2022-2024 and a population of 22 million, place the current fatality rate at around **11.2 per 100,000, exceeding the globally recommended safety threshold of ⩽10 deaths** per 100,000 population, as set by the **Second Global Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030** and endorsed by **WHO** and the **United Nations**. Thus, the grim reality

remains, far too many lives are being lost or permanently altered on the roads each year.

Road Traffic Accidents : Sri Lanka Police has recorded 118,697 road accidents between 2020 and 2024, resulting in 12,322 deaths, an annual average of 23,740 accidents and 2,464 fatalities. Figure 1 highlights that minor accidents constitute the largest share of reported road accidents (37%), while serious accidents (28%) also contribute to the overall burden. Property-damage-only cases (24%) entail substantial economic cost related to vehicle repairs and insurance claims. Fatal accidents, though fewer in number (10%), carry the highest human cost, underscoring the grave consequences of road safety failure.

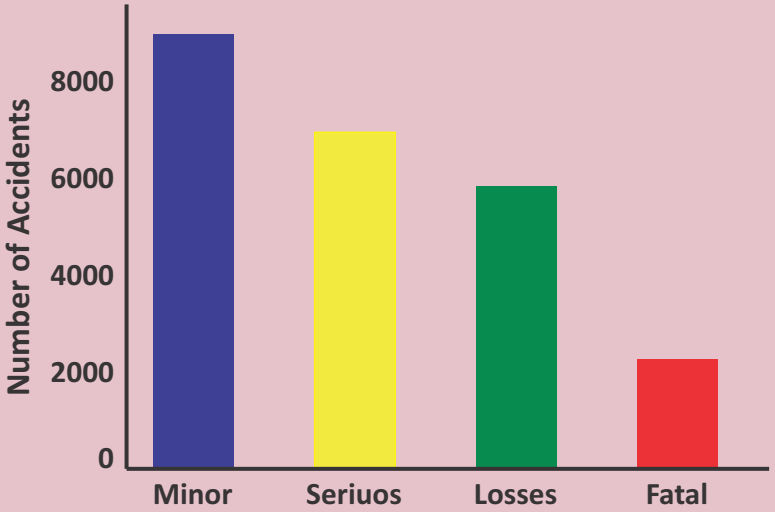


Figure 1 :
Average Annual Number of Road Accidents in Sri Lanka by Severity : 2020-2024

Road Traffic Fatalities : Motorcyclists alone account for 34% of all accident victims, and when combined with pedestrians, the figure rises to 63%, highlighting the extreme vulnerability of these road users (Figure 2)

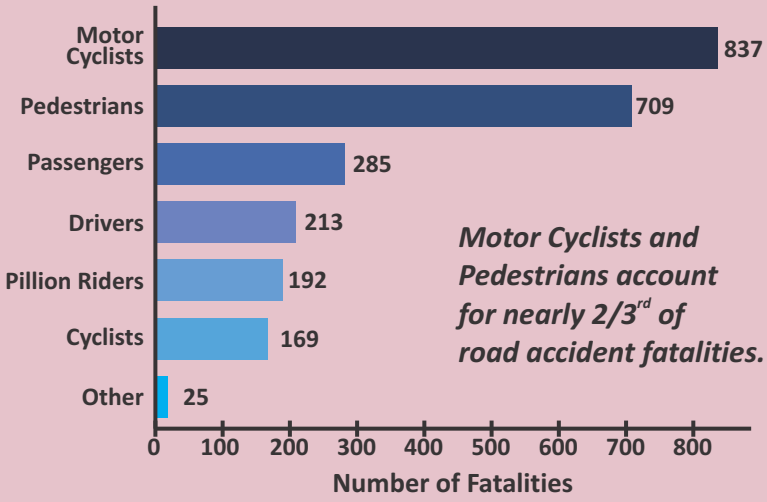


Figure 2 :
Average Annual Number of Fatalities by Road Accidents in Sri Lanka :2020-2024

Passengers account for a moderate share, while drivers, pillion riders, and cyclists show similar but lower fatality levels. This fatality rates underscore the need for road safety interventions in Sri Lanka to prioritize motorcyclists and pedestrians, who together account for nearly two-thirds of all road fatalities.

Railway Accidents and Fatalities: From 2020 to 2024, railway accident data reveal persistent safety issues, especially at level crossings. Damage to gates by road vehicles averages nearly 400 cases annually, while train-vehicle collisions average 73 per year,

peaking at 94 in 2022. Injuries at crossings reached 103 in 2023, and fatalities rose to 24 in 2024, highlighting serious risks and the urgent need for targeted level crossing safety measures.

Vehicle Involvement in Traffic Accidents : On average, over 23,000 vehicles of various categories are involved in road accidents annually. As illustrated in Figure 3, motor bicycles are the most frequently involved, accounting for 35% of road accidents. Motor cars, dual-purpose vehicles, and lorries account for 37% of road accidents, with private buses (6%) causing three times more incidents than CTB buses (2%). Although fewer in number, the impact is significant due to higher passenger loads. Though hit-and-run cases make up only 1%, they still pose serious legal and social concerns. The data highlights the need for focused safety measures targeting high-risk vehicle types.

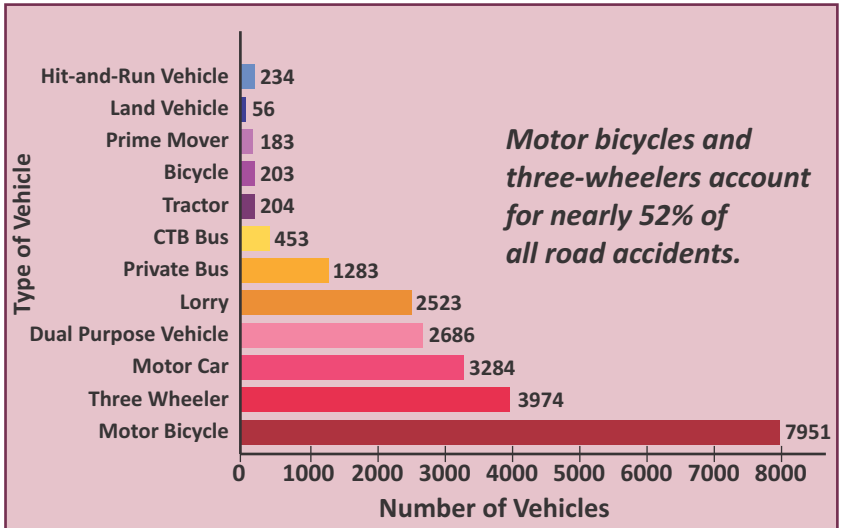


Figure 3 :
Average Annual Vehicles involved in Road Accidents in Sri Lanka :2020-2024

Bus-related Offences: Prosecuted bus-related offences from 2020 to 2024 reveal key behavioral risks behind road accidents. Traffic law violations dominate, averaging 11,426 cases annually (74%), followed by speeding (1,762-11%), reckless driving (1,312-9%), and drug-impaired driving (318- 2%). Driving under the influence alone caused 354 fatal bus crashes and 356 deaths, averaging 71 fatal crashes and 75 deaths per year. These patterns underscore the urgent need to address driver behavior in bus safety interventions.

Together, these statistics reveal a complex and multi-dimensional road safety crisis, driven not only by reckless driving or enforcement gaps, but also by poor infrastructure design, limited public awareness and adherence to rules and regulations, and as result of a growing shift from public to private transport. Given the high toll of road accidents, both in lives and economic cost, a strong national commitment is essential.

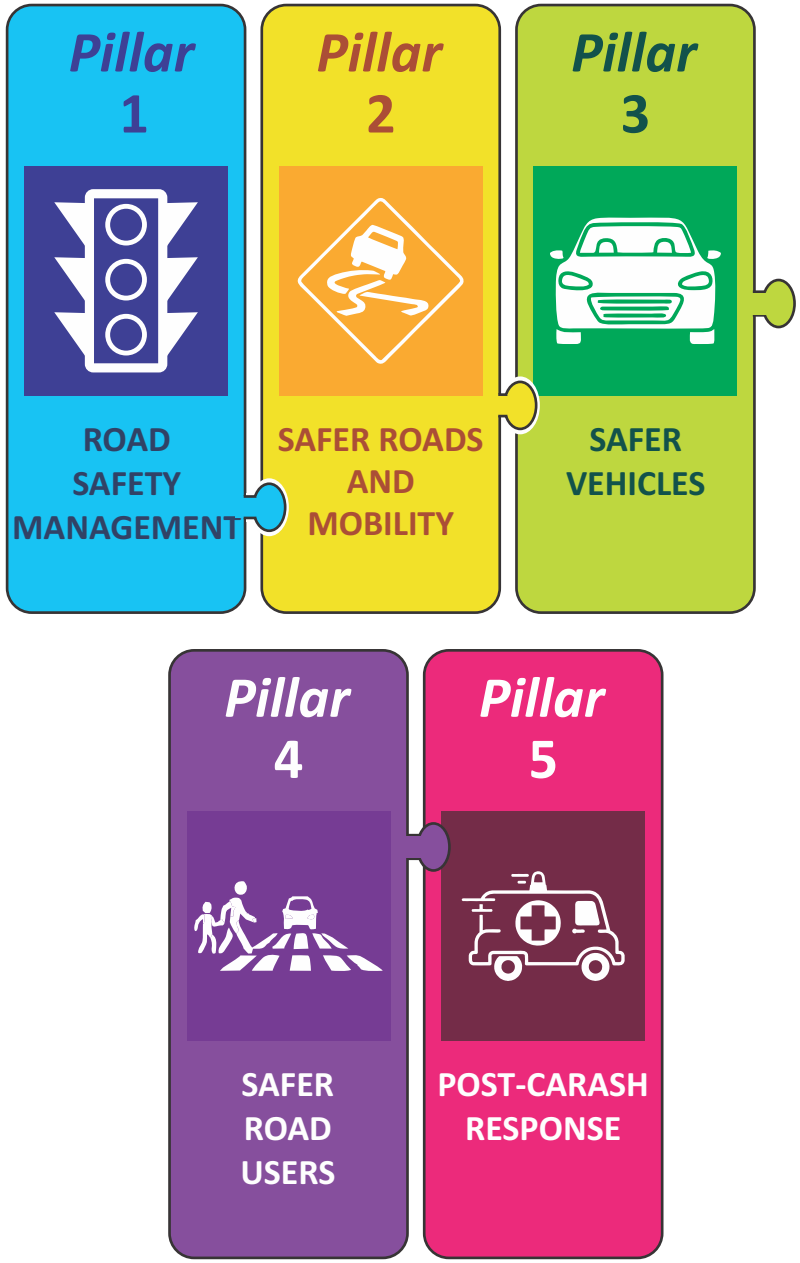
Sri Lanka must reduce road deaths by about 267 annually to reach the global benchmark of ⩽10 deaths per 100,000 population. This requires shifting from fragmented and reactive efforts to a proactive, system-based and outcome-driven approach that tackles the root causes of unsafe mobility.

1.2 *Committing to Change*

In response to the ongoing national tragedy, the Ministry of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation (THPAM) presents this transformative vision: ***Go Safe - The Road Safety Action Plan 2025-2026.*** **This plan sets an ambitious goal to achieve a measurable reduction in road traffic fatalities by the end of 2026, marking a meaningful step toward overcoming Sri Lanka's road safety challenge.** At the heart of this transformation lies a ***Commitment to Change*****,** built on three strategic "P" s:

Pillars	identifying *what* must change, based on the globally endorsed Five Pillar Approach to road safety: Road Safety Management, Safer roads and mobility, Safer Vehicles, Safer Road Users, and Post-Crash response.
Processes	defining *how* change is planned, implemented, and monitored under 94 outcome-driven short-term actions, supported by clear milestones, accountability mechanisms, and a forward-looking vision beyond 2026.
People	empowering the individuals and institutions who will drive and sustain the change.

This Action Plan is not a reiteration of outdated approaches, but a bold declaration that Sri Lanka can—and must—do better in ensuring road safety. It marks a decisive shift toward delivering measurable results aligned with the 'A Thriving Nation–A Beautiful Life' policy framework of the current government. It stands as a framework for shared responsibility, and a commitment to a safer future for all road users.



02 ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT

The Road Safety Management pillar forms the backbone of Sri Lanka's national effort to systematically reduce road traffic fatalities and injuries. It provides the governance, policy, institutional, and data systems needed to support evidence-based interventions across all sectors involved in road safety.

2.1 Policies and Legislation

- Strengthen the National Road Safety Policy by updating it to align with international goals such as the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Enforce comprehensive and harmonized traffic laws covering speed limits, helmet use, seat belts, mobile phone use, and drunk driving, with consistent penalties.

- Introduce mandatory licensing reforms, including graduated driver licensing (GDL), age-appropriate tests, and psychological assessments for high-risk categories (e.g., heavy vehicle and passenger transport drivers).
- Implement random drug and alcohol testing for commercial and public transport drivers, supported by mobile enforcement units and roadside testing kits.
- Mandate a Passenger Transport Driver License (PTDL) with annual renewal, behavioral assessment, and physical fitness verification.
- Revise the Motor Traffic Act and related regulations to integrate modern traffic management tools (e.g., automated enforcement systems, GPS vehicle monitoring).

2.2 Data Systems

- Establish a centralized National Road Crash Data System with real-time input from police, hospitals, insurance providers, and road authorities.
- Ensure crash data is geo-coded and severity-tagged for evidence-based hazardous spots identification and infrastructure investment.
- Promote the adoption of integrated data platforms where vehicle registration, driver licensing, enforcement history, and crash involvement can be accessed collectively by relevant authorities.
- Make data publicly accessible in anonymized formats, enabling civil society, academia, and industries to support road safety through research and community engagement.
- Use AI and predictive analytics to identify emerging risk patterns, enabling preemptive interventions.

2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Develop a National Road Safety Performance Framework with key indicators such as fatalities per 100,000 population, helmet compliance rates, emergency response times, and enforcement frequency.
- Conduct annual road safety performance audits across all provinces, benchmarking them against national targets and publishing results.
- Introduce a dashboard-based monitoring system for policymakers to track road safety interventions in real time, including enforcement activity, crash trends, and infrastructure improvements.
- Evaluate all major infrastructure projects using pre- and post-implementation road safety impact assessments.
- Establish a Road Safety Research and Evaluation Unit under the Ministry of Transport to coordinate independent reviews and policy evaluations.

2.4 Institutional Framework

- Set up a National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) with legal mandate to lead, coordinate, and regulate all road safety-related activities across government and private sectors.
- Strengthen coordination between key stakeholders: Ministry of Transport, Police, Health, Education, Urban Development Authority, Insurance Board, and private transport operators.

- ❖ Define clear roles and accountability structures at national, provincial, and local levels for road safety planning and enforcement.
- ❖ Create provincial road safety committees with funding and technical guidance from the NRSC to address region-specific risks.
- ❖ Develop capacity-building programs for local governments, law enforcement, and transport operators to implement safety measures effectively.
- ❖ Promote public-private partnerships (PPPs) in areas such as road safety education, vehicle compliance technology, emergency response, and GPS tracking services.

A strong and well-resourced Road Safety Management system is critical to the success of all other pillars. By developing robust institutions, policies, data systems, and evaluation mechanisms, Sri Lanka can lead a coordinated and sustained national effort to significantly reduce road traffic deaths and injuries beyond 2026.

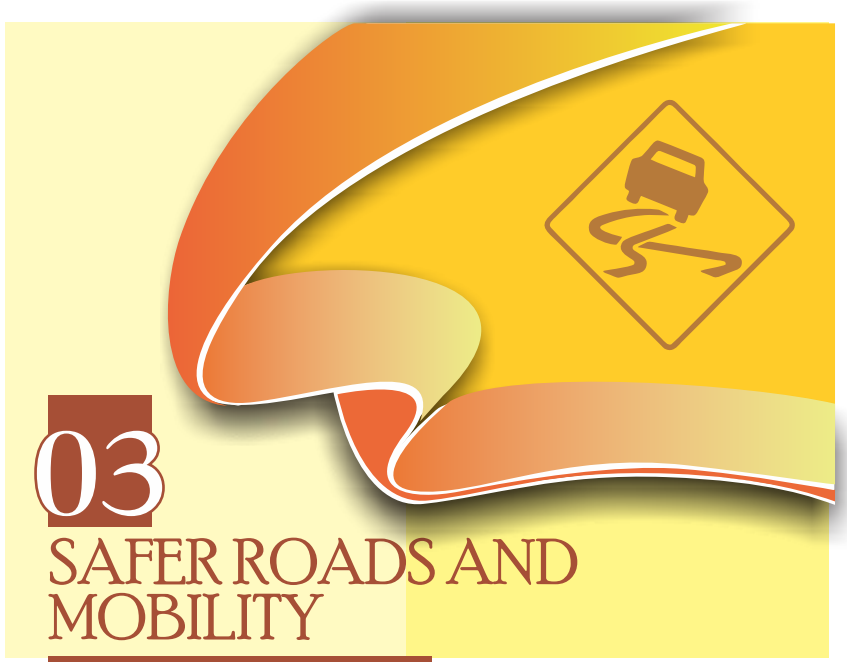
2.5 Action Plan for Road Safety Management: 2025-2026

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
01	Publish the road rules gazetted in 2015 as a consolidated Road Rules Compendium	DMT	June 2025	July 2025
02	Develop a road accident database and generate annual analytics reports	DMT	May 2025	December 2025
03	Introducing new standards for driving schools	DMT	December 2025	December 2025
04	Initiate actions to monitor driving schools and driver testing activities in accordance with the recommendations of the P. Dayaratne Parliamentary Committee Report	DMT	April 2025	August 2025
05	Establish the National Council on Road Safety as the “National Transport Safety Commission"	NCRS	June 2025	December 2025
06	Verify the accuracy of financial contributions made by insurance companies to the Road Safety Fund	NCRS	July 2025	September 2025
07	Review and update the medical guidelines for driver fitness	NTMI	April 2025	December 2025
08	Amend regulatory provisions of the National Transport Medical Institute Act.	NTMI	January 2024	December 2025
09	Integration of the computer systems of the National Transport Medical Institute and the Department of Motor Traffic	NTMI DMT	January 2025	December 2025
10	Establish an inspection unit to monitor SLTB driver behavior both onboard and on the road	SLTB	August 2025	December 2025
11	Analyze the causes of public transport bus accidents and generate reports to inform response planning	SLTB NTC RPTA	August 2025	December 2025
12	Mandate that all bus drivers wear seat belts	SLTB	August 2025	September 2025

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
13	Install CCTV cameras at all necessary locations in the Colombo city area	SLP	January 2026	June 2026
14	Initiate a project to implement a comprehensive integrated electronic solution for fine collection and the driver demerit point system	SLP	October 2025	December 2025
15	Offer Senior and Junior Traffic Management courses through the Traffic Management and Road Safety Division to strengthen the capacity of transport officers	SLP	September 2025	December 2025
16	Provide one- or two-week traffic training programs through workplaces and police academies	SLP	September 2025	December 2025
17	Display WhatsApp contact numbers in all buses to inform passengers about misconduct and thereby develop a data system	SLTB NTC RPTA	Display WhatsApp Numbers July 2025 Data Sys. Jan. 2025	Display WhatsApp Numbers July 2025 Data Sys. Dec. 2025
18	Provide financial assistance to advance the development of selected innovations submitted to the Road Safety Innovation Competition	NCRS	August 2025	September 2025
19	Mandate the use of standardized safety signboards by all contractors engaged in the construction, repair, and maintenance of roads, bridges, and pedestrian crossings	RDA	January 2025	August 2025

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
20	Initiate a pilot program in the Western Province to minimize competition among buses by introducing a company-based operational structure for bus services	SLTB NTC RPTA	October 2025	December 2025
21	Regulate three-wheeler drivers, school transport operators, office bus drivers, and app-based drivers through the National Transport Commission, and develop a comprehensive social security program for them	NTC RPTA	July 2025	December 2025
22	Introduce a data system (SLADMS) through the Traffic Management and Road Safety Division to collect and manage road-accident-related data island-wide, with technical assistance from the World Health Organization and private sector	WHO SLP Private Sector	September 2025	December 2025

WHO : World Health Organization
NTC : National Transport Commission
NCRS : National Council for Road Safety
DMT : Department of Motor Traffic
SLP : Sri Lanka Police
RDA : Road Development Authority
RPTA : Road Passenger Transport Authority
SLTB : Sri Lanka Transport Board
NTMI : National Transport Medical Institute



03 SAFER ROADS AND MOBILITY

3.1 Risk Management

Effective risk management is central to achieving safer roads and mobility, requiring a coordinated approach across strategic, tactical, and operational levels.

At the **strategic level**, the emphasis lies in the elimination of systemic risks through comprehensive identification and prioritization of high-risk corridors using historical crash data, road inventory data, traffic data and predictive analysis techniques. At present, the National Road Safety Strategy for Road Infrastructure is being drafted to phase out the development of identified unsafe road segments of the National Road Network, subjected to findings of Road Safety Audits and the International Road Assessment Program.

Engineering risk management is also being carried out in parallel, by updating national highway design standards, formulation of

guidelines and specifications for implementing road safety improvements to reflect Safe System principles, embedding features such as self-explaining roads, forgiving roadsides, and traffic calming elements. At present, RDA and the line ministry is engaged in updating the existing speed management regulations as a strategic road safety intervention, with the aim of upgrading not only the safety of the National Road Network but also the municipal and rural road network with grant mechanism, which ties funding allocation to safety improvement outcomes.

Administrative risk management, on the other hand, involves institutional reforms such as improving the institutional capacities and establishing institutional coordination. A recent effort was put to forming a core committee with the involvement of multi-disciplinary stakeholders related to road safety, including representation from police, public health, and local governance sectors, etc. A proposal to mandate annual safety audits for trunk roads is also being considered as a strategic control mechanism.

At the **tactical level**, risk management focuses on regional and district-level planning and implementation. Tactically, the elimination of risk involves traffic segregation strategies such as segregating pedestrians and non-motorized road users away from heavy vehicles especially at sensitive zones like schools, hospitals and public markets, and the implementation of zonal speed limits based on land-use classification.

Engineering interventions at this level include the installation of median barriers and guardrails, especially in the Central, Sabaragamuwa, and Uva provinces where terrain-related risks are acute.

Tactically, administrative measures include scaling up enforcement capacity, such as pilot testing automated speed enforcement cameras in high-risk provinces and strengthening the technical competency of engineers through targeted training

programs. Notably, an initiative to train RDA engineers in Road Safety Audit (RSA) and Road Safety Inspection (RSI) methodologies is currently being implemented.

At the **operational level**, risk management is focused on daily and localized interventions. Elimination of risk at this level involves immediate hazard mitigation such as rapid pothole repairs and obstruction removal, supported by community-based reporting platforms for near-miss or conflict locations.

Engineering responses include the deployment of cost-effective safety countermeasures such as temporary rumble strips, speed feedback signs, and edge-line markings on minor roads.

Administrative responses at this level are procedural, ensuring that standard operating procedures are in place for work zone safety, emergency road closures, and close coordination between RDA field units and local law enforcement.

3.2 Quality Improvement of Road Infrastructure

Improving the quality of road infrastructure is fundamental to creating a safer, more inclusive road environment for all users. Infrastructure upgrades in Sri Lanka are increasingly being aligned with the principles of inclusivity and accessibility, especially for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and users of non-motorized transport.

In urban centers, there is a crucial need for continuous and adequately wide footpaths, pedestrian zones, and properly demarcated bicycle lanes, particularly in peripheral urban areas experiencing rapid development. Furthermore, existing pedestrian overpasses are being re-evaluated and redesigned to accommodate multiple modes of movement, ensuring usability by both pedestrians and light non-motorized vehicles.

Traffic calming measures are also gaining prominence, especially in mixed-traffic zones and village areas. Treatments such as

gateway designs, raised intersections, speed humps, and mini roundabouts are being considered for national scale deployment. These treatments serve to moderate vehicle speeds and enhance user awareness, especially near schools and densely populated communities. Speed management initiatives are being reinforced through policy-driven speed zoning and infrastructure-led speed control. For instance, the introduction of 30 km/h zones in residential and commercial districts is under discussion, alongside the use of intelligent speed adaptation signage and speed display boards at urban approaches.

One of the most critical aspects of quality infrastructure for safety is the illumination of pedestrian crossings, particularly at night. There have been increasing incidents involving pedestrians at poorly lit crossings, prompting proposals for high-visibility zebra crossings enhanced with embedded LED studs, solar-powered overhead lighting at junctions, and sensor-based “smart” crossings in urban areas. These infrastructure solutions not only improve visibility but also signal to drivers the presence of high-risk crossing zones, thereby reducing conflicts and potential collisions.

3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation of Road Safety Management Procedure

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) play an essential role in ensuring that road safety measures are both effective and adaptive to changing conditions while maximizing benefits of the limited budgetary spending.

A robust M&E framework involves the establishment of clear performance indicators, consistent data collection mechanisms, and structured evaluation cycles. In Sri Lanka, the current practice is transitioning from relying solely on

lagging indicators such as fatality rates and injury counts, to incorporating leading indicators that measure proactive safety management — for example, the percentage of the network covered by safety audits, or the compliance rate with posted speed limits.

The integration of data across multiple sources is a priority. Combining police crash records with hospital trauma registries and RDA's infrastructure inspection data allows for more comprehensive understanding of crash causation and risk exposure. Efforts are ongoing to develop a GIS-based safety dashboard to enable real-time mapping of crash hotspots, enabling data-driven intervention planning and resource allocation.

Evaluation will be conducted through structured annual reviews, with support from international development partners such as JICA, ADB and the World Bank. These reviews may assess the effectiveness of implemented safety measures, including before-and-after studies for major interventions such as new guardrail installations or traffic calming in high-crash locations. More importantly, following a continuous development cycle whereby policies and practices are refined based on empirical evidence is sought as the way forward.

To institutionalize this, multidisciplinary stakeholder review workshops involving engineers, law enforcement officials, public health specialists, and civil society actors should be convened regularly. The need to establish a National Road Safety Policy and periodic adjustment of it based on outcomes from the monitoring and evaluation system, is also considered as a timely requirement.

3.4 Action Plan for Safer Roads and Mobility : 2025-2026

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
01	Identify high-risk locations on rural roads and implement targeted safety interventions	NCRS	October 2025	December 2025
02	Install countdown timers at traffic signal locations currently lacking them	RDA	Colombo District - July 2025 All other Districts - Oct. 2025	February 2026
03	Install bells and electric lamps at 24 railway crossings from Mahawa to Anuradhapura	SLRD	June 2025	December 2026
04	Install secure gates at 20 railway crossings from Mahawa to Anuradhapura with foreign	SLRD	June 2025	December 2026
05	Install bells and electric lamps at 25 railway crossings	SLRD	December 2025	December 2025
06	Launch a pilot project to operate railway gates using solar power, with the support of the private sector	SLRD Private Sector	June 2025	December 2025
07	Installation of warning signboards at dangerous railway crossings (Thelangapatha and Wanawasala in the Kelaniya area, Wedikanda and Horape in Enderamulla area, and Sirivardhana Road in the Ragama area) with contribution from the private sector	SLRD Private Sector	June 2025	December 2025

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
08	Install new zebra crossings in school zones and maintain existing damaged ones	RDA	April 2026	June 2026
09	Conduct assessments of occupational health and safety conditions at the Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB) and the National Transport Commission (NTC)	NTMI	August 2025	To be continued
10	Implement an integrated timetable system for inter-provincial buses along the five main bus corridors, starting primarily with the Puttalam corridor and gradually including the other four corridors	NTC	May 2025	December 2025
11	Construction of two platforms for express buses on Bastian Mawatha	NTC	January 2025	December 2025
12	Upgrade GPS devices installed in buses and the central control system to enhance monitoring and regulation	NTC SLTB MDE	May 2025	March 2026
13	Initiate a pilot project to monitor drivers and buses by installing GPS technology in all buses at four selected Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB) depots, including the Kataragama depot, with the support of the private sector, and by equipping 30 selected long-distance service buses with an artificial intelligence-powered camera system	SLTB Private Sector	July 2025	December 2025

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
14	Use GPS-based monitoring to mandate a 30-minute break every 4.5 hours for long-distance drivers	MDE NTC SLTB	December 2025	December 2026
15	Implementation of a pilot project to monitor drivers and buses by installing GPS technology in privately owned buses regulated by the National Transport Commission with the contribution of the private sector, and by installing an AI-powered camera system in 10 selected long-distance service buses	NTC Private Sector	June 2025	July 2025
16	Identify and establish sign boards at designated stopping points for long-distance buses and regulate stops using GPS	NTC RDA CMC SLTB	July 2025	Puttalam Corridor July 2025 Balance December 2025
17	Develop a system using AI technology to detect drowsy or distracted bus drivers and issue timely alerts	NTC SLTB	December 2025	July 2026
18	Installation of standardized iron fences, necessary signage for passenger safety, side barrier signs, flexible guide poles, pedestrian crossing fences, and advance warning blinker light signs for drivers, as required	RDA	April 2025	March 2026
19	Improving safety in identified high-footfall areas near schools in the Kandy and Gampaha districts	RDA	August 2025	March 2026

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
20	Organizing a student art competition under the theme “Let’s Unite for a Future Without Road Accidents.”	NTC	March 2025	December 2025
21	Conducting road safety audits on national and provincial roads identified as high-risk accident zones	RDA NCRS	August 2025	To be continued
22	Introduction of Automated Speed Detection Camera Systems on Highways and Expressways	MOTHPCA CMC RDA SLP SD&CC	January 2026	December 2026
23	Installation of safety barriers along hilly and curved road segments in the Sabaragamuwa, Uva and Central provinces	RDA PRDA	April 2025	March 2026
24	Introduce an insurance scheme designed to provide financial protection for individuals affected by railway accidents.	SLRD	July 2025	September 2025

MDE : Ministry of Digital Economy
MOTHPCA : Ministry of Transport, Highways, Ports & Civil Aviation
NTC : National Transport Commission
NCRS : National Council for Road Safety
SLRD : Sri Lanka Railway Department
SLP : Sri Lanka Police
RDA : Road Development Authority
PRDA : Provincial Road Development Authority
SLTB : Sri Lanka Transport Board
NTMI : National Transport Medical Institute
CMC : Colombo Municipal Council
SD&CC : State Development & Construction Corporation

04 SAFER VEHICLES

4.1 Condition Monitoring

The current number of vehicles in Sri Lanka is approximately 8 million while the regulation of motor transport is carried out by the Department of Motor Traffic. This includes key functions such as vehicle registration, maintenance, and deregistration. These processes fall under the “Safe Vehicles” pillar, one of the globally recognized pillars of road safety.

During the registration of a vehicle, it must comply with the regulations stipulated in the Motor Traffic Act; vehicles that do not meet these standards are not permitted to be registered. After registration, vehicles are subject to periodic inspections, with particular attention paid to their maintenance status. If any faults are identified, they are addressed by motor vehicle inspectors of the department.

Annually, every vehicle must obtain a revenue license, which requires an emission test beforehand. This test measures the levels of harmful ingredients in the exhaust emissions and assesses the mechanical condition of the vehicle. Vehicles involved in accidents are also inspected by motor vehicle inspectors, and any identified defects are rectified accordingly.

Vehicle inspections are conducted on highways in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Police, and when faults are identified, necessary actions are taken to rectify them. Failure to maintain a vehicle in a fully roadworthy condition can lead to sudden accidents, which may also endanger other vehicles. Therefore, regular and proper inspection of vehicles is essential. In this regard, proposals have been made to conduct roadworthiness tests, suggesting that all vehicles should undergo proper inspection before being issued a revenue license.

4.2 Standardization

There should be standardized garages and service stations for proper vehicle maintenance, and in this regard, the Department has already initiated a process for garage registration. Due to the employment of mechanics and workers without proper knowledge and experience, vehicle repairs are often not carried out correctly, which can lead to accidents. Therefore, proper garage registration is essential for the effective inspection of vehicle roadworthiness.

Another globally recognized pillar of road safety is **"Safe Road Users,"** which includes drivers, workers, passengers, and pedestrians. The Department of Motor Traffic issues approximately 200,000 new driving licenses annually, along with a large number of renewals. However, during renewals, while a

medical examination is conducted, driving competency is not reassessed. The lack of updated knowledge on road rules and regulations significantly impacts road safety.

Hence, institutions capable of providing road safety education should be identified, and drivers found guilty by courts due to road accidents should be required to undergo road safety training. Drivers operating public passenger buses must obtain a public transport certificate, however a large number of drivers in this category have not participated in the relevant training program. All vehicles that transport passengers for a fee under public passenger transport should be included in this category, including three-wheelers, school buses, and employee transport vehicles.

Government and private institutions that can conduct this training should be identified and used to implement the program, which would make a significant contribution to reducing sudden accidents. Furthermore, in post-crash response, lives may be lost or injuries worsened due to the lack of proper first aid knowledge during transportation to the hospital. Therefore, it has been proposed that a first aid training course should be completed prior to obtaining a medical certificate required for the driving license. In the future, the standards of driving schools should be improved, and the driving test process should also be further systematized.

The Department of Motor Traffic has introduced both short-term and medium-term proposals in this regard. One such proposal is the incorporation and publication of the road regulations gazetted in 2015 into a new consolidated road traffic rulebook. Although these signs have already been placed on the roads, the absence of a new road rules compendium has made it difficult to teach them effectively.

It has also been proposed to develop a data system for Motor Vehicle Inspectors to record and update details related to the vehicles they inspect, especially those involved in accidents. This system would enable better analysis of vehicle damage, maintenance history, and the frequency of accidents, allowing for more targeted training and intervention.

According to the report of the P. Dayaratne Committee, steps should be taken to establish a proposed committee to oversee the supervision of driving schools and the monitoring of driving examinations.

4.3 Action Plan for Safer Vehicles: 2025-2026

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
01	Conduct capacity development programs for motor vehicle inspectors every six months	DMT	May 2025	December 2025
02	Make it mandatory for rear seat passengers to wear seat belts in light vehicles traveling on expressways	MOTHPCA	July 2025	August 2025
03	Making seat belt use mandatory for all bus drivers on all roads	NTC RPTA SLTB	June 2025	July 2025
04	Mandate the submission of an engineering report for inter-provincial and SLTB buses scheduled to travel distances exceeding 100 kilometers, prior to operation, with the necessary facilities to be provided by the SLTB and the National Transport Commission	NTC SLTB	July 2025	December 2025
05	Initiate preliminary discussions regarding the implementation of roadworthiness testing for vehicles	MOTHPCA	July 2025	August 2025
06	Formulate specifications for all passenger transport buses in accordance with regulations, ensuring that only those buses which fully meet the specifications are permitted for import	MOTHPCA NTC SLC DMT	August 2025	January 2026
07	Standardize buses and other vehicles by removing non-essential accessories and verifying compliance with required passenger transport standards	MOTHPCA SLP DMT	September 2025	December 2025
08	Use onboard CCTV cameras to monitor activities inside buses and store data to be accessed when necessary (e.g., in the event of an accident or misconduct)	NTC RTPA SLTB	January 2026	December 2026
09	Make it mandatory for all passengers to wear seatbelts in all vehicles traveling on expressways	MOTHPCA	July 2025	September 2025

MOTHPCA : Ministry of Transport, Highways, Ports & Civil Aviation
DMT : Department of Motor Traffic
NTC : National Transport Commission
SLP : Sri Lanka Police
SLC : Sri Lanka Custom
RPTA : Road Passengers Transport Authority
SLTB : Sri Lanka Transport Board

Ensuring the safety of road users is a cornerstone of any effective national transport strategy. In Sri Lanka, the evolving complexity of road networks, increasing vehicle density, and diverse user behaviors necessitate a comprehensive approach to road user safety. This chapter outlines key initiatives aimed at enhancing driver competency, raising public awareness, recognizing safe practices, and ensuring the health of those behind the wheel.

5.1 Driver Training and Standardization

Sri Lanka's current driver qualification framework—rooted in traditional theoretical and practical instruction—has seen minimal evolution over the decades. As global best practices in driver education advance through technology and research, it is imperative that Sri Lanka modernizes its approach to driver training.

Key Initiatives :

- **Enhancing Training Quality**: A nationwide initiative will be launched to uplift the quality of driver training schools. This includes accreditation standards, instructor certification, and regular audits.
- **Curriculum Modernization**: A revised, standardized curriculum will be introduced, aligning with international benchmarks. This will incorporate simulation-based training, digital learning tools, and scenario-based assessments.
- **Defensive Driving Modules**: Specialized training for public transport drivers will include modules on defensive driving, fatigue management, hazard perception, and accident prevention.
- **Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)**: Pilot programs will explore the integration of ADAS in public transport vehicles, evaluating their impact on driver behavior and accident reduction.
- **Post-Incident Requalification**: Drivers involved in major incidents will undergo mandatory counseling, refresher training, and requalification before resuming duties.

5.2 Public Awareness

Awareness is a powerful catalyst for behavioral change. A well-informed public is more likely to adopt safe practices, respect traffic laws, and contribute to a safer road environment.

Key Initiatives :

- **Targeted Campaigns**: Awareness programs will be tailored for specific groups such as government drivers, school bus operators, and taxi drivers.
- **School-Based Task Forces**: Schools will serve as hubs for road safety education, with student-led task forces promoting safe behaviors within their communities.

- **Digital Engagement**: The Ministry of Transport will launch dedicated social media platforms to disseminate road safety content, including infographics, videos, and real-time updates.
- **Media Campaigns**: A sustained campaign across television, radio, and online platforms will reinforce key safety messages.
- **Pilot Awareness Zones**: Selected roads will host focused awareness campaigns, with impact assessments guiding future expansion.

5.3 Reward and Recognition

Positive reinforcement is a proven strategy for encouraging safe driving behaviors. Recognizing and rewarding exemplary drivers not only boosts morale but also sets a benchmark for others.

Key Initiatives :

- **Recognition Programs**: Public transport drivers demonstrating consistent safe driving—measured through ADAS and telematics—will be publicly recognized and rewarded.
- **Community Role Models**: Stories of safe drivers will be shared widely to inspire others and build a culture of safety.

5.4 Health Monitoring

A driver's physical and mental well-being is directly linked to their performance on the road. Ensuring that drivers are fit to operate vehicles is a non-negotiable aspect of road safety.

Key Initiatives :

- **Annual Health Screenings**: All public transport drivers will undergo annual physical and mental health evaluations to ensure continued fitness for duty.
- **Substance Testing**: Mandatory drug and alcohol testing will be introduced, with strict enforcement protocols to deter substance abuse among drivers.

5.5 Action Plan for Safe Road Users : 2025-2026

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
01	Conduct annual training programs for driving instructors (three-day training sessions in groups of 200 for the 600 instructors attached to the Colombo District Secretariat	DMT	May 2025	December 2025
02	Initiate training programs for individuals found guilty of traffic violations and issue them a certificate upon completion	DMT	October 2025	To be continued
03	Implement annual awareness programs at the provincial level for SLTB and other public transport bus drivers	NCRS	October 2025	To be continued
04	Organize road safety exhibitions for school children (two exhibitions in 2025 and six exhibitions in 2026)	DMT	September 2025	December 2025 - 2026
05	Conduct annual awareness programs for three-wheeler drivers at the provincial level	NCRS	October 2025	To be continued
06	Organize annual awareness programs for drivers of both public and private sector institutions	NCRS	October 2025	To be continued
07	Award certificates and financial incentives to recognize and encourage public transport bus drivers, driver assistants, and voluntarily identified individuals who adhere to road rules	NCRS	1st Stage September 2025 2nd Stage September 2026	1st Stage December 2025 2nd Stage December 2026

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
08	Provide EPF and ETF benefits to inter-provincial and provincial route private passenger transport bus drivers and conductors	NTC RPTA	July 2025	December 2026
09	Provide insurance coverage for bus drivers and conductors	SLTB	May 2025	July 2025
10	Make it mandatory for the unlimited insurance coverage presented during the renewal of passenger service permits to include coverage for drivers and conductor	NTC RPTA	July 2025	December 2025
11	Conduct practical, skills-based training programs for SLTB/private bus drivers involved in serious accidents	NTC SLTB	July 2025	To be continued
12	Upgrade bus crew training programs to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3	NTC	January 2025	December 2025
13	Implement a motivation program to identify and recognize drivers and conductors who comply with road rules and contribute to accident prevention	NTC NCRS	January 2025	December 2025
14	Streamline the existing medical examination system for SLTB/NTC drivers over the age of 40	NTMI	July 2025	To be continued
15	Establish a mobile unit for conducting random drug tests	NTMI SLTB NTC SLP	May 2025	To be continued

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
16	Provide insurance coverage for drivers of three-wheelers, school transport buses, office transport buses, and mobile app-based ride services	NTC RPTA	September 2025	December 2025
17	Initiate continuous public awareness on road safety by launching Facebook and YouTube channel	DMT	May 2025	To be continued
18	Display audio-visual programs on buses before commencing long-distance journeys, as a safety measure	NTC SLTB	August 2025	December 2025
19	Take steps to ensure the safety of cyclists traveling at night	NCRS	July 2025	September 2025
20	Conduct road safety awareness programs for school students through television, radio, and the currently active media units in schools	NCRS	October 2025	To be continued
21	Provide foundational road safety concepts to preschool children by distributing teaching aids (including printed banners and a road safety teaching guidebook) to 1,000 preschools across the country	NCRS	August 2025	December 2025
22	Conducting road safety awareness exhibitions widely across the country, focusing on school children and the public	SLP	September 2025	To be continued
23	Taking measures to prevent harassment faced by women during transportation	NTC	March 2025	To be continued

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
24	Implementing two national programs on road safety for drivers (once every 6 months)	NCRS SLP NTC SLTB	1st Programme July 2025	2nd Programme January 2025
25	Conducting client-centered medical examinations	NTMI	January 2025	To be continued
26	Implementing programs under the theme “Avoid using mobile phones while driving.”	SLP NTC	July 2025	To be continued
27	Disseminating road safety information via radio, as well as through print and electronic media	MEDIA	May 2025	To be continued
28	Improving the quality of food and sanitation facilities provided to passengers at restaurants during long-distance travel and ensuring designated rest areas for drivers	NTC SLTB MOH CAA	August 2025	December 2025
29	Establishing passenger empowerment committees based on 25 model depots and their associated bus routes, as an initial phase	SLTB	October 2025	July 2026
30	Introduce ticketing machines, mandate the issuance of bus tickets, and enforce penalties for both buses that fail to issue tickets and passengers who travel without them	NTC SLTB RPTA	July 2025	December 2025
31	Implement nationwide awareness campaigns for road users through branding initiatives, demand creation, and logo design competitions focused on road safety	MEDIA	July 2025	To be continued

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
32	Establish a standardized and transparent system for seat reservations on scheduled bus routes	NTC MDE SLTB MOTHPCA	August 2025	March 2026
33	Enable electronic transactions to purchase tickets and implement a system to track real-time bus arrivals at designated stops	NTC MDE SLTB MOTHPCA	June 2025	January 2026
34	Launch nationwide campaigns to promote adherence to lane discipline, discourage mobile phone use while driving, and prevent both excessively slow and fast driving, supported by strong legal enforcement through billboards, radio, television, and social media	NCRS SLP	October 2025	June 2026
35	Mandate participation in a Red Cross–conducted awareness session prior to issuing the medical certificate required for obtaining a driver’s license	NTMI	December 2025	To be continued

MDE : Ministry of Digital Economy
MOH : Ministry of Health
MOTHPCA : Ministry of Transport, Highways, Ports & Civil Aviation
DMT : Department of Motor Traffic
SLP : Sri Lanka Police
NTC : National Transport Commission
NCRS : National Council for Road Safety
RPTA : Road Passengers Transport Authority
CAA : Consumer affairs Authority
SLTB : Sri Lanka Transport Board
NTMI : National Transport Medical Institute

06 POST CRASH RESPONSE

Efficient post-crash response is critical in minimizing the impact of road accidents. This plan emphasizes coordinated efforts from first responders, medical teams, and support systems to ensure rapid and effective intervention. Below is a concise overview of its key components:

6.1 Emergency Response

- Deployment of trained first responders, including police, paramedics, and fire services, to secure crash sites and deliver life-saving care.
- Integrated communication systems to coordinate actions between disaster management, ambulance services, and hospitals.
- Effective traffic management to ensure safety and prevent secondary accidents.

6.2 Safe Evacuation and Rescue

Specialized rescue teams are equipped with tools and training to extract victims safely from vehicles or hazardous conditions, prioritizing safety and efficiency.

6.3 Field Triage and First Aid

- On-site triage protocols categorize victims based on injury severity for optimal care prioritization.
- Immediate first aid is provided to stabilize patients until further treatment is available.

6.4 Transportation and Health Care

- Ambulances are dispatched efficiently to transfer patients to appropriate facilities, including air ambulances for critical cases.
- Hospitals activate trauma response teams preemptively to deliver emergency and specialized care.

6.5 Post-Injury Management

- Comprehensive support for victims and their families through psychological counseling, rehabilitation services, and follow-up care.
- Emphasis on restoring victims' quality of life through vocational training and mental health support.

6.6 Insurance and Compensation

Streamlined processes for victims and families to access insurance claims and government compensation programs.

6.7 Implementation Recommendations

- ❖ Regular training for first responders and healthcare providers.
- ❖ Investment in advanced equipment and communication systems.
- ❖ Public awareness campaigns on road safety and first aid.

This plan underscores a victim-centered approach, prioritizing rapid response, coordinated care, and long-term recovery. It aims to reduce fatalities and improve outcomes for crash victims through systematic and empathetic actions.

6.8 Action Plan for Post-Crash Management : 2025-2026

No.	Action Description	Respon-sibility	Task Initiation	Task End
01	Enhance the capacity of district-level disaster management centers by ensuring adequate resources and infrastructure	PCMT	June 2025	December 2025
02	Establish trained volunteer rescue teams at the Divisional Secretariat level to support local emergency response efforts	PCMT	June 2025	December 2025
03	Form field-level rapid response teams, leveraging existing resources such as tri-forces health units, auxiliary ambulance services, and hospital-based emergency response teams	MOH MOD	May 2025	August 2025
04	Strengthen hospital emergency management teams by providing essential equipment, training, and operational support	MOH	May 2025	August 2025
05	Conduct a comprehensive study of global post-crash management systems and mobilize the necessary technical and institutional support from the Ministry of Health for localized implementation	MOH	May 2025	January 2026
06	Foster inter-agency coordination by developing an integrated disaster management framework across the Uva, Sabaragamuwa, and Central provinces, ensuring effective collaboration among all relevant institutions	PCMT	May 2025	August 2025

MOD : Ministry of Defense
MOH : Ministry of Health
PCMT : Post Crash Management Team

07 National Road Safety Action Plan for Sri Lanka : Beyond 2026

While implementing the short-term operational plan outlined in the earlier sections of this document, Sri Lanka will take steps to improve road safety by engaging in progress reviews, gathering insights through experience, and learning key lessons. This process will not only strengthen the country's road safety framework but also set the stage for surpassing global road safety targets. The proposed forward path, briefly outlined below under five pillars for road safety, reflects this ambition.

7.1 Road Safety Management

Strengthen national coordination, policy, and data systems by establishing a central authority, long-term strategy, recognition

- Establish a centralized **National Road Safety Authority** with legal mandate, technical capacity, and inter-agency coordination powers.
- Develop and implement a **long-term National Road Safety Strategy (2026–2035)** aligned with SDGs and UN Decade of Action.
- Launch a **national Road Safety Recognition Program** to acknowledge best practices among institutions, drivers, and companies.
- Create a **centralized crash data and analytics system** with real-time reporting and geo-tagged data input.
- Ensure sustainable **funding mechanisms for road safety programs** through insurance levies, fines, or road user fees.
- Mandate **annual performance audits and reviews** for all road safety-related government departments.
- Integrate road safety into **urban development, education, and transport policies** at national and provincial levels.

7.2 Safer Roads and Mobility

Enhance road infrastructure safety through audits, smart design, public transport GPS tracking, pedestrian facilities, and integrated mobility planning to reduce crashes and improve accessibility for all road users.

- Conduct nationwide **road safety audits** and **blackspot identification** for targeted infrastructure upgrades.
- Enforce **minimum safety design standards** in all new roads, particularly school zones and pedestrian-heavy areas.
- Expand **dedicated pedestrian, cycling lanes, and crossing facilities** in urban and suburban areas.

- Introduce **public transport vehicle tracking mechanisms (GPS)** and establish regional **monitoring centers** to ensure safe operations.
- Strengthening **road infrastructure resilience** against natural hazards and climate impacts.
- Promote **multimodal and inclusive mobility planning** that considers gender, age, and ability differences.
- Implement **smart traffic management systems** for congestion reduction and crash prevention.

7.3 Safer Vehicles

Improve vehicle safety by enforcing compliance standards, introducing a Vehicle Compliance Index, phasing out unsafe vehicles, promoting inspections and encouraging adoption of modern safety technologies and emission-compliant transport.

- Introduce and enforce a **Vehicle Compliance Index (VCI)** that rates vehicles based on safety, emissions, and roadworthiness.
- Restrict the import and operation of vehicles **not meeting minimum safety and emission standards**.
- Make **vehicle fitness inspections more transparent and digitized**, linking results to licensing databases.
- Promote the **phasing out of unsafe, unregulated three-wheelers** used for public transport.
- Encourage adoption of **vehicles with ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems)** through incentives or regulations.
- Mandate **regular inspection regimes** for passenger and freight transport fleets, with GPS and digital compliance logs.

7.4 Safer Road Users

Promote responsible road use through strong public campaigns, driver training reforms, mandatory licenses, fatigue monitoring, standardized driving schools, and structured licensing to enhance awareness, skills, and compliance among all road users.

- Launch a **nationwide multimedia campaign** focusing on seatbelt use, helmet compliance, drink-driving, speeding, and mobile phone use.
- Mandate a **Passenger Transport License** for all drivers of passenger vehicles, with minimum training and vetting standards.
- Establish a **driver fatigue and rest monitoring mechanism**, especially for long-distance public and freight transport drivers.
- Implement **emergency response and first aid training programs for all licensed drivers**.
- Standardize and accredit **driving schools** with a unified curriculum, certified trainers, and simulation-based training tools.
- Fully **restructure the driving license issuing process** to include mandatory psychological testing, practical assessments, and digital monitoring.
- Introduce a **graduated driver licensing system** for novice drivers with strict restrictions and supervision requirements.
- Empower school and community road safety education programs as mandatory curricula.

7.5 Post-Crash Management

Strengthen post-crash response through coordinated emergency services, trauma care access, driver first aid training, GPS-based alerts, and victim support systems to minimize fatalities and improve recovery outcomes.

- Develop a **national emergency crash response framework**, linking hospitals, police, fire, and transport departments.
- Train all highway and expressway operators in **rapid response and basic trauma care**.
- Ensure **24/7 access to trauma-equipped hospitals** within 30–50 km range of national highways.
- Introduce **standard operating procedures (SOPs)** for coordinated post-crash actions at local levels.
- Mandate GPS-linked **SOS alert systems** in passenger transport vehicles and long-distance buses.
- Create a **road crash victim support system** offering legal, financial, and psychological services.
- Periodically review and audit **EMS coverage and response time metrics**, targeting international benchmarks.

7.6 Strategic Integration

- Strengthening collaboration among **government agencies, private sector, insurance companies, NGOs, and academic institutions**.
- Leverage **technology and innovation** (AI, IoT, data analytics) to monitor, enforce, and improve safety practices.
- Promote regional partnerships to **share best practices and harmonize safety standards** in South Asia.

- Ensure **public transparency** by publishing annual road safety performance reports and action plan updates.

All the elements described above highlight long-standing gaps and neglected areas that have persisted for decades, despite the ongoing tragedy of road safety in Sri Lanka. These issues reflect systemic weaknesses that require coordinated attention. At the same time, they serve as a crucial foundation for developing a comprehensive and forward-looking strategic roadmap for road safety in the decade ahead.

In this context, the implementation of this short-term operational plan will not only address immediate priorities but also act as a critical and catalytic step toward institutionalizing long-term, sustainable improvements. By learning from past shortcomings and building on current momentum, Sri Lanka can move decisively toward a safer, more resilient road transport system.