

Number of road fatalities in Dubai drops in 2009

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Dubai: Last year Dubai roads witnessed the lowest fatality rate in four years with 23.5 per cent decline in deaths and 16 per cent decline in fatal accidents compared to 2008.

Major General Mohammad Saif Al Zaffein, Director of Dubai Police's Traffic Department, said the traffic indicator on fatalities last year was extremely positive as it has declined from 294 in 2008 to 225 in 2009.

This translates to 17.86 deaths for every 100,000 of the population in 2008 while 12.7 fatalities to every 100,000 of the population in 2009.

In 2005, fatalities reached 236 and in 2006 the figure rose to 312. The number kept increasing in 2007 to reach 332 while it dropped in 2008 to 294.

The rate of injures between moderate and severe was almost similar with 212 severe injures in 2009 and 211 in 2008.

Although Emirates and Sheikh Zayed roads top the list of black spots for accidents, there has been a significant drop in fatal accidents on these two roads.

Emirates Road had 46 deaths in 2008 but dropped to 26; similarly, Sheikh Zayed had 24 deaths in 2008 but declined to 11 last year.

However, last year two roads witnessed an increase in fatal accidents; Dubai Bypass and Jebel Ali-Lehbab roads. Six deaths occurred on Dubai Bypass road in 2008 but rose to 17 in 2009, while 10 deaths were recorded on the Jebel Ali-Lebab roads in 2008, which increased to 16 last year.

A main cause of road fatalities in 2008 and 2009 remained the same with failure to respect other road users topping both lists. However, deaths related to sudden swerving and crossing a red light had increased last year compared to 2008.

In 2009 crossing red traffic signal had staggeringly increased by 450 percent while sudden swerving rose by 36 percent in comparison to 2008. The traffic fines for crossing red traffic signals also increased in 2009 reaching 15,646 while it was 12,243 in 2008.

Road collisions and crashes top the main reasons for fatal accidents followed by running over pedestrians. In 2008, pedestrian fatalities reached 106 but dropped to 70 last year.

However, road collisions increased to reach 119 last year while it was 99 accidents in 2008.

According to Maj Gen Al Zaffein, radars, the black point system, hefty fines, and awareness lectures have contributed in curbing accidents and fatalities in the emirate.

In 2009, the total number of fines reached to 2,458,697 and 30,147 impounded vehicles while in 2008 it was 2,477,806 fines and 38,470 confiscated vehicles.

Although the total of fines have decreased last year, specific kinds of fines significantly increased such as for speeding reaching 1,286,161 in 2009 while it was 1,217,390 in 2008. As for the vehicles, trucks were exceedingly fined from only 6,559 in 2008 to 16,795 last year.

Road radar increased from 210 in 2008 to become 510 in 2009. Of the 510, there was a 184 percent increase in digital stationary radars and 112 percent increase in digital radars at traffic signals. The traffic department introduced last year new set of 14 hand-held radars.