

Oman fourth in the Gulf in regard to traffic accidents

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(MENAFN - Times of Oman) Some local newspapers noted recently that the Sultanate is ranked fifth in the world in relation to deaths due to traffic accidents.

However, it should be emphasised that the annual report issued by WHO in 2009 pointed out that the Sultanate ranked fourth in the Gulf and the 57th globally in terms of traffic accidents and the resulting mortality and injuries.

The World Health Organisation adopted the study according to the world population of 2007.

The report noted that the population of the Sultanate during 2007 amounted to 2,595,133. The number of the registered vehicles reached 629,670. The number of deaths touched 798, which equals 21.3 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

Traffic education for students

With the beginning of the second semester for school students, starts the application of the road safety document for schools in all grades from the 1st to the 12th in various schools of the governorates and regions of the Sultanate. The document was launched recently by the Ministry of Education, the Royal Oman Police and Shell Development, Oman.

Working on the document has commenced since the academic year 2005-2006, where the team of road safety evaluated the pilot phase based on observations from field visits and from other reports.

The idea of the document was raised after exploring the human and material damage caused by traffic accidents, as well as the importance of teaching traffic rules and creating awareness on traffic. Educating students from an early stage would eventually be a positive sign to decrease the number of traffic accidents.

Road safety document

The document contains the elements of traffic safety, which are divided in accordance to the subjects under which there are a set of traffic concepts.

The document of road safety will be applied in the curriculum as follows: When the teacher prepares the scientific subject for the students, he/she brings in the traffic concepts as related to the topic of the class.

The teacher has to make sure that the concepts can be included with the lesson that is being taught and should see that the concept has to have a connection with the subject of the lesson, either through texts or images.

Educational groups

The groups of educational activities in the school play a major role in activating the document of road safety through raising the topics of traffic safety via the activities that are done in the school. This, in fact, has a prominent role in conveying the message to the students.

The journalism group, for instance, aims to raise awareness on various subjects and fields through wall notices, the school's newspaper as well as the booklets.

Seminars and lectures are important cultural activities where students could receive significant information from experienced and competent people on topics such as traffic safety.

Schools can also host specialists in the field of traffic to introduce the students to the traffic rules and regulations. Drama activities can be employed to spread awareness on road safety. Field visits to hospitals and police stations would also enhance the campaign of creating awareness.

Keep to the yellow line while driving

Overtaking from the shoulder of the road (outside the yellow line) is a traffic violation as it causes traffic accidents and creates provocation for other users of the road. Emergency vehicles and civil defence vehicles are allowed to overtake from the shoulder of the road while they are on their way to extinguish fire or are moving for a rescue operation.

The law punishes a person who overtakes from the shoulder of the road to an imprisonment period not exceeding one year and a fine of not exceeding RO500 or either one of the two penalties.

Several tough measures are currently being taken against those who overtake from the shoulder of the road.

One such penalty is that the driver of the vehicle will be sentenced to custody for 48 hours, plus the vehicle is also sent to custody until the date of referral to the court, unless it is proved that the offender is not the owner of the vehicle and the latter submits a request to get his vehicle.

Overtaking via the road shoulder is prohibited and results in criminal penalties. Drivers should not risk overtaking via the shoulder of the road under any circumstances.