
More should be done to improve safety for motorcyclists

PETALING JAYA: More measures should be introduced to boost safety for motorcyclists in Malaysia, such as creating dedicated lanes for them.

In Malaysia, most or about 60% of road deaths involve motorcyclists, said road safety expert Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

“As such, if we want to reduce the number of fatalities on the road, we should start with them,” said Law, who heads UPM’s Road Safety Research Centre.

He said this when asked to comment on the rising number of road accidents nationwide, which had caught up with pre-pandemic levels.

Law said creating more motorcycle lanes in the country would

help lower the risk of accidents in “mixed traffic” where different types of vehicles like cars and motorcycles use the same road.

“The best way to create such lanes is by using physical barriers.

“But if cost is a factor, then an affordable method is to paint markings on the road,” he said.

Of course, he said, not every road will be wide or ideal enough for motorcycle lanes.

“But it should be included on roads that can cater to it, such as those with three lanes going in one direction.

“It should also be on highways to prevent motorcyclists from using the emergency lane,” he said.

Enforcement should also be

conducted to ensure motorcyclists use such dedicated lanes for them.

Police statistics showed that there had been 598,635 road accidents nationwide from Jan 1 to Dec 30 last year.

This is 5.5% higher than the 567,516 road accidents recorded in 2019, the year before the Covid-19 pandemic first struck.

The total number of road deaths in Malaysia also increased from 6,080 in 2022 to 6,433 last year.

All states recorded an uptick in road accidents and deaths from 2021 to 2022, based on the Environment Statistics released for every state by the Statistics Department last month.

Selangor topped the list with

the most fatalities, rising by 35% from 742 in 2021 to 1,003 in 2022.

One possible reason for the increase in road mishaps was the anxiety by people to travel again after the Covid-19 movement control order.

Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research chairman Prof Dr Wong Shaw Voon said the spike in accidents was contributed by increased traffic after restrictions to curb the spread of Covid-19 were lifted.

“With the higher exposure between vehicles, the higher the likelihood of crashes on the road,” he said.

On the recent year-end holidays, Prof Wong said there was an increased risk of accidents as people took the opportunity to

travel, including tourists who rented cars.

“When driving in places we are unfamiliar with or using a vehicle we aren’t used to, there will be higher chances of an incident occurring,” he said.

The different modes of transportation also have a part to play when it comes to the risk of getting killed on the road.

Motorcycles, by far, have higher probability compared with other vehicles.

“A person on a motorcycle is 16 times more likely to get into a fatal accident compared with someone driving a car.

“And compared with a person on a bus, the motorcyclist is 42 times more likely to get killed,” he said.