

Watch **speed** during balik kampung trip, public told

➤ 'Sheer madness' to tailgate as collision would surely occur if vehicle in front brakes during emergency, says expert

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SERDANG: A total of 598,635 road crashes occurred in the country in 2023, or one crash every 53 seconds. Of the number, 6,433 victims died, accounting for three deaths every four hours.

Motorcyclists recorded the most fatalities at 67.45%, followed by motorists at 17.91% and pedestrians at 4.84%. Bus drivers and passengers contributed the least to road deaths, accounting for 0.44%.

At a recent talk titled "Safe Travels During Festive Season", Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Department of Community Health professor, Dr Kulanthayan K.C. Mani, presented the statistics and warned motorists to watch their speed during their Hari Raya balik kampung journey.

The talk was part of the faculty's monthly Community Health Medicine programme, which serves to build capacity and continuously educate medical and health professionals and the public about new learnings in the field of medical and health sciences.

Kulanthayan told *theSun* that few motorists are aware that it takes 26m to stop a vehicle travelling at 50kph, 37m for a vehicle travelling 70kph and 58m for one going at a speed of 80kph.

"So, it is sheer madness for motorists to tailgate another vehicle when they will surely be involved in a crash if the vehicle in front applies the emergency breaks," he said.

Kulanthayan, who also heads the UPM Putra Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Research Group, and is a Selangor Road Safety Council permanent member, said the speed of a vehicle directly relates to the injuries sustained during a crash.

"For instance, injuries suffered in a 90kph crash is equivalent to a person falling from the 10th floor of a building, while a crash at 30kph is like one falling from the first floor."

He said travelling on public transport is much safer compared with private vehicles.

Travelling on motorcycles is the riskiest, as the machines are open with no protection for the riders and passenger, thus making them vulnerable to serious injuries during a crash.

During the talk, Kulanthayan stressed that road safety is a multidisciplinary issue and every member of society shares responsibility.

He said prominent stakeholders for road safety are industries and companies because employers have a duty of care to their workers in terms of providing a safe and healthy work environment.

"Commuting to and from work is part of the work environment concept as any road crash will lead to absenteeism, which directly affects output and production.

"So, to prevent workplace absenteeism due to preventable road crashes, it is vital for

employers to play a much bigger role in addressing the matter."

Kulanthayan said during the Hari Raya exodus, employers could adopt the "Vision Zero Crash" concept, in which they and their employees send reminders to colleagues to be careful and keep safe during their travels.

He said the initiative should later be extended for the whole year since the risk of travelling remains constant and is not limited only to the festive travel period.

"If all employers spearhead this win-win initiative via their safety and health officials, a significant segment of society will be reminded to make our roads safer to travel on.

"There is a high chance workers will pay heed to their employer's call since they are their paymasters and know them well. Thus, the employee's road safety behaviour can be modified from unsafe to safe."



Motorcyclists are vulnerable to serious injuries during a crash, recording the most fatalities at 67.45% in 2023. – **ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN**