

# Suspend offenders' licence

## Measure will safeguard other road users, say experts

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**PETALING JAYA:** Those caught for reckless driving, especially under the influence of drugs or alcohol (DUI), should be immediately suspended from driving to avert any further risk to road users, say road safety experts.

Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua of Universiti Putra Malaysia said this proactive measure will safeguard other road users while awaiting the legal outcome of such cases.

He argued that allowing those on bail to continue driving will still be risky as the effects of substance abuse may last for several hours or days.

"It also serves as a deterrent to potential perpetrators. There should be legislation that empow-

ers the Road Transport Department (JPJ) or police to temporarily suspend the driving licence of those suspected of DUI," Law said, adding that transportation companies also have an obligation to ensure their drivers stay clean.

"There should be policies where the company does a background search on a candidate prior to employment," Law said.

Road Safety Council of Malaysia executive council member Datuk Suret Singh agreed that companies should be responsible in the hiring of competent drivers.

He said under the Land Public Transport Agency's Industry Code of Practice guidelines, all operators are required to have safety officers, including smaller businesses with fewer than five permits.

"A safety officer should routine-

ly monitor drivers and bar them from driving if they are suspected of being involved with substance abuse," said Suret, who is also a former chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research.

He argued that all forms of reckless driving should be penalised, regardless of whether they involve substance abuse.

"Why only DUI? Drivers who blatantly disregard safety should also be liable. Tailgating, beating traffic lights, or weaving between traffic are all dangerous acts," he said, adding that it was appropriate for the magistrate to suspend the licence of a lorry driver who was charged over a crash that killed nine Federal Reserve Unit officers on May 13.

Criminologist Datuk P. Sundramoorthy said DUI remains a serious threat, and it is vital to

have more integrated solutions, even in the face of recent amendments to the Road Transport Act 1987.

Sundramoorthy said public education campaigns should go beyond fear-based messages and emphasise the consequences of DUI.

"It requires a comprehensive approach. Legal penalties must be consistently enforced and complemented by rehabilitation and public education. We can learn from global best practices and tailor them to local needs.

"Rehabilitation should also be part of the strategy. First-time or non-violent offenders should be required to attend mandatory treatment and counselling. However, the real challenge lies in enforcement consistency and public attitude," he said.