

'GO BEYOND STRICTER RULES'

Enforcement must be done regularly, firms held accountable for hiring practices, say experts

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STRICTER inspection procedures for heavy vehicles alone will not resolve Malaysia's road safety issues without consistent and transparent enforcement.

This was emphasised by Associate Professor Dr Law Teik Hua, head of the Road Safety Research Centre at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

"Enforcement is too often inconsistent or reactive, typically only after incidents, which weakens its deterrent effect.

"Tighter regulations, like deeper tyre tread and sideboards, work only if they are regularly and randomly inspected," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Law said enforcement agencies must be equipped with personnel and technology to conduct inspections, especially at highway entries and exits, as well as industrial zones.

"Consistent follow-through and appropriate penalties are crucial.

"Severe sanctions, such as licence suspension or vehicle impoundment, must be implemented for non-compliance."

However, Law said, without transparent, data-driven enforcement, stricter regulations might become merely symbolic.

He also highlighted the need to address systemic issues by placing greater responsibility on companies that operate heavy vehicles.

"Employers often take shortcuts, which put pressure on drivers to meet tight delivery deadlines, operate poorly maintained vehicles or skip breaks.

"Companies must be held accountable for their hiring practices, safety training and vehicle maintenance," he added, calling for stronger corporate responsibility.

Law said safety reforms might not bear fruit unless fleet operators and logistics firms were



Associate Professor
Dr Law Teik Hua

held responsible.

Commenting on the recent crash in Sungai Buloh, where a lorry collided with a motorcycle and roadside stalls, Law said the incident highlighted safety concerns, particularly the dangers heavy vehicles posed in pedestrian-heavy zones.

He praised the emergency response, but stressed the importance of improved traffic management, stricter zoning for heavy vehicles, safer roadside setups and smarter urban planning to protect road users.



Professor Wong
Shaw Voon

Professor Wong Shaw Voon, chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros), agreed with Law, emphasising that road safety required involvement not just from the government, but also from industry players and the public.

"If regulations are not enforced, it's as good as having none at all."

Wong said companies were ultimately responsible for managing drivers, vehicles and transport schedules.

"Have companies truly done their best to adopt safer operating standards? Some may claim ignorance, while others prefer not to know.

"Often, companies only learn the hard way — when one of their vehicles is involved in a crash that results in fatalities.

"Yet, established standards like ISO 39001 (Road Traffic Safety Management System) exist.

"Why wait to learn from a bad experience when the standard is already available?"

Wong said there was a need for government mechanisms to ensure companies conduct safe operations, while denying the perception that deadly accidents had no impact on a business' bottom line.

"The impact (of an accident) is not business as usual.

"If a company is involved in a fatal crash, it risks losing the trust and business of its customers.

"Companies must understand this. While a tragedy may not happen today, operating unsafely will eventually come at a cost."

On Saturday, Road Transport Department director-general Datuk Aedly Fadly Ramli outlined stricter inspection procedures for heavy vehicles. These include requirements for increased tyre tread depth and sideboards that align with each vehicle's permit and technical specifications.