

# Registry can take habitual offenders off the road, say experts

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**PETALING JAYA:** Driving licences of habitual traffic offenders must be suspended automatically to prevent them putting the lives of others at risk, say experts.

Drivers of commercial vehicles with multiple unpaid summonses or those involved in fatal accidents must also have their driving licences withdrawn immediately, they said.

In fact, there should be a national registry of reckless drivers, said Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua, who is head of Universiti Putra Malaysia's Road Safety Research Centre.

The Road Transport Department (JPJ), he said, needs to be empowered to suspend driving licences of offenders without the need of a

court order.

Stricter enforcement with the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered cameras and real-time databases should also be in place to identify repeat offenders and immobilise their vehicles until they settle the fines.

"There should also be a registry that blacklists or bans repeat offenders from renewing licences or owning vehicles.

"To further boost road safety, telemetries must be mandated for all heavy vehicles. Global positioning systems and AI can monitor speed, fatigue, and maintenance in real-time. This can save lives," Law told *The Star*.

Road Safety Council of Malaysia executive council member Datuk Suret Singh said the suspension of driving licences under the demerit points for traffic offences sys-

tem (Kejara) has failed.

"How could a driver with 18 summonses, with most of it for speeding, be allowed on the road?

"He should have faced severe action. This goes to show that the Kejara system has failed us," he said.

The driver in the Gerik bus crash in which 15 Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris students were killed has 18 outstanding summonses, 13 of them for speeding.

Suret said the law only allows the suspension of driving licences through Kejara or a court order.

However, he said drivers with three or more summonses for serious offences such as speeding and beating traffic lights should face instant suspension of their driving licences.

"There is a critical need for the weaknesses of Kejara to be fixed.

"Let us learn to be proactive and not reactive only after more than a dozen people died in an accident," he said.

He said the compulsory use of seatbelts in buses could also minimise casualties.

"The Gerik tragedy may not have seen such grave consequences if seatbelts were used. Speed limiters are another feature that may address speeding by commercial vehicles.

"However, these devices are often tampered with by operators. There should be a feature that alerts the authorities when this happens," Suret said.

Crime Consciousness and Public Safety Society chairman Datuk Mohamad Anil Shah Abdullah agreed that there are weaknesses in the Kejara system as demerit points take effect only

when a summons is paid and not when it is issued.

"If the offender does not pay up, they are not subject to demerit points.

"We need to re-examine the Kejara mechanism to see that it effectively addresses reckless driving," said the former police senior assistant commissioner.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Academic Association Congress urged the government to draw up a comprehensive national action plan to implement speed monitoring systems and driver alert mechanisms for all public transport vehicles.



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