

Hauliers back move, but experts say firms must be accountable too

KUALA LUMPUR: Hauliers back the proposals to suspend a commercial driver's licence after an accident, but transport experts say companies must also be held accountable.

Transport analyst Wan Agyl Wan Hassan said suspending licences might be appropriate in serious cases, but real deterrence required safety audits on companies.

He said stricter enforcement and laws that held negligent companies criminally responsible were necessary.

"If we suspend a (driver's) licence without asking why the

crash happened, whether it was fatigue, faulty brakes or unreasonable work demands, we're punishing the symptom and not addressing the root cause.

"If a crash results in loss of life or shows clear signs of dangerous behaviour, like speeding, reckless driving or substance use, then a suspension is understandable.

"It is not about guilt or punishment, it is about managing risk while facts are established," he said.

Wan Agyl said any suspension must be transparent, limited and have a fair avenue for appeal.



Wan Agyl Wan Hassan

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Associate Professor Dr Law Teik Hua said suspending a driver's licence could help reduce accidents by removing risky drivers from the road.

Law, however, said that many serious accidents stem not only from driver negligence but also from poor vehicle maintenance, lack of training and unreasonable driving schedules.

"Without tackling these systemic issues, licence suspension alone may not lead to a long-term decrease in collisions.

"This measure will be contrary



Associate Professor Dr Law Teik Hua

to the 'innocent until proven guilty' principle, since drivers would lose their livelihoods on the basis of allegations, not convictions," he said.

Law said a more even-handed approach would involve short suspensions, accelerated investigations, restricted routes or compulsory retraining.

The Association of Malaysian Hauliers (AMH) said suspending the licences of commercial drivers was a sound and progressive approach.

AMH secretary Mohamad Azuan Masud said yesterday that commercial vehicle operators did

not have full access to drivers' background information, such as records of any accident or drug abuse.

"Suspension of licences pending investigation serves as an important initial filter, while the proposed refresher training represents a fair and responsible rehabilitative measure.

"While the move may temporarily affect drivers' livelihoods and cause some disruption to company operations, road safety is a shared responsibility.

"As ethical and responsible industry players, we are prepared to work with the authorities, such as the Transport Ministry and its agencies, including the Road Transport Department, to support efforts to reduce road accidents," he said.