

Scrap discounts to save lives, say road safety experts

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PETALING JAYA: The Law Compliance Operation – code-named Ops PUU – should be further expanded to curb bad habits that can lead to serious accidents, say road safety experts.

They even suggest doing away with the discounts offered for road summonses.

Road Safety Council (MJKR) executive council member Datuk Suret Singh fully supports the more stringent actions taken by the police.

“Of special interest is the police’s focus on summoning riders for illegal modification of motorcycles.

“My suggestion is also for the Customs Department to ban the import and manufacture of these parts, which increase noise levels and the horsepower of the bikes used for illegal racing.

“Speeding and beating red

lights are also big red flags because speed is a major cause of road crashes.

“Beating red lights can cause the death of innocent law-abiding road users due to the actions of reckless drivers,” he said.

The no-nonsense approach by the police, added Suret, needs to continue and be expanded to include the Road Transport Department so that it can be the catalyst that will change drivers.

Road Safety Marshal Club founder K. Balasupramaniam said the operation is a good reminder for road users.

“Many of these users got their licences decades ago, and they have forgotten these small laws.

“This is a useful reminder. Many do not think of the consequences and how their actions can potentially lead to bigger issues,” he said.

Balasupramaniam is also very much against the implementation of discount periods, describing it

as “a way to encourage bad habits”.

“People will think that it’s okay because they can just wait for the next discount period to pay.

“Many also do not realise that these small offences can potentially lead to serious accidents or even fatal ones. For example, if you illegally park, a huge lorry may not be able to see the parked vehicle while driving,” he said.

According to police, traffic obstruction, such as illegal parking, makes up the bulk of the warning notices issued to motorists and motorcyclists during Ops PUU.

Balasupramaniam also urged the state government to step up its efforts in ensuring ample parking for all to prevent cases of illegal parking.

Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua of Universiti Putra Malaysia said enforcement conducted within already known set periods only creates temporary deterrence.

“When enforcement measures are stepped up only within scheduled campaigns, they inevitably create a temporary deterrent impact but not a lasting sense of compliance culture.

“The dominant public mindset is for drivers to change habits only when there is a perceptible chance of capture. Once the operation is terminated, the overall atmosphere of alertness typically subsides,” he said.

Operations, he stressed, will need to be unpredictable and year-round.

Law also believes that, although politically popular and effective in reducing backlogs, summons discounts are harmful to road safety in the long term.

“They unintentionally convey the message that traffic laws are negotiable and that penalties can be postponed.

“This diminishes the immediacy and gravity of the consequences, teaching drivers to anticipate

discounts rather than to regard the penalty with apprehension,” he said.

A better system, Law pointed out, would be to consistently enforce penalties without any chances for discounts, making sure that fines are seen as a definite and unavoidable cost of breaking the law, which would make them more effective at preventing violations.

He said the persistent traffic violations that still exist show a gap between awareness and action.

He added that awareness alone does not lead to behavioural changes.

“To bridge this gap, the focus needs to move from awareness to creating a regular and predictable enforcement environment supported by special-purpose, emotionally charged campaigns that stress the harsh realities of real-life consequences of violating traffic laws,” he said.