

Hazard awareness test proposed

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➤ Move would enable commercial vehicle drivers to recognise potentially dangerous situations

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PETALING JAYA: A hazard perception test should be included as a requirement for those applying for a commercial vehicle driving licence, a road safety expert said.

Prof Dr Law Teik Hua said this would ensure such drivers have some training on recognising potentially dangerous situations on the road and respond appropriately.

The Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head was commenting on an accident on

Saturday where the driver of an fuel tanker was killed after his lorry caught fire on the North-South Expressway near the north-bound Behrang rest area.

"They should be considered as professional drivers," Law told theSun.

"Commercial vehicle drivers ferry passengers and goods, sometimes hazardous materials. I think the (current) training to (teach) them about risks is not sufficient.

"We train them how to drive the vehicle but we never emphasise on how to deal with potentially dangerous situations on the road.

"The Hazard Perception Test (HPT) is compulsory in countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. This test is important because the accident on Saturday could have affected other road users."

The HPT is a computer-based touch screen test that measures drivers' ability to recognise potentially dangerous situations on the road and respond appropriately. It aims to ensure learner drivers have hazard perception skills. The test uses film clips of real traffic situations.

Law said commercial vehicle drivers need to be at their best, both physically and mentally, since the lives of their passengers and the goods that they transport are in their hands.

"Besides the risk of making mistakes at work due to fatigue and sleep deprivation, the safety of the

drivers themselves are at risk if they do not get sufficient rest, especially when they drive long-hours.

Law also pointed out the importance of having a fire extinguisher in every vehicle.

"The presence of fire extinguishers must be enforced. We do not know whether there was one in the tanker (that day) but maybe the driver could have helped himself (if he had one)," he said.