

Commuting Safety is Priority

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ROAD accidents involving employees on their journey to and from their workplaces have increased by almost 70 per cent over the past 10 years.

The number of commuting accidents increased 69 per cent from 20,810 accidents in 2009 to 35,195 accidents in 2018.

Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) had paid out RM315.96 million in compensation between January and May this year for cases of accidents involving workers while travelling to and from their workplace.

During this period, 15,697 accident cases involved workers travelling to their workplace or while returning home, with 290 deaths recorded.

With high number of accidents and deaths, not only do employers face losses due to loss of skilled manpower but also the victims' families also suffer, especially if the victims are the breadwinners.

Last year, SOCSO spent RM688.9 million in benefits for workers involved in accidents while travelling to or from their workplace.

To improve commuting safety and reduce road accidents among workers, SOCSO in cooperation with the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS) launched the Commuting Safety Support Program (CSSP).

The programme aims to facilitate employers' implementation of commuting safety measures at the workplace through practical intervention in order to reduce the number of motorcycle accidents. It also encourages close cooperation between strategic partners and stakeholders for better road safety.

The CSSP is part of SOCSO's initiative to support and implement Vision Zero based on the three pillars of safety, health and wellbeing, following the 7 Golden Rules. The programme also builds on the Standard and Industrial Research Institute 4 (SIRIM) of Malaysia: 2014 Good Practices in Implementing Commuting Safety Management Guidelines.

Last year, 805 training sessions were organised and 10,000 motorcyclists were successfully trained through the CSSP. This resulted in improved riding behaviour by 85 per cent of participants in terms of using personal protection such as helmets and protective vests, while 76 per cent of the



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DR AZLAN DARUS

Head of division SOCSO's Prevention, Medical and Rehabilitation

workplaces involved in the programme achieved at least 10 per cent reduction in commuting accidents.

Besides CSSP, SOCSO actively conducts advocacy programmes all over the country, throughout the year. SOCSO's priority is to reach out to its state offices with the highest compensation claims to try to get to the root

cause of some of the major issues.

“People don't realise that most commuting accidents happen closest to the workplace, within a five-kilometre radius. The fear of being late to work is cited as the main cause. This is the reason we are constantly advising workers not to rush, there is no point in putting your life on the line for a few minutes.

“Our advocacy programme trains employees in defensive riding, help them find safer routes, provide advice on conducting regular and thorough vehicle checks and we talk to employers about avoiding fatigue among workers through proper policies,” said SOCSO Prevention, Medical and Rehabilitation Division head of division Dr Azlan Darus.

Another aspect of the road safety campaign involves working with the Royal Malaysian Police (PRDM) to identify and reduce the number of accidents, as well as to raise awareness and educate.

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In July, SOCSO collaborated with Perodua on SOCSO's National Safe Driving to Workplace Campaign. The

campaign is part of Perodua's continuous effort to promote road safety for its 8,500 staff who commute to and from its headquarters in Sungai Choh.

About 150 Perodua and 40 SOCSO staff listened to a talk entitled Vision Zero delivered by SOCSO trainers. It covered topics such as safe driving and the importance of regular checks of one's vehicle.

In March, SOCSO conducted a road safety talk during Inokom Corporation Sdn. Bhd. (Inokom) “Stay Alert, Don't Get Hurt” campaign to emphasise and provide awareness to all Inokom's employees, especially the motorcyclists, on the aspects of safe riding and the importance of proper motorcycle maintenance as well as the recommended use of safety vest while riding.

These are among hundreds of programmes conducted by SOCSO with employers all over the country to promote commuting safety among workers.

Besides conducting awareness campaigns around the country, SOCSO also organised Labour Day Run and Ride 2019 in conjunction with the 2019 Labour Day Celebration on 28 April 2019. In line with SOCSO's aspiration of developing a wellness culture in Malaysia, this event aimed to encourage all workers to inculcate healthy lifestyles through being actively involved in physical activities and regular exercise.



Human Resources Minister M. Kulasegaran (centre) fastening the helmet on a Perodua employee after the launch of the National Safe Driving to Workplace Campaign in July. Also present were SOCSO chief executive officer Datuk Seri Mohammed Azman Aziz (second from right) and Perodua chairman Datuk Zainal Abidin Ahmad (third from right).