

Highway operators urged to designate 'stop' spaces

KUALA LUMPUR: Highway authorities have been urged to designate spaces to allow vehicles to stop during emergencies at accident-prone stretches.

Associate Professor Dr Law Teik Hua said this was to prevent the recurrence of the tragic crash along the North South Expressway on Wednesday, which claimed the lives of three children and left their mother, who was the driver of the car, seriously injured.

Before the accident, a lorry carrying electronic items had rammed into another lorry laden with palm fruits on the left lane of the expressway. Both lorries had stopped at the emergency lane.



Associate Professor Dr Law Teik Hua

The Perodua Axia driver, who was travelling in the same direction, lost control of her car, causing it to spin before crashing into the rear of one of the lorries.

Law said the two collisions should be analysed separately.

"The first collision involving the lorries could be prevented by designating spaces for an emergency at accident-prone areas. This could prevent heavy vehicles from being on the road and

becoming a road hazard to oncoming traffic.

"Besides that, commercial vehicle drivers should also be given training on hazard prevention.

"Often, these vehicles are overloaded and they lack proper



The site of the crash at Km272.5 of the North-South Expressway near Gunung Lang, Ipoh, which claimed the lives of three children. FILE PIC

maintenance. They often tailgate each other and even speed on the highways," he said.

However, the Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head said the second collision involving the Perodua Axia was related to emergency-handling procedures.

"In cases of emergency, early notification should be issued to warn the oncoming motorists about the hazards ahead. A proper and timely management of accident sites is also crucial.

"Furthermore, the Gunung Lang area has been an accident 'blackspot' for a long time."

He suggested that PLUS Malaysia Bhd build an additional

lane to widen the highway, especially at accident-prone stretches.

"We may not be able to do this for the whole stretch of the highway, so consideration should be given to accident-prone areas," he said.

Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros) board member Professor Dr Wong Shaw Voon also agreed that an early warning system was crucial to inform motorists of hazards ahead.

"A motorist (after stopping his or her car) should place the reflective emergency triangle kit at least 45 metres from the vehicle to alert incoming motorists."



Professor Dr Wong Shaw Voon

Another vital reminder that drivers often overlooked, he said, is that speed kills.

"Cars are usually designed to safely absorb a frontal impact of up to 56kph.

"This means car passengers will most likely not sustain severe injuries if a collision occurs at this speed.

"Unfortunately, many drive at high speeds and consequently are unable to avoid hazards on the road," he said.

As for the Perodua Axia driver, he said it was possible that the driver was not anticipating vehicles stalling or stopping ahead.

"We often expect a free flow traffic, especially on highways. However, quite often we find stalled lorries ahead," he said.

To avoid accidents, Wong reminded drivers to always adhere to the speed limit.