

Comply with the law to save your life

QUESTION

18/05/2010

THE STAR

I REFER to the report 'Buckle up in the rear or be fined, (The Star, May 15) and applaud the efforts made by the Road Safety Department to get drivers to understand the importance of wearing rear seat belts.

According to the department, only 20% of Malaysians are complying with the regulation of wearing rear seat belts although the ruling was implemented in January last year.

I believe attempts to get the public to comply with the regulation must focus more on awareness creation and education, intensifying advocacy and stepping up enforcement as a last resort.

Clear and short messages must be carefully designed in order to create the maximum impact and make the public aware that they are required to wear rear seat belts not only because of legal compliance but more for their own safety.

As such car stickers or labels should focus on 'Buckling up saves life' instead of 'Buckle up - it is law.'

I am sad to say that respect for the law on road safety seems to be diminishing today judging from the attitude and behaviour of road users.

Cases of speeding, beating red traffic lights by motorcyclists and not strapping on helmets are a daily occurrence.

I am not suggesting that law enforcement is not important but on the contrary, I hope to see more law enforcers ensure discipline on our roads.

In any road safety campaign we are to embark upon, it must be to make the road users aware that they have to comply not just because of the law but more to save their own lives.

TAN SRI LEE LAM THYE,
Kuala Lumpur.

FEEDBACK

25/05/2010

THE STAR

SKP: Vital to enforce rear seatbelt rule

THE Road Safety Department would like to thank Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye for his views on the importance of creating awareness and education in getting the public to comply with the law (Comply with the law to save your life, - The Star, May 18).

We are happy to note Lee's appreciation of the department's efforts in getting drivers to understand the importance of wearing rear seatbelts.

The department has continuously and vigorously promoted the use of rear seatbelts through weekly advocacy programmes carried out nationwide by our state offices.

We have also campaigned through the print and electronic media such as newspapers, the Internet as well as TV and radio commercials.

Before the enforcement of the rear seatbelt law on Jan 1, 2009, the department and its partners had been carrying out campaigns designed to educate and inform the public of the new law on rear seatbelts. This was followed by a targeted enforcement programme by the police and the department from January to March 2009.

The effectiveness of the enforcement activities can be seen in the increasing compliance rate of

wearing rear seatbelts jumping from 7% in December 2008 to a high of 47% in February 2009.

The subsequent decline to 37.3% in March 2009 to 20% currently is due to a lower media exposure on TV, radio and newspapers as well as because the enforcement effort could not be sustained at the initial high impact level.

For the long-term, the department concurs that education and awareness creation are the best measures in getting the public to comply with the law. But for immediate compliance, the best measure is stringent enforcement.

The department also notes Lee's suggestion to use the slogan "Buckling Up Saves Lives". It is already one of the slogans adopted by our campaign in addition to "Buckle Up, It is The Law" and "Jom Klik, Depan & Belakang".

DATUK SURET SINGH,
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Road Safety Department.