



Safer roads, safer people

Safety drives all aspects of IRU's work

Road safety is essential to the well-being of people and societies, and vital for economic growth and prosperity. For decades, IRU has worked to make commercial road transport safer for everyone.

The challenge

Road accidents affect drivers and passengers, but also pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists. Road traffic deaths number over 1.2 million annually, with another 50 million seriously injured. Lower income countries are particularly affected. Road accidents are the leading cause of death for people aged between 15 and 44.

Road safety is a global issue and one of our greatest development challenges this century. There is global consensus to reduce the carnage, with the UN's Decade of Action for Road Safety and Agenda for Sustainable Development aiming to halve deaths and injuries by 2030.

Accidents are caused by many factors, including human behaviour – both drivers and other road users, vehicle standards and technology, infrastructure and road traffic systems, and emergency service response.

Making our roads safer requires a holistic approach, covering all causes of accidents, and involving all relevant sectors including transport, police, education, health and insurance. Commercial road transport has a key role to play.

IRU helps develop standards for commercial vehicles and how they are used for passengers and cargo, trains professional drivers and managers on safety, raises awareness, promotes the sharing of best practice, and works with a wide range of partners on new innovative technologies and processes.



Standards

IRU advocates for sustainable standards that improve road safety, working with the United Nations, international organisations and government authorities on both formal and informal standards.

Commercial transport operators run trucks, buses, coaches and taxis every day across the globe. IRU brings their voice into drafting, proposing, advocating and vetting standards. This ensures that robust and practical benchmarks are developed, in particular through IRU's technical member groups including committees for road safety, technical affairs, legal affairs and the carriage of dangerous goods by road.

IRU develops, and collaborates with partners on, research and studies into the causes of accidents and how they can be prevented. Once developed, IRU and its members take a leading role in bringing standards to life by working with governments, associations and transport operators.

Driving standards

IRU proposes, drives and supports formal and informal standards to boost road safety:

- Transporting dangerous goods
- Driver working times
- Vehicle regulations
- Safe load securing
- Safe goods reception
- Passenger transport security guidelines
- Goods transport security guidelines
- Vocational training standards

Training

Most road accidents are caused by human error. Training helps drivers meet high standards and makes our roads safer.

With a network of more than 65 training institutes in more than 45 countries, the IRU Academy trains and certifies thousands of commercial drivers and transport operators every year. The Academy also runs awareness raising campaigns on key issues and train-the-trainer programmes to boost training capacity in the sector.

Amongst a wide range of courses with a focus on safety, the Academy's Crash Prevention Programme trains on road safety best practice for professional drivers.

The Road Safety at Work on-line course for managers, developed with Cranfield University and the Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport, is the first digital course for managing fleet safety, covering both passenger and goods transport.

The Academy also offers courses on transporting dangerous goods, driving and rest time management, safe loading and unloading, safe goods reception, as well as mobile course modules on safety for taxi drivers.

Training pays

IRU and the Arab Union of Land Transport studied the impact of professional training on commercial freight drivers. Road safety clearly benefits economies. GDP losses due to road accidents range from 4.8% in Lebanon up to 6.8% in Sudan.

Training professional drivers however reduces accident risk by up to 46%, making roads safer for everyone.

Accidents involving commercial vehicles are mainly caused by human error. A recent IRU/ World Bank guide on transport sector reform highlighted how the cost of training drivers can be recouped by fewer crashes, along with more efficient road transport.



Awareness

In many cases, road accidents are predictable and preventable. Raising awareness about the cause of accidents, on abiding by and using standards correctly, and in exchanging best practice, are an important part of a holistic approach to road safety.

IRU continuously runs campaigns and develops awareness materials, covering a wide range of safety issues for goods and passenger transport, for member associations, commercial operators and partners.

IRU guides, checklists and campaigns include:

- Safety checklists for truck, bus, coach and taxi drivers
- Instructional guides and videos for safe driving, transporting dangerous goods, and goods transport security
- Bus and coach road safety handbook
- Helping commercial drivers find safe parking and road side facilities, promoting strict adherence to driving and rest time rules, through IRU's TRANSPark app
- Collaborative projects on vehicle technology, digitisation and automated in-vehicle safety mechanisms that alert emergency services to accidents
- Exchanging best practice and promoting safety innovation amongst bus and coach operators through IRU's SmartMove campaign
- Championing taxi operators which meet safety requirements on driver and vehicle certification through IRU's UpTop campaign
- Recognising excellence with industry awards

"IRU works to increase standards in professional road transport, raises awareness through campaigns, studies and reports, and provides practical guidance to help make our roads safer."

Umberto de Pretto, Secretary General IRU