

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR ONG PANG BOON, MINISTER FOR LABOUR,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE "ROAD SAFETY FOR YOU"  
EXHIBITION AT THE HONG LIM COMMUNITY CENTRE ON  
FRIDAY, 17 JUNE, 1977 AT 8.00 P.M.

National Archives and  
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Over the last 3 years (1974-1976), a total of 862 persons died and 7,699 were injured in traffic accidents. These statistics show a high rate of fatalities and injuries on our roads. With an economy which is dependent on its manpower, we cannot afford this loss of our human resource. Neither should we allow the needless grief and sorrow which visit the families of those who are killed or maimed on our roads.

Road accidents involve both the motorist, the motor-cyclist and the scooterist as well as the pedestrian. They are caused by inconsiderate, careless or reckless drivers and pedestrians who jaywalk. Road accidents are therefore not only unnecessary but also preventable. As a compact urban centre with our population exposed a great deal to roads, it is obvious that we must introduce additional measures to deal with this social problem. The Government has therefore organised a national "Road Safety for You" Campaign from June to inculcate safe-driving and safe-walking and crossing among road users. A number of measures will also be introduced to deal with anti-social road users.

I do not intend to touch on the problem of the bad drivers. They will be dealt with by changes to the Points Demerit Scheme and the Road Traffic Act to provide for enhanced penalties against reckless or dangerous driving. Rather, to-night I want to deal with the question of safe-walking and crossing of roads.

In 1976, out of a total of 288 lives lost in traffic accidents, 132 or about 50% were pedestrians. It has been found that jaywalking is the cause of an alarming number of pedestrian fatalities on the road. The Government has built pedestrian safety facilities, like overhead bridge crossings and preventive railings, to not much avail. Overhead bridge crossings, where provided, are largely not used. Roads are not crossed at proper and safe places while some even attempt to climb over the preventive railings.

Jaywalking like littering on the road in the past is a bad habit we must drop. We must realise that it is a dangerous habit not only for the pedestrian but also for other innocent road users who may be killed or injured as a result of the foolish act of jaywalking.

Pedestrians must practise greater self-restraint and discipline and cross the road properly even when it may not be convenient. If there is realisation that road hazards exist; that roads must be shared by all road users and that consideration and courtesy should be given to others in the interests of one's own safety and that of others, then our roads will be made safer for everyone.

The Pedestrian Crossing Rules will come into effect from 1 July this year, making it compulsory for pedestrians to utilise crossing facilities provided when crossing the road. Pedestrians who fail to use designated pedestrian facilities when crossing will be liable to a composition fine of up to \$50/-. However, full-scale ticketing of pedestrians who fail to use the crossing facilities provided will only be effected on the 1st of September. This will give adequate time for our pedestrians to adjust to the need to cross safely on roads.

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It is my hope that all road users, whether drivers or pedestrians, will respond positively to the present national road safety campaign. We have made our city clean and green. Now we must move to make it safer for our road users.

I have now great pleasure to officially declare open the "Road Safety for You" Exhibition at the Hong Lim Community Centre.