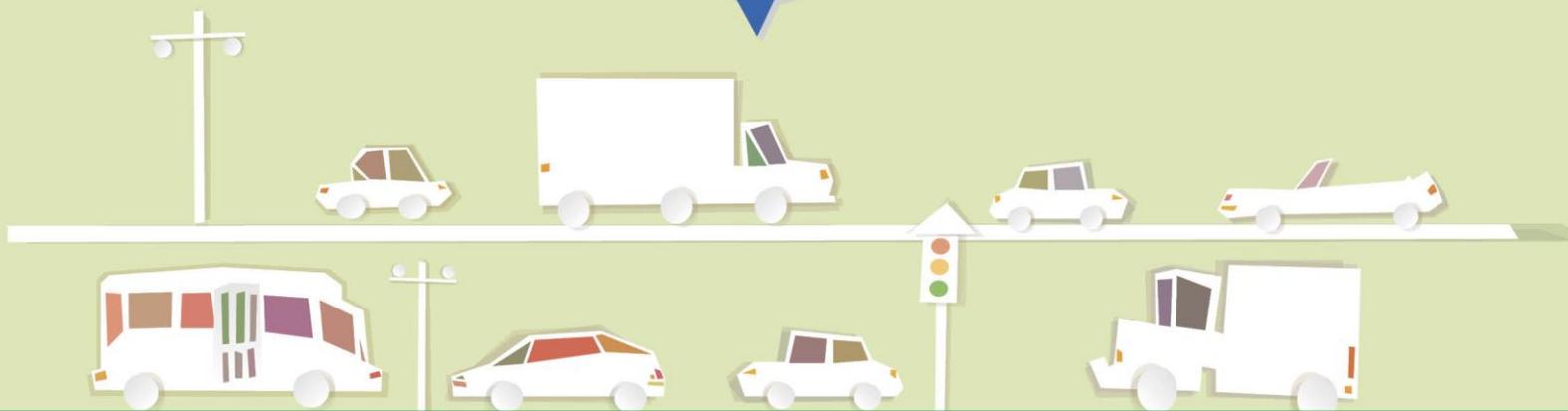


THEMATIC FILE ROAD SAFETY 9

SPEED



Knowledge center
Road safety

Thematic File Road Safety 9 – Speed (Summary)

Thematic File Road Safety 9 – Speed (2017)

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Excessive or inadequate speed is a major cause of road unsafety. In spite of this, speed limits are still frequently exceeded according to the many traffic offences recorded, and the national and international behavioural and attitude measurements. Young drivers, male drivers and some professional drivers appear not to respect the speed limit.

Excessive or inadequate speed results in a higher number of accidents and a higher level of accident severity. 10 to 15% of all accidents and 30% of the accidents with a deadly injury are the direct consequences of excessive or inadequate speed. An increase of the mean speed of 5 km/h on rural and urban roads leads to a rise of 40% of deadly accidents. In case of a collision between a vehicle and a vulnerable road user (such as pedestrians or cyclists), the injuries of the vulnerable road users are extremely severe. Actually, they are not “safely” protected in their vehicle. A study has pointed out that, for an impact speed of 70 km/h, the risk of a deadly injury equals to 16% for an occupant and is two times higher (38%) for a pedestrian. In case of acceleration from 70 km/h to 80 km/h, the risk doubles.

This report includes an overview of the speed limits in force in Belgium and of the speeding fines. It is important to notice that the norm outside the built-up area in Flanders has become 70 km/h since 1st January 2017. In Wallonia and in Brussels, the norm is still 90 km/h.

BRSI behavioural measurements shows that the highest percentage of traffic offences in the surroundings of a school (with no limit concerning the infrastructure) with a permanent speed limitation of 30 km/h in Belgium is committed. The number of speed offences of more than 10 km/h is alarming (59%). On 50 km/h roads, 64% of the drivers respect the speed limit. Outside the built-up area, the speed problem mainly occurs on two-lane roads with a speed limit of 90 km/h. In that situation, 60% of the registered vehicles commit a speed offence. On one-lane roads with a speed limit of 90 km/h, the lowest number (29%) of speed offences is registered. On highways, 22% of the vehicles committed a light speed offence (less than 10 km/h) and 31% of the vehicles a speed offence of more than 10 km/h.

Some interesting information can also be collected from self-reported behaviour surveys. The international ESRA study led by the BRSI revealed that 73% of the Belgians stated that they drove last year above the speed limit on highways and outside the built-up areas. Within the built-up area, the percentage was 68%. Belgium is thus in line with the European average.

Regarding the speed enforcement, Belgium scores better than the European average. In Belgium, 42% of the drivers indicated that the risk of being controlled by the police for speeding during an ordinary drive was (very) high. In Europe, this percentage is only 36%. The enforcement statistics in Belgium show that around 3.2 million speed offences were registered in 2015.

Measures against speeding can target on three factors: human, vehicle and environment. For the environment related measures, the stress is put on the compatibility between the configuration of the road and the applied speed limit. Policymakers can rely on the “Sustainable safety” approach. The measures for the road users concern education/training and enforcement. Thanks to the speed controls (and the related sanctions) the drivers are pushed to respect the speed limit. Speed offenders can follow a course that makes them aware of the dangers and the consequences of inadequate or excessive speed. Finally, measures concerning the vehicle deal with vehicle technology. Intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) is, for instance, a system that allows the drivers to better respect the speed limit.



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