



Policy Brief No 12 of 2025 Road Traffic Crashes: Implications and Policy Options

Overview

The Sustainable Development Goal 3.6, targets to halve the number of global traffic related deaths and injuries by 2030. However, rising incomes in many developing countries, including Kenya, have led to rapid motorization, while road safety management and regulations have not kept pace. The number of road crashes, injuries and deaths having been on the increase over the last one decade with 5000-10,000 road crashes reported annually. Two-thirds of traffic injuries and deaths occur among individuals within the working-age bracket (15–64 years). This has far-reaching implications on the country’s economy and the quality of life of the population. The National Transport Safety Authority (NTSA) and other relevant stakeholders must therefore, accelerate the road safety management and regulation reforms to match the rapid motorization and avert the increasing number traffic crashes, injuries and deaths.

Background:

Road injuries remain a major public health problem affecting millions of people globally. Each year, between 20 and 50 million people are affected by nonfatal road injuries, while about 1.19 million people die due to road crashes. Additionally, **92 percent of all road injury deaths** globally occur in low- and middle income countries with the greatest burden in the African region. Concomitantly, Kenya is not an exception to these alarming statistics. Through the **Sustainable Development Goal 3.6**, the world targets to halve the number of global traffic related deaths and injuries by 2030. Rising incomes in Kenya, has led to rapid motorization, while road safety management and regulation reforms have not kept pace.

Key Findings:

- Road traffic crashes (RTCs) are the leading technological disasters in the country.
- Speeding, drink driving, using mobile devices while driving, not using seat belts, and reckless driving are major contributors to road traffic fatalities.
- Approximately **5000-10000 RTCs** are reported annually but the crashes occur almost on a daily basis.
- The number of reported accidents reduced marginally from 9,976 in 2022 to 9,960 in 2023.
- The number of **fatalities dropped by 7.8 per cent** from 4,690 in 2022 to 4,324 in 2023.
- Seriously and slightly injured **rose by 8.4 per cent and 9.3 per cent** to 10,762 and 7,799 between 2022 and 2023. See figure 1.

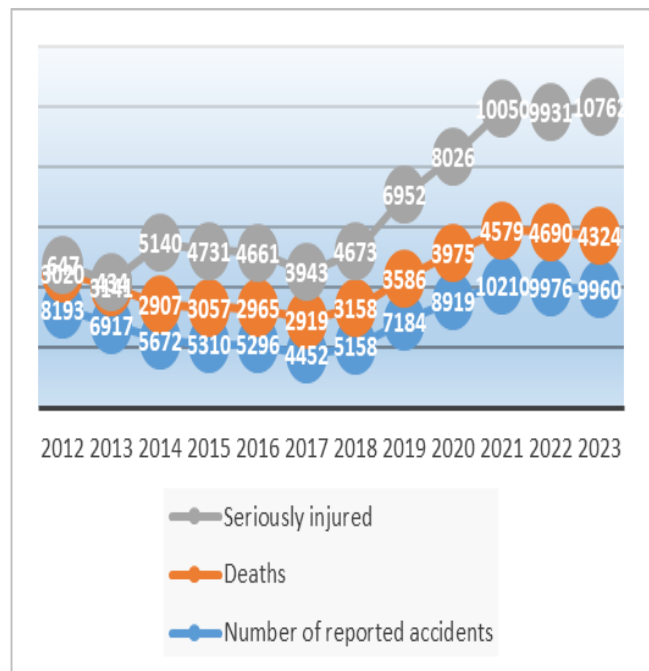


Figure 1 Trend in Reported Accidents, Related deaths and Serious Injuries, 2012-2023

- Road injuries accounts for about **1274 per 100,000 population disability-adjusted life years (DALYs)**
- About **two-thirds** of mortality and long-term disability from road traffic crashes occur amongst the working-age population (between 15 and 64 years old).

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Implications:

- Road traffic crashes cost **3-5%** of their gross domestic product (Approximately **Kshs. 0.811 trillion**)
- Deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes affect medium- and long-term growth prospects by removing prime-age adults from the work force, and reducing productivity due to the burden of injuries.
- World Bank estimates that a **10% reduction** in road traffic deaths raises per capita real GDP by **3.6%** over a 24-year horizon.
- Road crashes contribute to the **mental health burden** through long-term psychological and psycho-social problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety disorder that affect the quality of life of a population.
- Medical Costs related to medical treatment of victims, medication and rehabilitation continue put **pressure on healthcare systems**.

Recommendations:

1. NTSA to promote multisectoral collaboration to accelerate road safety management and regulatory reforms.
2. Traffic Police, NTSA and the Judiciary to improve the enforcement of road safety regulations, using a general deterrence approach supported by targeted promotion campaigns.
3. Build robust systems for road safety data collection and evaluation for evidence based decision making.
4. NTSA, the private sector and the Ministry of Health to improve emergency response and trauma care.

Conclusion:

Road traffic crashes are not only a public health concern in the country but also impact negatively on the economy and the quality of life of our population. Premature deaths and long term injuries remove prime-age adults from the work force, and reduce productivity.

References

1. National Council for Population and Development. (2025). Kenya Population Situation Analysis Report 2025.
2. WHO. (2025). Global health estimates: leading causes of DALYs.

This Policy Brief is based on the Kenya Population Situational Analysis Report 2025.

Collaborating Organizations: National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), Population Studies and Research Institute (PSRI) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

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NCPD is a semi-autonomous government agency that formulates and promotes population policy and coordinates related activities for sustainable development in Kenya.

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