

The Safe System approach

Victoria adopts the Safe System approach to road safety. The Safe System philosophy is recognised globally as the best practice approach for reducing deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

Endorsed by the World Health Organization Global Plan for Road Safety, this approach underpins the Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030.



At the core of the Safe System approach is the recognition that humans will inevitably make mistakes on the road, but that no one should die or be seriously injured as a result of these mistakes.

The principles that guide this approach include:

- **People make mistakes.** When mistakes happen on the road, they can lead to crashes.
 - **Humans are fragile.** The human body is vulnerable and has a limited ability to withstand the forces of a crash. Any impact over 30km/h significantly increases the risk of death.
 - **Road safety is a shared responsibility.** Everyone has a role to play in keeping themselves and others safe on the roads.
 - **The road system must be forgiving.** Creating a forgiving road system ensures that crash forces do not exceed the limits the human body can tolerate.
- **Safe road user behaviour:** Always wearing seatbelts and bike helmets and not using mobile phones while driving are examples of this.
 - **Safe roads and roadsides:** This includes raised pedestrian crossings, flexible safety barriers, roundabouts, and shared-use paths.
 - **Safe vehicles:** This involves ensuring people drive the safest car possible within their budget.
 - **Safe travel speeds:** This means keeping speeds in high-risk areas, like school zones, safe for all road users.

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The Safe System and a whole-of-school community approach

The Safe System approach underpins the Victorian Government road safety partners whole-of-school community approach to road safety. This approach promotes shared responsibility among government, local councils, school leaders, teachers, parents and carers, and children to ensure safe journeys to and from school.

Examples of the Safe System in action within the whole-of-school community approach include:

- Government and councils creating safe school zones with low-speed limits, raised pedestrian crossings, and bike and shared-use paths for safe travel.
- School leaders and teachers informing families about safe routes to school and embedding road safety into school policies, practices and curriculum.

- Parents and carers abiding by speed limits, purchasing the safest car possible, and supporting children in choosing safe, active travel options to school, like walking, cycling, and public transport.
- Children understand key road safety risks and avoid walking and cycling on high-speed roads.

Other benefits of the Safe System approach

The Safe System approach offers many other benefits beyond road safety. Some of these include:

- Enhanced air quality from improved street designs that cater to various travel modes beyond just cars and trucks.
- Increased feelings of public safety, fostering higher levels of active transport, such as walking, cycling, and public transport.
- Promotion of healthier, more active lifestyles as more people engage in walking and cycling.
- Development of environmentally friendly, sustainable, and liveable communities where people are keen to interact and play.

