

Revision	Date	By	Revisions
1.0	01 Jul 2020	C Stokes	First release

Introduction:

As managers of the road transportation system, practitioners have an ethical responsibility to ensure that road users are not killed or seriously injured as a result of using the system. One issue faced by practitioners are changes to the way the road network is designed or used that can introduce new risks to the safety of road users. When this occurs, it is the practitioner's responsibility to assess the change in risk and develop strategies to mitigate any risk to road users that could see them face severe injury outcomes. However, the extent of a practitioner's ethical responsibility can become unclear when other factors and responsibilities are considered. In this tutorial, we will discuss the ethical responsibility of a practitioner through the lens of a changing road network.

Instructions:

Students should review Module 2, Snippet 1, *Why does harm occur?* and Module 2, Snippet 2, *The ethical imperative for change* of Safe System for Universities before undertaking this activity.

Form a group of 2-4 students. As a group, review the case study *Rowell Highway Road Safety Audit*. Consider that you are a practitioner responsible for overseeing the safe introduction of mining activities along the Rowell Highway. As part of your activities, you are responsible for commissioning a road safety audit (RSA) of the highway. This RSA is being undertaken because the introduction of heavy haulage vehicles servicing the local mine are likely to introduce a new risk along this highway. Below are some of the factors that will be considered as part of the RSA.

- What new risk are introduced by the introduction of heavy haulage vehicles?
- What existing risks remain and how might the introduction of heavy haulage vehicles change these risks?
- What stakeholders are likely to be impacted by the risks (e.g. haulage vehicle operators, general public)?
- What options are available for mitigating the identified risks?

As the commissioner, you are responsible for acting on the findings of the RSA. In order to do so, you must consider a number of ethical questions regarding your responsibility to road user safety. As a group, discuss and answer the following questions while considering your ethical responsibility as a road safety practitioner:

Questions

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1. The RSA has identified several new risks to road users created by the introduction of heavy haulage vehicles along the highway. The RSA has also identified several existing risks along the route. Some of these existing risks are made worse by the introduction of the haulage vehicles, while some remain unchanged or are even lessened. Which risks do you have an ethical responsibility to act upon?
 2. One of the risks introduced by the haulage vehicles is able to be addressed by the mine operator introducing upgraded haulage vehicles. However, the mine operator has highlighted that doing so is economically not feasible and so has elected not to undertake the upgrade. What ethical responsibility do you have to mitigate this risk? Does the mine operator's refusal to deal with the risk in any way reduce your ethical responsibility?
 3. Now consider that this risk in Question 2 affects only the safety of the mine workers. Does this change your ethical responsibility to mitigate the risk?
 4. A significant risk identified by the RSA is the high-speed interactions between the haulage vehicles and light vehicles used by the general public. This risk can be mitigated by constructing a separate road for haulage vehicles to use. However, doing so would come at the cost of negating any economic gains to the local community that are generated by the existence of the mine. Other forms of mitigation will likely be less effective but will come at far less economic cost. What form of mitigation would you suggest to be implemented?