

BOOSTING ROAD SAFETY

# 'STRICTER VEHICLE MAINTENANCE NEEDED'

Expert proposes mandatory vehicle maintenance records for diesel subsidy approval

HAKIM MAHARI  
 KUALA LUMPUR  
 hakimmahari@nst.com.my

**R**EQURING commercial vehicle companies to maintain and submit periodic vehicle maintenance records as a condition for diesel subsidy approval will boost road safety and reduce lorry-related accidents, says an expert.

Dr Nurul Hafeezah Sahak, a senior lecturer from the Engineering Technology Department at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, said this measure was the minimum the government should enforce to ensure vehicle safety.

She said company owners must take responsibility for maintenance costs to safeguard lives.

"Yes, the government should require Puspakom inspection records before approving diesel subsidies for commercial transport companies.

"This serves as a checklist to ensure that lorries and their drivers adhere to best practices, providing a minimum standard for safety.

"Given the large number of lorry and industrial companies, controlling everything is challenging.

"However, having periodic maintenance records that the authorities can review is a practical solution," she told the *New Sunday Times*.

Puspakom, the Computerised Vehicle Inspection Centre, is authorised to conduct motor vehicle inspections under the Road Transport Act.

Nurul said road safety required an approach involving individual awareness and responsibility.

"Although regulations and laws exist, it depends on the individual to practise safety."

She said behaviour-based safety practices were essential in ensuring road safety.

"For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, despite the standard operating procedures (SOPs) set by the government, individual awareness and self-dis-



Dr Nurul Hafeezah Sahak



Dr Rozni Ismail

cipline in adhering to these SOPs were key in controlling the spread of the virus.

"In road safety, even with regulations, people must practise safety.

"Therefore, in addition to regulations, people need to have awareness and self-discipline to practise safety consistently."

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Traffic and Road Safety psychologist Professor Dr Rozni Ismail called for an investigation into the transparency and integrity of vehicle maintenance records.

While periodic inspections are documented, he said the government needs to address concerns about the reliability of these records.

"Significant leakages in the system often stem from operators seeking to pass the Puspakom inspection by any means necessary, enabling vehicles to remain on the road.

"At that level, strict monitoring, such as spot checks, needs to be done.

"The authorities need to conduct spot checks, check tyres and ensure vehicles are safe.

"Sometimes, the paperwork looks perfect, but the true condition may not align with what's reported," he said.

Earlier, Bernama reported that 1,457 deaths were recorded in 3,500 road accidents involving lorries in the country from January 2019 to last month.

Federal police Traffic Investigation and Enforcement Department director Danuk Seri Mohd Yusri Hassan Baseri said during the same period, 473 cases of serious injuries and 1,076 cases of minor injuries were reported.

He said the highest number of deaths was recorded in 2019 (274) followed by 2024 (260), 2023 (235), 2022 (232), 2021 (230) and

2020 (226).  
 On accidents involving buses, Yusri said 548 cases were recorded in the same period, with 153 deaths, 120 serious injuries and 218 minor injuries.

"Police will continue to intensify monitoring and enforcement operations on commercial vehicles, particularly lorries and buses, to reduce fatalities," he said yesterday.

Yusri said the police would increase cooperation with the Road Transport Department, the National Anti-Drug Agency, and toll concession companies for this purpose.

He said he hoped that owners, companies and drivers of commercial vehicles would ensure the safety of their vehicles.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros) said its study found that accidents involving lorries on highways were more likely to result in fatalities compared with other types of roads such as federal, state and municipal roads.

"This may be due to the higher speed of vehicles on highways.

"In addition, lorries with heavy loads, when travelling at higher speeds, create significant momentum if involved in accidents.

"The same study showed that the risk of death in accidents involving lorries is higher if the incident occurs at a curve, compared with other road geometries.

"Additionally, the risk of death for other vehicle users, except for buses, is higher when involved in accidents with lorries."

Miros said accidents caused by loose tyres could stem from low-quality vehicle components, poor maintenance practices, and overloading beyond the recommended weight limit.

It reminded owners of vehicles to ensure their roadworthiness.