

Running your Road Safety Week: Guidance for governments and NGOs

Could you make a Road Safety Week happen in your country? It can be a relatively low-cost and effective way to get crucial road safety messages out widely to the public, to help save lives on roads.

A Road Safety Week is an organised campaign, often run annually, to raise awareness about road safety, promote safe, legal and responsible road use, and ultimately to reduce road deaths and injuries. It can be coordinated at national, regional, local or organisational level, but often involves:

- Encouraging grassroots involvement and action at local level by stakeholders including educators, local authorities, community groups and companies.
- Offering and promoting resources, information and/or events to support involvement and action by these stakeholders and raise public awareness.
- Delivering an awareness-raising publicity campaign.

The value of Road Safety Weeks has been recognised by the UN in its plan for the **Decade of Action for Road Safety**. One of the desired outcomes of the Decade is to increase the number of countries holding Road Safety Weeks.

Why set up a Road Safety Week?

The death and injury toll on roads is an international problem of huge proportions. Globally there are 1.24 million road deaths a year^[1] with estimates placing the injury toll between 20 and 50 million. Road deaths are the biggest killer of young people worldwide and the 10th biggest killer overall^[2]. These casualties inflict terrible suffering among bereaved and injured victims, and pose a major economic burden^[3].

Most road crashes and casualties are caused by or involve behavioural factors, for example not wearing a seatbelt, speeding or drink-driving. So most can be prevented by drivers or other road users altering their behaviour. This leaves a huge amount of scope for preventing casualties through raising awareness of how people can protect themselves and others on roads. Road Safety Weeks can be an effective way to do this and act as a focal point for the communication of road safety messages. It can help transform attitudes, normalise responsible driving, and build cultural disapproval of risk taking.

Road Safety Weeks can support other work to improve road safety, such as changes in laws, enforcement and engineering measures. For example, organisers can work with police to set up and promote a period of heightened traffic enforcement, to get the message out that illegal driving won't be tolerated. Equally, a Road Safety Week could be used to promote a change in the law, for example a lower drink drive limit, by conveying the message that even small amounts of alcohol can be deadly when driving. Road Safety Weeks can yield social benefits by encouraging



and supporting grassroots educational and campaigning activities. A bottom-up approach allows communities to take ownership over road safety in their local area and encourages an active and cohesive community. Furthermore, if people feel their roads are safer it might encourage them to walk and cycle more, which has health and social benefits.

The end goal of a Road Safety Week is to prevent road death and injury and achieving this can lead to major social and economic benefits. Fewer casualties results in less strain on health and emergency services. It also prevents the financial devastation that injured or bereaved families can experience.

Organising a Road Safety Week

STEP ONE: Identify who you aim to reach

Try to engage as many people as possible, but take into account the resources you have at your disposal and plan accordingly. Consider if you:

- Can coordinate the Week at national or regional level. Have a particular need to target a specific age group or demographic. Can make use of your existing networks and communication channels to promote involvement in the Week.
- Will be able to work with national or local partners, such as membership organisations, employers, national/regional/local authorities and schools to help cascade road safety messages to the target audience.

STEP TWO: Research and gather support

Research and contact the organisations that can help you deliver the campaign and reach your target audience. This can include public bodies such as traffic police and national transport agencies. Identify and contact potential sponsors. Securing funding from corporate sponsors can enable you to run your event on a larger scale and reach a bigger audience.

STEP THREE: Pick a suitable date and theme

Ensure the date doesn't clash with any other large scale events or national holidays and fits with the calendars of your target audience. For example if you aim to involve schools, your Road Safety Week should not be during or immediately after school vacations or busy periods in the run up to exams.

Choosing a theme can give your event focus and can act as a suggested starting point for people to get involved. If your country or region has a particular road safety problem this could be the theme. For example the first **Road Safety Week in Canada** focused on encouraging people to wear seatbelts because of the low rate of seatbelt use at the time. Consider how you can ensure your theme has wide relevance and appeal. Or you could make use of Brake's Pledge, or choose one of the **Pledge** topics, as your theme, to promote safe road use. You can also state that participants don't have to stick to your theme if they have another road safety issue they wish to address locally.

STEP FOUR: Plan and develop resources

Your resources should be appropriate for the stakeholder group they are aimed at – resources for school groups will be very different to those for fleet professionals – and fit with your theme. You can also consider producing some generic Road Safety Week posters or flyers for your event. Brake offers a range of **downloadable resources** on key road safety topics that you can use as part of your Road Safety Week.

It is also useful to set up an online presence for your Road Safety Week. This can be a whole website, a web page on your site, or a Facebook page. An online presence provides an accessible source of information for participants as well as easy access to resources. You can refer to our guidance for **companies, schools and colleges**, and **local agencies and community groups** to help you provide information and ideas to these groups of stakeholders on how to get involved.

STEP FIVE: Market and promote to potential participants

Identify the groups and organisations you want to participate in Road Safety Week, for examples schools, emergency services, local authorities and community groups. Communicate clearly to these groups why it is beneficial to them that they participate and how they can do so. Contact them with plenty of notice to give them time to plan their involvement. Promote your Road Safety Week through the organisations in step 2 for further reach. This can be done through: email marketing to existing contacts and via partners; advertising on your own website and on partner sites; using social media channels; and sending press releases to relevant media. It can be a good idea to set up a registration system to enable monitoring of how many people get involved and distribution of information and resources to participants. See Brake's **registration form** for Road Safety Week in the UK. Coordinate with the various stakeholders throughout the Week to ensure they have the tools and resources they require.

STEP SIX: Promote and gain coverage

Gaining publicity and media coverage in the run-up, during and after your Road Safety Week can help you reach more people with important road safety messages and boost involvement in the event. Plan in advance what messages you want to get across (linked to your theme if you have one) to encourage people to use roads safely. Consider how you can use statistics, images, case studies and film clips to get these messages across powerfully. You can then work to engage TV, radio and newspapers (at national and regional level) by issuing press releases and making contact with journalists. You can also promote your messages through social media, advertising and other communications channels open to you. See Brake's **publicity and media guidance**.

STEP SEVEN: Measure participation and coverage

Record factors such as the number of registrations and the number of events run by stakeholders (and different types of events). Evaluate publicity gained. This will give you an indication of the reach to help you plan and evaluate in future years and achieve ongoing funding. In the run up to the event it is useful to record marketing activity to better target your marketing for future Weeks. It is worthwhile to gather feedback from stakeholders and participants. This will tell you what worked well and highlight any difficulties people encountered. This can be useful for planning future event. See Brake's **Road Safety Week 2013 Evaluation Report** for how these metrics can be recorded.

STEP EIGHT: Communicate outcomes to stakeholders, supporters and participants

This demonstrates that their involvement is crucial to the success of Road Safety Week. It also shows them how other groups participated and can give them ideas for the future. This could be set out in a similar way to **Brake's evaluation report**.

STEP NINE: Planning for next year

This can begin as soon as your Road Safety Week has ended – or even before. Use the feedback and other evaluation data to consider future improvements. Select your date and theme for next year as soon as possible and inform previous participants so it goes in their calendars early. Get commitment from stakeholders, supporters and participants for their involvement next year and start marketing again.

- **Browse case studies of existing road safety events for ideas at www.roadsafetyweek.org/projects-map**
- **Get tools and resources for your Road Safety Week at www.roadsafetyweek.org/tools-resources**
- **Contact us and tell us about your event at www.roadsafetyweek.org/contact**

- [1] **Global Status Report on Road Safety**, 2013, World Health Organisation
- [2] **Decade of Action for Road Safety: Saving Millions of Lives**, 2011, World Health Organisation
- [3] **Road traffic injuries fact sheet**, 2013, World Health Organisation

This guidance is part of www.roadsafetyweek.org, a global resource developed by Brake, the road safety charity, in partnership with Fundación MAPFRE, for anyone interested in organising a Road Safety Week, or a similar awareness-raising event, in their country, locality or organisation.

Our aim is to encourage more Road Safety Weeks to spring up around the world during the UN's **Decade of Action for Road Safety**, and help more organisations, government agencies and communities take action to improve road safety and prevent casualties.

Brake has domestic operations in the **UK** and **New Zealand**, and coordinates national Road Safety Week **UK** and **NZ**. Brake also offers internationally relevant guidance, resources, research and webinars, which can be accessed by organisations around the world to help you promote road safety and support road crash victims. Sign up for our free fortnightly **professionals' e-bulletin** to get updates on events, products and services we provide to support international road safety and fleet professionals.