

National Society: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**10**  
road safety  
commitments

**I COMMIT TO:**

- Use a seatbelt
- Wear a helmet on a motorcycle
- Drive at a safe speed and distance suitable for the conditions
- Not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Not use a mobile phone when driving
- Be visible as a pedestrian or cyclist
- Know and respect the highway code
- Maintain my vehicle in a good condition
- Be licensed and trained for the vehicle I drive
- Know how to react in case of a crash

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

# An invitation to make **a road safety commitment**

A guide book for the individual road safety commitment card

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Saving lives, changing minds.

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



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*The Global Road Safety Partnership is a  
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International Federation of Red Cross and  
Red Crescent Societies.*



## The Risk

Just over 100 years ago, mankind invented motorized transport. Alongside the huge benefits that have resulted, we have introduced a hidden hazard into society. This is the huge energy associated with moving at speed, that humans cannot sense in any way.

Approximately 3,000 people, including more than 500 children, are killed every day on the world's roads. This amounts to 1.2 million deaths a year – a crisis on the scale of tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS. More than eight out of ten deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. In addition, more than 50 million people are seriously injured, many are disabled for life. Pedestrians, cyclists, and riders of motorized two-wheelers and their passengers account for around half of global road traffic deaths.

Road crashes can happen to you and to the ones you love.

There are solutions to bring to this global crisis, and everyone can play a role.

The purpose of this booklet is to show how your own individual contribution can make a difference. It has been written by the road safety specialists of the Global Road Safety Partnership and is based upon global good practice road safety research and implementation, with examples chosen from all sectors of society.



**Andrew Pearce**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Global Road Safety Partnership



**Matthias Schmale**  
Under-Secretary General  
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## Red Cross Red Crescent Action

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has identified building a 'culture of risk reduction and prevention' as one of its underlying priorities in all its activities. Improving road safety to save lives and build safer communities is part of that policy and is included in IFRC's *Strategy 2020*.

To support action in the field of road safety, the IFRC has produced a personal road safety commitment card, for use by National Society governance leaders, staff and volunteers, partners in road safety and the general public.

The card lists ten road safety commitments, which the cardholder promises to respect and implement. It is a way for staff and volunteers to protect themselves in their daily life and to set a good example to others.

## Your personal commitment

We are all involved in some way in road transport.

Everybody is at risk from the energy involved – and it could be you next.

Many road safety initiatives are being implemented in the areas of engineering, law enforcement, school education, public information, responding to emergency situations and building up trauma care systems.

A way to minimize the risk can start with you taking responsibility for protecting yourself and others.

By following the ten commitments in this booklet, your chance of survival throughout your life will increase significantly.

# 1 I commit to use a seatbelt

“A seatbelt reduces the risk of getting killed in case of a crash by half.”

## WHY

- Your own body energy in a moving car is usually enough to kill yourself and everyone else in the car. At 70 km/h your car has about the same energy as 40 flying rifle bullets, and your own body about 4 rifle bullets. If you do not use a belt, your body becomes a weapon!
- A seatbelt is one of the most effective road safety measures.
- A seatbelt prevents you from being thrown into the windshield.
- Passengers with no seatbelt count for most occupant fatalities.
- In a road crash, seat belts have been proven to reduce the risk of death by half for front seat – by 25 per cent for rear seat passengers.
- A seat belt reduces head injuries by 60 per cent to vehicle occupants.
- In a crash without a seatbelt where you are thrown out of the car, you have a 75 per cent chance of being killed.



## Seatbelt myths

**Myth:** *I don't need to wear a seatbelt, I have an airbag.*

➤ **Fact:** Airbags can be deadly if not used with a seatbelt.

**Myth:** *I don't want to get trapped in the vehicle in case of fire.*

➤ **Fact:** Fires are very rare in a crash, deaths and serious injuries without belts are very common.

**Myth:** *I don't need to wear a seatbelt driving in town.*

➤ **Fact:** A crash at 10 km/h can still cause severe facial and chest injuries. Imagine falling flat on your face with no protection at all. That is a crash at 4km/hr.

**Myth:** *I don't need to wear a seatbelt in the rear seat.*

➤ **Fact:** Unbuckled passengers can be thrown about and can kill other passengers as well as themselves.

## 2 I commit to wear a helmet on a motorcycle

“A helmet can increase the chance of my survival in a collision by 40 per cent”

### WHY

- Your own body energy while riding a motorcycle is enough to split your head open in a crash.
- Helmet wearing for both rider and passenger will increase the chance of survival by up to 40 per cent depending on the speed of the motorcycle, and quality of the helmet.
- Tens of thousands of people around the world die in motorcycle collisions every year.
- Head and neck injuries are the most common causes of death and severe injury among motorcyclists and cyclists.
- Helmets are effective in reducing the likelihood of head injuries, as well as their severity.
- For optimal protection the helmet needs to be fitted properly.
- Wearing a crash helmet by motorcyclists reduces the risk of brain damage by 70 per cent.



**A helmet needs to be fitted properly – otherwise it doesn't work!**

### Some helmet myths

**Myth:** Helmets cause neck or spinal cord injuries.

✎ **Fact:** Research has proved that helmets conforming to standards and correctly worn do not cause neck or spinal cord injuries.

**Myth:** Helmets impair hearing and sight.

✎ **Fact:** Helmets do not affect peripheral vision or contribute to crashes. Helmets may reduce the loudness of noises, but do not affect the ability of a rider to distinguish between sounds. Some studies have indicated that properly fitted helmets can actually improve the ability to hear by reducing the noise of the wind.

## An invitation to make a road safety commitment

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**Myth:** Motorcycles are a small percentage of registered vehicles, thus motorcycle crashes represent a minor burden to society.

➤ **Fact:** Whether motorcycles make up a small proportion of vehicles (as in some high-income countries) or the bulk of vehicle fleets (as in many Asian countries), the fact is that motorcyclists are about 27 times as likely as passenger car occupants to die in a traffic crash, and about 6 times as likely to be injured.



SPEED

## 3 I commit to drive at a safe speed and distance suitable for the conditions

*“I don’t have time to stop if a pedestrian crosses the road in front of me.”*

### WHY

- Your vehicle has more than enough energy to kill other people.
- The energy of your vehicle is related to *the square of the speed, and even at very low speeds is enough to kill a human being.*
- The faster you drive the harder you hit. A family car at 50 km/h has about the same energy as 20 flying rifle bullets, at 70 km/h it is 40 bullets.
- The higher speed – and therefore energy – the more severe the crash.
- A driver is more likely to lose control at higher speeds
- At high speeds one fails evaluate oncoming risks in good time, and it takes longer to react and longer to stop.
- Most road users are killed if hit by a car travelling 50 km/h.

- At 30 kph the chance of survival is more than 90 per cent – which still means that one in ten pedestrians are killed even at this speed
- Speed is estimated to be the main contributory factor in about half of all road crashes.



### The effect of speed when road crashes involve child pedestrians

At **65kph** most children are killed

At **50kph** half are killed

At **30 kph** mph one child in 20 is killed

### The effect of speed on adult victims of crashes

Hit by a car at **65kph**, 9 out of 10 pedestrians are killed.

Hit by a car at **50kph**, one out of 10 pedestrians are killed.

# 4 I commit to not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs

*“Driving under the influence affects my performance and I can harm myself or other people severely.”*

## WHY

- Because I am in charge of a machine with the energy to kill myself and others. I would not want to be in an air jet with a pilot who drinks on duty. Why would I do it myself?
- Drivers who have been drinking have a much higher risk of involvement in crashes than those with no alcohol in their blood.
- Alcohol affects your brain and driving skills:
  - Poor judgment of the situation and the risks.
  - Lower concentration.
  - Poor assessment of distances.
  - Reduced field of vision.
  - Reduced co-ordination and reflexes.
  - Longer reaction times.

- At a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .05 (limit in many countries), the risk of being involved in a road crash is about double compared with a BAC of zero and the risk increases rapidly with increasing alcohol.
- The only safe option is not to drink alcohol if you plan to drive, and never offer an alcoholic drink to someone else who is intending to drive.
- Drugs also create a false sense of alertness and confidence reducing the ability to make correct decisions. Drugs seriously affect driving.



*Cold showers, exercise, black coffee, fresh air, or vomiting does not help reduce the alcohol in your blood.*

*Only time reduces the level of alcohol – but even the following morning the alcohol level can be too high for safe driving.*

*Becoming tired when driving can be as dangerous as being affected by alcohol or drugs.*

# 5 I commit to not use a mobile phone when driving

*“It only takes one second of distraction to create a dangerous situation and someone can die.”*

## WHY

- Using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving may increase your chance of a crash by as much as four times.
- Riskier decision making. Talking on the phone is not the same as talking to a passenger. The person on the other end cannot see your environment and will be trying hard to get your attention at exactly the time you need it to drive.
- Talking on the phone leads to less controlled braking and moving out of the lane.
- Talking takes away your concentration on the road which affects attention and judgement. The more you talk the less you see.
- Slower reactions. Reaction times for drivers using a phone are 30 per cent worse than those who do not.
- All phone calls distract from driving. The more distraction while driving the more dangerous.



*Callers also play an important role. If you ring someone on their mobile phone who turns out to be driving when they answer, say you'll call them later and hang up.*



## 6 I commit to be visible as a pedestrian or cyclist

*"I want to be seen by the drivers so I don't get hit!"*

### WHY

- Pedestrians and cyclists are extremely vulnerable. Nearly every vehicle around them has enough energy to kill them.
- Bright or reflective clothing helps to be seen on the road at night. If drivers can see you, they can more easily avoid you.
- Pedestrians and cyclists are small and will not be easily seen by drivers.
- Pedestrians and cyclists should not expect that the traffic can stop quickly.



### Behaving in a safe manner on a road increases safety:

- ↘ Use safe crossings and footpaths
- ↘ Always wait for the green light to cross a road
- ↘ Do not run across roads
- ↘ Use the side of the road with street lights
- ↘ Do not cross the road from between parked cars as drivers may not see you.
- ↘ Try not to cross near trees or bushes because drivers may not see you.
- ↘ Avoid crossing near a bend or crest in the road. Give yourself a good chance to see vehicles coming from both directions.
- ↘ Avoid crossing roads near roundabouts, unless a pedestrian crossing is provided. If there is no pedestrian crossing, pedestrians must give way to vehicles.
- ↘ When it is dark, cross the road near street lights.
- ↘ Children and young people must learn the rules and know how to behave in traffic.

# 7 I commit to know and respect the highway code

*“Highway code is there to protect myself and others in what is a dangerous activity.”*

## WHY

- The highway code and traffic law is there to protect individuals and society.
- The purpose of the highway code is to provide factual information and guidance to road users.
- Compliance will reduce the frequency and severity of road crashes.
- If the public understands it is for their own interest, it is easier to follow the rules.



*Even when they are not enforced – follow the traffic rules.*



## The highway code for road safety concerns:

- ↘ Traffic rules, including meaning of signs and lights
- ↘ Speed
- ↘ Drinking and driving
- ↘ Seatbelt use
- ↘ Helmet use
- ↘ Vehicle standard

# 8 I commit to maintain my vehicle in a good condition

*“The safer the vehicle the safer is everyone around me and myself too!”*

## WHY

- It is important to keep the vehicle fit for driving and safety.
- Road vehicle standards are set to ensure that vehicles meet acceptable safety and environmental standards.
- Undergo regular vehicle testing and inspection at an authorized garage.
- Avoid overloading in volume and weight.
- A spare tire and emergency equipment including first aid kit and a set of safety triangles can save time and lives.



**Before driving your vehicle, check its condition, including:**

- ↘ Brakes, steering, horn, lights, battery and wind-screen wipers
- ↘ Clean lights
- ↘ Tires pressure and wear
- ↘ Check oil, water and other liquids if necessary



# 9 I commit to be licensed and trained for the vehicle I drive

*"I am driving a vehicle with the energy to kill, and I must be responsible with it."*

## WHY

- Good and safe driving takes good driver training.
- In order to drive, a license is needed that shows you are competent to do it.
- Driving different vehicles takes different driving skills and licenses.



Driver standards apply to both private drivers and commercial operators.

Normally these requirements are met by undertaking a practical and a theoretical test.

Your driving license needs to be valid.

International driver licenses can be obtained for travelling abroad.



# 10 I commit to know how to react in case of a crash\*

*“Imagine a victim with severe bleeding following a road accident. If nobody applies pressure to the wound to stop the bleeding, even the most sophisticated or the quickest emergency service in the world will only arrive on the scene to certify death”*

## WHY

- Anyone can save a life! The application of first aid and alerting emergency services can mean the difference between life and death in a road crash.
- 57 per cent of deaths from traffic collisions occur in the first few minutes of a crash.
- On average, it takes less than four minutes for a blocked airway to be fatal.
- The number of people who die as a result of road crash would be considerably reduced if a witness was able to act effectively before the arrival of the emergency services.
- When all drivers and more people learn what to do to help road crash victims, more lives will be saved.
- Mobilising the emergency services can make the difference between life and death for people trapped in vehicles or needing emergency surgery.



## First aid – what does it mean?

This is immediate help provided to a sick or injured person. It is concerned not only with physical injury or illness but also with other initial care including psychological support for people suffering emotional distress caused by experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event (source: First Aid Policy of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – 2007).

### An example of first aid curriculum (Austria):

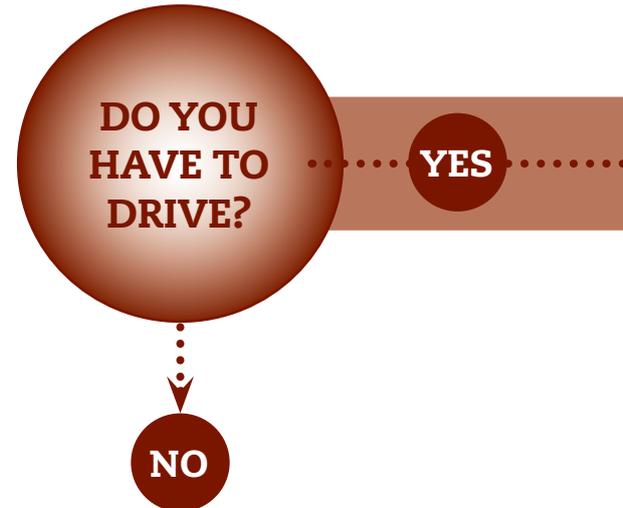
- Protecting the scene and alerting emergency services
- Evacuation of the victim
- Management of an unconscious victim
- Management of ventilation arrest
- Management of cardiac arrest
- Management of shock
- Management of severe bleeding
- Use of the first aid kit, which is compulsory for every car

\* This chapter was written with reference to the position paper of European Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies “About First Aid and Driving Licence”. 2008.

## Journey planner

Thousands of crashes are caused by tired drivers. They are most likely to happen: on long journeys, at night, after eating, drinking alcohol (even one drink), after having less sleep than normal, if taking medicines that cause drowsiness, on journeys home after night shifts.

A planned journey reduces the risk of drowsiness and falling asleep at the wheel, and is more efficient, saving you time, stress and money.



Go by Rail, Air, Bus or Coach – it's safer

↘ **PLAN  
THE JOURNEY**

- Share the driving if possible
- Ensure your vehicle is in a safe condition
- Make sure you're not impaired by alcohol or drugs
- Make sure you will be well rested
- Book an overnight stop if necessary
- Avoid drinking in peak-sleepiness period

↘ **PLAN  
THE ROUTE**

- Avoid drinking when you would normally be asleep
- Plan where to take rest-breaks – at least every 2 hours
- Plan where to stop for the night, if necessary
- Check for delays and plan alternative routes

↘ **DURING  
THE JOURNEY**

- Take rest-breaks as planned
- Listen to the traffic news for possible delays
- Concentrate on your driving

↘ **IF YOU START  
TO FEEL TIRED**

- Find somewhere safe to stop
- Take two strong caffeine drinks
- Nap for about 15 minutes

↘ **TOO  
TIRED TO  
CONTINUE?**

Find somewhere safe to stop overnight

## Assist in spreading the message!

Spreading the road safety messages and the commitment cards in your own environment helps save lives. By increasing awareness and skills more people will survive and your local community will be more safe.

How and where you can contribute to spreading the road safety message:

- Set a good example yourself.
- Discuss with family and friends.
- Introduce the commitment card
  - into your own life
  - in the work environment
  - in your local community
  - around schools (safe crossings) and in class
  - sports clubs
  - local markets and shopping areas.

Following these commitments, doing volunteer work and assisting to ensure better road safety in your organization and in your local community will save lives!

Find more about road safety at [www.grsproadsafety.org](http://www.grsproadsafety.org)

The Global Road Safety Partnership is a partnership between business, civil society and government dedicated to sustainable reduction of death and injury on the roads.



The graphic features a large orange circle with the number '10' inside. Below the circle, the text 'road safety commitments' is written in a sans-serif font, with 'road safety' in black and 'commitments' in orange. To the right of the circle is a list of ten commitments, each preceded by an orange arrowhead. The entire graphic is enclosed in a black border.

**I COMMIT TO:**

- Use a seatbelt
- Wear a helmet on a motorcycle
- Drive at a safe speed and distance suitable for the conditions
- Not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Not use a mobile phone when driving
- Be visible as a pedestrian or cyclist
- Know and respect the highway code
- Maintain my vehicle in a good condition
- Be licensed and trained for the vehicle I drive
- Know how to react in case of a crash

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Together  
we can save  
millions  
of lives.

## **2011-2020 – A Decade of Action for Road Safety**

*An individual contribution can make a difference.*



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