
The CAMBODIA DAILY

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In Bid to Increase Helmet Use, Campaign Focuses on Fines

by Meghan Tribe and Khuon Narim | October 23, 2015

With a new traffic law set to come into force next year, officials and NGOs Thursday announced an aggressive campaign to tell people that failing to wear a helmet while riding a motorbike will threaten their lives and their wallets.

Starting on January 1, police will begin collecting \$3.75 fines from all drivers and passengers caught not wearing a helmet. At a meeting Thursday to discuss the “Head Safe. Helmet On” campaign, police, government officials and NGO representatives explained how they would spread the word.



The ghost of a motorbike accident victim explains the importance of wearing a helmet in a still

image from a television commercial running as a part of the 'Head Safe. Helmet On' campaign.

In a joint initiative between the Transportation Ministry, the Asia Injury Prevention Fund (AIP) and USAID, the message will be disseminated through television and radio commercials, local officials and on billboards across the country.

"Experiences in other countries confirm that when we promote helmet wearing...we can reduce road traffic deaths among motorcyclists," said Kim Pagna, country director for AIP, during the meeting at the Phnom Penh Hotel.

According to the latest figures from the World Health Organization, motorcyclists accounted for 73 percent of all traffic deaths in 2014. Of those, only 12 percent were wearing helmets.

Ty Long, deputy chief the National Police's public order department, said that efforts were underway to prepare people for the enforcement of the new law, which requires all motorbike passengers over the age of 3 to wear a helmet.

"Currently governors of all provinces have issued notices and disseminated information to people so they understand about the enforcement of the law," he said.

A message informing the public about the fines will also be included in existing public service announcements produced by AIP for radio and television.

In the TV spot, a man is riding on a motorbike with his helmetless wife and child when they are confronted by the ghosts of a man and a young girl who died in a traffic accident because they were not wearing helmets.

"In our television commercial...we try to make people more aware so that they will consider that 'OK I don't want to pay the fine, instead I will use my money...to buy a helmet for myself to protect myself and avoid the fine,'" said Mr. Pagna.

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