



**Israel National Road
Safety Authority**





Establishment of the NRSA

In 2006, the government of Israel adopted the Public Committee Report for the Preparation of a Multiyear National Plan for Road Safety (the Sheinin Report), and the Knesset passed the 2006 National Road Safety Authority Law (Temporary Order).

The decision to establish an independent national road safety authority signifies the Israeli government's acknowledgement of the fact that road safety requires in-depth attention, and that a practical strategic plan is necessary to improve the safety of road users in Israel – drivers, passengers, pedestrians, motorcyclists and bicyclists.

In 2007, the NRSA commenced its work and outlined its mission:

To spearhead the national road safety strategy; to serve as a national traffic safety information center; to direct, coordinate and supervise the activity of the partner organizations in order to form a safe driving culture; and to reduce the number of traffic crashes and fatalities in the State of Israel.

The following objectives were set, based on the National Road Safety Authority's multiyear plan for 2008-2012, which was approved by the government of Israel:

Within the next ten years, to achieve the same level of safety as the leading countries in traffic safety and to reduce the annual number of traffic fatalities to less than 360 by the end of 2010 and less than 330 by the end of 2012.



Roles of the NRSA

Under the law, the NRSA's roles are as follows:

1. To set up and operate a system to control and oversee the activities of the local traffic authorities.
2. To augment the funding of road safety operations in local authorities, to improve the transportation infrastructure and safety measures on urban roads, and to supervise implementation of the funded activities.
3. To formulate a multiyear plan to improve road safety and help implement it through annual action plans.
4. To promote, plan and conduct marketing strategies and campaigns, along with other educational activities, in order to increase public awareness of road safety.
5. To set up and run a national center for road safety information and research.
6. To advise and assist the educational system, in all types of educational institutions, with practical curricula on road safety education, including securing the financial aid necessary for providing instruction to the relevant age groups.
7. To advise the emergency rescue organizations, after consulting with them, about the actions required to optimize and improve the care provided to crash victims and to coordinate between the various entities. To secure funding for emergency rescue operations based on sound standards.
8. To help boost enforcement of traffic laws.
9. To advise the Minister of Transport and Road Safety and the government on road safety, vehicle safety and driver licensing.



Planning and Strategy

The NRSA, by virtue of its role as Israel's leading governmental road safety organization, is entrusted with implementing the strategic national plan for road safety, which is modeled on the plans in the world's leading nations in traffic safety. This strategic plan integrates the entire array of efforts made by the various road safety organizations, including government ministries, the Israel Police, the National Road Company, the courts administration, the Center of Local Government in Israel, the emergency rescue entities, research organizations, and various NPOs and NGOs.

The underlying approach of the NRSA's strategic plan is based on safety performance indicators accepted throughout the world. These indicators measure the actual safety status on Israel's roads and are considered good predictors of the desirable situation in the country and the success of all the activities conducted by the relevant parties. The NRSA is committed to attaining the multiyear objectives specified by the government and to achieving a 30% decrease in the number of road deaths over a five-year period.

The core of the NRSA's activities are conducted among population groups that the Authority has identified as having a higher rate of traffic crashes than the general population and/or that require special attention for their particular needs, tailored to their language and culture.

Specifically, the populations that have been defined as the main target groups for the Authority's activities are children, the elderly, young drivers, professional drivers, motorcyclists, bicycle riders, the ultra-Orthodox sector and the non-Jewish sector in Israel. A work plan was established for each group, which defines the efforts to be focused on that group and their contribution to the overall decrease in the number of casualties among them.



Core activities of the National Road Safety Authority

National Road Safety Information and Research Center

As required by law, the Authority established the National Road Safety Information and Research Center, whose goal is to provide decision makers – both inside and outside the Authority – with professional information to guide all the national activity for promoting road safety based on scientific information obtained from reliable research. The National Information and Research Center is headed by the authority's Chief Scientist.

The research center is responsible for compiling and analyzing general data on safety performance indicators. These include behavioral indices such as driving under the influence of alcohol, the use of seat belts and other restraining devices, driving speed and pedestrian behavior. The indicators also focus on high-risk groups like young drivers, professional drivers, motorcycle and bicycle riders, the elderly and children. The center also produces an annual safety report, which is the State of Israel's official statistical account of road safety data and characteristics. This report also provides a comparison of the safety situation in Israel to that of other member countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The National Information and Research Center's work affiliates Israel with the International Road Traffic and Accident Database (IRTAD).



The center focuses on three major realms: information, research on human factors and technology.

Data management, analysis and distribution – The center develops and adds to the database on road crashes in Israel. It also initiates and conducts surveys that provide a current picture of all the road safety characteristics, including safety performance indicators. The center has the largest database in Israel on crashes, casualties, roads, traffic and “black spots,” and this information is accessible to decision makers through a Business Intelligence system, enabling the production of reports and data analysis according to numerous road safety parameters. The National Road Safety Library in the center contains books, research reports, journals and access to local and international electronic road safety databases.

Research – The center initiates and conducts in-depth research on the causes of traffic crashes and the interrelationship between road-user characteristics and road safety, as well as research on the contribution of the activities of the NRSA and other organizations. The center also publishes abstracts on select subjects in road safety for the use of professionals in the field, and fosters the training of young researchers through scholarships for doctoral students whose studies focus on road safety.

Technological Research & Development – The center is responsible for keeping abreast of innovative technologies to promote road safety, and encouraging the development and evaluation of these technologies through field research. The center is also involved in promoting regulations and legislation on most of these technologies following proof of their effectiveness.



Populations groups at risk:

The NRSA has focused on eight population groups that have a higher rate of traffic crashes than the general population or require special attention for their particular needs, language and culture. These high-risk groups are children, the elderly, young drivers, professional drivers, motorcyclists, bicycle riders, the ultra-Orthodox sector and the non-Jewish sector in Israel.

The Authority prepares intervention plans and develops tools to address each population group specifically and accurately. The plans are based on an analysis of vulnerability data, characteristics and general traits. After characterizing the population group and identifying its needs, significant relevant partners are recruited and a “safety suit” is specifically tailored. The plans are implemented in the community, the family, workplaces and at all levels of the educational system, from preschool through university, based on preset curricula.

Marketing strategies and campaigns

The NRSA is working to change the driving culture in Israel through marketing strategies and campaigns, focusing mainly on the human factor as the primary cause of traffic crashes. The objective of the endeavors is to affect the public’s conduct by focusing on core issues such as driving under the influence of alcohol, speeding, the use of restraining devices (seat belts and child safety seats) and pedestrian behavior. The message is conveyed to the public through traditional media channels, new social media – especially the Internet, and hands-on activity – unmediated encounters with the public at large. For the high-risk population groups, the activities are also accompanied by campaigns specially adapted to each group’s characteristics.



Infrastructure and Traffic

The NRSA, in cooperation with the Israel National Roads Company (formerly the Public Works Department) and other infrastructure-related organizations (Derech Eretz, the Ayalon Highways Company, Israel Railways), pinpoints “black spots” in the interurban road network and warns of traffic safety deficiencies. Dozens of such black points are handled each year to minimize the risk involved.

The NRSA conducts comprehensive infrastructure inspections before and after serious crashes, and transfers its findings and recommendations to the proper authorities. It also investigates safety issues (crashes, hazards and complaints by the public) and outlines ways to mitigate hazards and improve safety. It assists local authorities in problem solving and improving safety, in accordance with both the predetermined annual plan and with complaints and localized warnings of disturbances or hazards on the road systems.

Local Authorities

Road safety management in local authorities is performed by local traffic safety coordinators, deployed in each of the 256 local authorities in Israel. Through these safety centers, the NRSA pinpoints and maps out risk spots in the infrastructure, locates population groups and defines their particular vulnerability characteristics. Based on the data gathered, the Authority allocates budgets to local authorities and guides them in preparing and implementing their annual work plans.

The activity in local authorities relates to infrastructure, enforcement, marketing strategies and campaigns, education, the community and high-risk population groups. The Authority is also responsible for integrating the work of all relevant organizations in the region that deal with these matters and for coordinating all their activities.



Emergency Rescue

The emergency rescue system in Israel consists of several separate organizations: Magen David Adom (Israel's national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service), the Israel fire and rescue services, regional volunteer rescue units, trauma units in hospitals, the military and the National Road Safety Authority.

The NRSA aims to minimize the “golden hour” – the critical time from the moment a call is received for rescue until the moment of arrival at the trauma units in the hospitals. The golden hour includes the distress call, dispatch, actual rescue, initial treatment and transport to the hospitals. Accordingly, the Authority invests in advancing the national rescue and evacuation system to improve its capabilities and effectiveness, and provides for the development and promotion of professional medical care at the highest level.

The NRSA also upgrades the rescue systems and acquires new systems, establishes new dispatch points for Magen David Adom, maintains existing points, and finances on-call trauma personnel in periphery hospitals.



Enforcement

The NRSA promotes and supports the activities of the Traffic Division in the Israel Police, in order to establish effective, professional enforcement of traffic laws and road safety. In this context, the Authority purchased traffic vehicles and auxiliary enforcement equipment for the Israel Police.

Legislation and Courts

The NRSA introduces and promotes legislation on road safety, monitors related procedures and judgments, and identifies issues requiring legislative changes, to promote safe conduct on the road.

The Authority works to improve the efficiency of the court system on traffic cases, with the goal of minimizing the time between the offense and the punishment, as part of effective deterrence. Thus, the NRSA has financed an increase in the number of traffic court judges in Israel.

The NRSA performs a legal analysis of proposed government and private bills pertaining to road safety, and follows a professional procedure to determine its position on these matters.

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