



Report of the State Comptroller of Israel | May 2024

Ministry of Transportation and
Road Safety

Road Safety – Special Report



Road Safety – Special Report

Background

Road accidents are one of the leading causes of death in Israel; therefore, the fight against them is a national mission. Since the establishment of the State of Israel (1948) until the end of 2022, 32,632 people have been killed in road accidents, 351 of them in 2022 alone. In addition to the fatalities, the accidents resulted in hundreds of thousands of injuries and significant economic damage to the country. Over the years, successive Israeli governments have made numerous decisions preventing road accidents. In addition, public and parliamentary committees have been established, including the Public Committee for the Preparation of a Multi-Year National Road Safety Program headed by Dr. Jacob Sheinin (the Sheinin Committee). Following the committee's report in 2005 (the 2005 National Program or the Sheinin Committee recommendations), the National Road Safety Authority Law (Temporary Provision), 2006 (the RSA Law) was enacted. In this law, the Minister of Transportation was defined as the "Minister of Transportation and Road Safety," (MOT) and the National Road Safety Authority (RSA) was established under its provisions, which began operations in 2008.

It is customary to divide the leading causes of road accidents into three categories: **(a) Human Factors** – this includes failures in driver training, human errors, negligence, non-compliance with traffic laws, dangerous driving, and driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. In this category, adequate enforcement and deterrent punishment can reduce the number of accidents; **(b) Infrastructure Factors** – including poor planning, failure to treat hazardous areas, narrow road shoulders, low road maintenance levels, and the lack of rest stops; **(c) Vehicle Factors** – this includes "blind spots," lack of technological systems to prevent accidents, and low maintenance levels of vehicles.

The multitude of factors influencing the prevalence of road accidents makes fighting them a complex process. The responsibility for addressing road safety lies with several government bodies, including the MOT, the RSA, the Traffic Division of the Israel Police, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Courts Administration, and the local authorities.

Although road accidents have been on the public agenda for many years, the various government actions over the past decade have not had a significant impact and have not reduced the number of fatalities and injuries from road accidents. The importance of this issue and the lack of an apparent improvement over the last decade have led the State Comptroller's



Office to monitor and examine this in numerous audit reports¹. This report comprehensively reviews government actions regarding road safety over the past decade.

Key Figures

**351 killed
and 2,607
seriously
injured**

in road accidents in Israel in 2022, compared to 335 fatalities and 2,273 seriously injured on average in 2018–2021

**up to 300
injured**

the number of fatalities target in 2015, set in the national plan from 2005. Since then, the government has met this target only in 2012

16%

the increase rate in the number of fatalities from road accidents in Israel in 2012–2022, compared to an average decrease of 22% in 27 EU countries

**NIS 16
billion**

the estimated annual cost of road accidents to the economy

1 Among the reports published by the State Comptroller are the following: **Annual Report 71A** (2020), "Road Safety of Heavy Vehicles," pp. 1041–1204; **Report on the Audit of Local Government** (2020), "Actions to Improve Road Safety within Local Authorities in the Arab Community," pp. 241–323; **Annual Report 68C** (2018), "Regulation of the Use of Bicycles and Electric Two-Wheeled Vehicles in Urban Areas," pp. 75–145; **Annual Report 67A** (2016), "The Fight Against Road Accidents and the Functioning of the National Road Safety Authority," pp. 671–722; **Compilation of Audit Reports for 2011** (2011), "The National Road Safety Authority – Functioning and Administrative Arrangements," pp. 179–209; **Annual Report 70C** (2020), "Safety and Responsibility Aspects Regarding Road Maintenance in Judea and Samaria," pp. 270–314.



NIS 40 million only

the flexible budget used by RSA for its activities in 2021, compared to NIS 125 million at its establishment in 2008

in 40%

of the Arab sector schools have no Road Safety Coordinators (ZAHAV coordinator) (ZAHAV – Hebrew acronym for "road safety"), compared to 22% in the Jewish sector schools

13% and 20% rates of unfilled positions

137 unfilled positions in the Israel Police Traffic Division (13% of the total work force headcount standard) and 201 unfilled positions of Traffic Division officers in the districts (20% of the total workforce headcount standard)

120 safety inspection mobile units only

the number of safety inspection mobile units operated by the National Traffic Division in a shift. A government decision from 2005 determined that there should be 450 units in a shift

only 1 per 100 km

National Traffic Division safety inspection mobile units rate in Israel, compared to 1 per 10 km in OECD countries

150,000

number of requests to convert a traffic fine into a warning and requests for a trial in 2019 – 13% of all traffic fines imposed

3,400 cases


number of cases handled by a traffic court judge per year on average. The number of cases has increased by 16% since 2016, but the number of traffic court judges has remained unchanged

NIS 830 million

the budget for handling high-risk areas, is only about 72% of the budget (NIS 1.15 billion) set in the Netivei Israel's five-year plan (2017–2021)



Audit Actions

 From September 2021 to September 2023, the State Comptroller's Office conducted a systemic audit on road safety. The activities of the various relevant bodies were examined, each in its field, including the interfaces between them and the systemic treatment. The audit was conducted at the Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety (MOT), the Road Safety Authority (RSA), the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Security (formerly the Ministry of Internal Security), the Police Traffic Division (Traffic Division); Netivei Israel – the National Transport Infrastructure Company Ltd (Netivei Israel), the Courts Administration, the Ministry of Education, and several local authorities. In addition, the State Comptroller's Office compared the policies, work plans, and measures adopted by various countries to reduce road accidents and their severity.



Chapter One – the Current State of Road Safety, Data Collection and Processing

Key Findings



The Road Safety Situation


-  **Number of Fatalities** – in 2022, 351 people were killed in 319 fatal accidents compared to 335 fatalities in 300 fatal accidents on average in 2018–2021. An increase of about 5% in the number of fatalities and about 6% in the number of deadly accidents. In 2022, there was a 3.5% decrease in fatalities compared to 2021².
-  **International Comparison of the Number of Fatalities** – in an international comparison of the rate of change in the number of fatalities in 2012–2022, Israel ranks second to last among the 27 European Union countries. In Israel, the number of fatalities increased by about 16% during these years, whereas the average for the 27 EU countries surveyed was a decrease of 22%. In terms of the ratio of fatalities per billion kilometers driven, Israel ranks 15th out of 25 countries, with an average of 5.6 fatalities in 2020–2022, slightly below the average of the surveyed EU countries, which was at 5.7. In a comparison of the change in the number of severe injuries in 2012–2022, Israel ranks second to last among 30 countries. In Israel, the number of severely injured people increased by about 21%, whereas the average for the surveyed EU countries decreased by 13.9%.
-  **Trends in Road Accident Data and the Response of Israeli Governments** – the figures for fatalities and severely injured people in Israel over the past decade have fluctuated, and there was no significant improvement. This is in contrast to 2005–2012, when there was an apparent decrease in the number of fatalities and severely injured people. The data indicate that there has not been an adequate response to the complex problem of road accidents and that the measures taken by the state to fight road accidents over the last decade have been ineffective. This is contrary to the trends in many European countries during the same period, which, unlike Israel, set a target of zero fatalities. The international comparison indicates that countries can reduce the number of fatalities and severe injuries in road accidents by tens of percent over time by taking effective action.

² In 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic was still prevalent.



The Characteristics of Serious Road Accidents and Their Casualties


- **Distribution of Casualties by Road Type** – according to 2022 data, about 64% of fatalities in accidents occur in inter-city areas and about 36% in urban areas, though less than a third of the accidents occur on inter-city roads.
- **Distribution of Casualties by Road User Type** – out of the 351 fatalities in road accidents in 2022, 28% were private vehicle users, 31% were pedestrians, and 22% were motorcycle and scooter riders. Seventy-seven motorcycle and scooter riders were killed in 2022, a decrease of about 8.33% compared to 2021 but an increase of about 30.5% compared to the average in 2018–2020.
- **Motorcycle Rider Injuries** – since 2018, there has been an upward surge in severe and fatal injuries among motorcycle riders. According to the RSA, in 2013–2019, the likelihood of motorcycle accidents increased for three reasons: the number of licensed drivers increased, the proportion of heavy motorcycles out of all motorcycles increased, and the total mileage increased.
- **Distribution of Casualties by Age** – age groups relatively prone to severe injuries compared to their share in the population are young people aged 15–24 and those aged 65 and over. The rate of fatalities and severe injuries in road accidents for those aged 65 and over was higher than the share of this group in the population from 2013 to 2022. On an annual average, the rate of fatalities and severe injuries among those aged 65 and over out of all fatalities was about 20%, compared to their share in the population – about 11.5%.
- **Distribution of Casualties by Population Sectors** – compared to their share in the population, Arab male drivers were involved in more accidents than Jewish male drivers in all age groups in 2013–2019; however, the difference was particularly prominent in the younger age groups. A significant portion of the difference between men up to age 24 and older men stems from the high injury rates of young men riding motorcycles. No significant changes have occurred in all the differences between the population sectors over the last eight years.

 **The Economic Cost of Road Accidents** – road accidents have a high economic cost, estimated in 2019 at about NIS 16 billion per year for accidents involving casualties. This is in addition to the complex consequences of loss of life, grief, pain and sorrow, injuries of varying degrees, as well as impacts on other aspects of the economy and society. Part of this cost is covered by the state budget or other public budgets (such as health expenses and benefit payments). Consequently, preventing road accidents may enable utilizing these funds for other critical needs.



Collection and Processing of Information on Road Accidents

Gaps and Deficiencies in the Information Collected by the Government Bodies

- **Partial Data Collection by the Police** – the information collected on road accidents is only partial, focusing mainly on severe and fatal accidents. The police do not collect comprehensive data on minor accidents, accidents involving only property damage, and accidents involving only non-motorized vehicles. In 2022, there were about 2,640 severe and fatal accidents, and each year there are about 45,000 minor accidents that are not investigated. Some of these accidents may have ended without severe injuries merely by chance; hence, collecting data on them could have been helpful in preventing future accidents. One reason for partial data collection is the lack of police traffic accident investigators. By the end of 2023 it is anticipated that there will be a shortage of 86 traffic accident investigators, about 35% of the work force headcount.
 - **Identification of the Accident Cause by the Police** – nearly 100% of accidents investigated are caused by human factors. However, sometimes, the investigation does not get to the root cause of the accident that led to the accident. For example, sometimes the offense that led to the accident, recorded as a lane deviation or failure to give the right of way, may have been due to distraction, driver drowsiness, or driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medications. Furthermore, the police do not utilize advanced and dedicated systems for documenting accident scenes, such as special-purpose cameras that can capture the scene from various angles before it is cleared. Failure to record non-human factors contributing to accidents compromises the ability to study and address these factors.
 - **Transfer of Information Between Relevant Bodies and Data Collection** – in recent years, improvements have been made in collecting and processing road accident data. However, some of the collected data is incomplete; for example, Magen David Adom (National EMS Organization, MDA) does not transfer data it has regarding the exact location of the accidents to the Ministry of Health. In addition, data transferred from the courts to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) are not processed and published; the healthcare system does not collect information regarding drivers' drugs and alcohol use, and only partial data is collected regarding accidents involving only property damage. Moreover, it has been found that no body monitors the condition of injured persons over time after their discharge from the hospital and when their rehabilitation process ends. Therefore, research conducted in Israel on road safety is based on incomplete data.
-  **Regulating the Obligation to Provide Information to the RSA** – the Ministers of Transportation have not enacted the regulations stipulated in the RSA Law, intended to require bodies like MDA to transfer information to the RSA. Enacting these regulations




could improve the RSA's ability to receive data that would contribute to a better understanding the causes of accidents.


Truck Survey – in 2013–2019, an average of 58 people were killed each year in accidents involving trucks, with 158 seriously injured. Since 1990, no comprehensive national truck survey has been conducted in Israel by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and the MOT. Such a survey can help plan the road system accordingly and suggest ways to utilize trucks, and driver inputs more efficiently to reduce truck mileage and driving hours, thereby reducing road accidents.

Travel Habits Survey – since 1996, the MOT has not conducted a national travel habits survey in Israel. Such a survey is needed, among other things, to measure the number of accidents relative to the use of each mode of transportation and to assist in enforcing traffic laws. This is contrary to the norm in European countries where such a survey is carried out yearly or every few years.

In-depth Accident Investigations – the Ministers of Transportation have not exercised their authority to establish inquiry and investigation committees for road accidents and have not regulated them. Over the years the RSA has established committees to investigate road accidents, but these committees lack the authority to collect testimonies and conduct interviews with those involved in accidents. In addition, confidentiality was not applied to the investigation materials, summaries, and recommendations of the committees. From 2010 until the end of the audit, only 12 in-depth investigations were published. In some years, none were published at all. These figures indicate that the number of in-depth investigations conducted is significantly lower than those specified in the 2005 National Program, which called for ten yearly investigations.







Key Recommendations

 It is recommended that all bodies involved in the fight against road accidents, including the Minister of Transportation and MOT, the RSA, Netivei Israel, and the Israel Police, examine the reasons for the failure to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries in road accidents over the past decade. The focus should be on understanding the causes of accidents, exploring ways to reduce them, identifying areas with high casualty rates, analyzing the most vulnerable age groups, and considering the causes of accident in different population sectors.

 It is recommended that all bodies involved in road safety, including the MOT, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, local authorities, the Israel Police, the Ministry of Justice, Netivei Israel, and the Central Bureau of Statistics, consider the high cost of road accidents to the economy, both financially and socially (grief, suffering, and bereavement), when



making decisions. The high costs of traffic accidents indicate that it is better to invest resources in preventing accidents rather than to pay the high costs incurred (economic, social, and personal) from accidents. Therefore it is recommended to assess whether the current budget allocations for combating road accidents meet the challenge and represent an effective use of the state's financial resources.

-  It is recommended that the Israel Police fully staff the positions for traffic accident investigators.
-  It is recommended that the RSA and the CBS continue coordinating with the police, the MOT, the healthcare system, MDA, the insurance companies, and the court system to obtain the most reliable and complete data possible on road accidents.
-  It is recommended that the Minister of Transportation enact regulations under the RSA Law requiring organizations to provide it with information.
-  Given the importance of the truck survey data for the proper preparation of the trucking industry and, consequently, for reducing truck mileage on Israel's roads, it is recommended that the CBS, the MOT, the Ministry of Finance, and the RSA cooperate to complete the survey and ensure continuous data collection on the subject.
-  It is recommended that the MOT complete the travel habits survey in cooperation with the CBS and the Ministry of Finance and establish a format for conducting it regularly according to needs.
-  Given the importance of conducting in-depth investigations of road accidents, it is recommended that the Minister of Transportation, the RSA, and the MOT formalize the process including granting appropriate powers to the committees and imposing confidentiality on the investigation materials and reports. Thus, increasing the information collected on road accidents, improve its quality, and may prevent future accidents. In addition, it is recommended that the MOT and the RSA set a target for the number of in-depth investigations to be conducted annually and act accordingly.




Chapter Two – Leading the Fight Against Road Accidents

Key Findings



Government Bodies Dealing with the Fight Against Road Accidents


-  **Defining the RSA as the Leading Body in the Fight Against Road Accidents –** for many years, the State of Israel has recognized the importance of an independent body with appropriate powers and necessary tools to lead the fight against road accidents, establish systemic policies and action plans, and coordinate and foster cooperation among all relevant governmental bodies. According to a 2005 government decision, the RSA was intended to fulfill this role and manage the fight against road accidents. However, in 2016, the State Comptroller's Office noted that the RSA had not become the leading body in the fight against road accidents. In the same year, the Knesset's Economic Affairs Committee determined that the government's policy lacked a comprehensive and systematic perspective that would guide all involved bodies toward unified and effective action. The committee called on the government and the Minister of Transportation to reassess the RSA's goals, roles, and powers so that it can outline the overarching policy on the matter and serve as the leading body in curbing road fatalities. The current audit found that many powers remain dispersed among various governmental bodies, primarily the RSA, the MOT, the Israel Police, and the Ministry of Education. These bodies operate without an integrated perspective and lack coordination and cooperation. The RSA's powers remain unchanged, and it still does not serve as the leading body in the fight against road accidents.


-  **Coordinating and Centralizing the Fight Against Road Accidents and Submitting the Required Reports to the Government and the Knesset**
 - **MOT's Units Handling Road Safety –** since the enactment of the Road Safety Authority Law in 2005, most MOT's units which address road safety issues, such as the Vehicle Division, Licensing Division, and Vehicle Supervision and Control Division, are not dedicated solely to this issue but deal with many other matters as well. No department within the MOT is responsible exclusively for road safety,

coordinating all ministry activities in this area, and serving as the professional and coordinating body between the ministry, the RSA, and other government bodies.

- **The Directors General Committee on Road Accidents** – since 2016, the inter-ministerial Directors General Committee of government ministries, established for the "urgent and comprehensive curbing of road fatalities," has convened only once, in December 2016. This is despite the importance of coordinating and joint decision-making, and though no improvement was made in the number of casualties from road accidents.
- **Reporting to the Knesset According to the Road Safety Authority Law** – since 2005, the Ministers of Transportation have not reported to the government and the Knesset's Economic Affairs Committee on the implementation of the RSA's annual plan, as required by law, and the Prime Minister has not reported this to the Knesset.

Strategic Plan to Fight Road Accidents

 **Strategic Plans in Israel** – despite the importance of multi-year strategic plans and the successful international experience in their adoption, since the national plan of 2005, the fight against road accidents in Israel has been conducted without a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan approved and budgeted by the government. Therefore, the activity of the numerous governmental bodies dealing with road safety is not based on an overall systematic and budgeted plan. The national plan from 2005 set goals for Israel until 2015; however, parts of it have not been implemented to this day (such as granting the Road Safety Authority powers and autonomy and the presence of 450 traffic enforcement units on the roads), and its objectives have not been achieved (a reduction in fatalities to below 300 per year by 2015). Since then, the government has approved no comprehensive and budgeted strategic plan for combating road accidents. The number of fatalities and injuries over the past decade (an increase from 290 fatalities in 2012 to 351 in 2022) indicates that in the absence of a strategic plan, the various actions taken as part of the fight have not ultimately achieved the desired results.

 **Implementation of the '50 to 30' Plan** – in 2021, the MOT and the RSA prepared a national road safety plan ('50 to 30' Plan) to halve severe injuries from road accidents in Israel by 2030 compared to 2019 data. The plan promised substantial economic savings, estimated at NIS 95 billion by 2040. The plan included neither a cost estimate nor budgetary sources. This despite having been prepared according to the government's decision to serve as a comprehensive multi-year program to enhance road safety and the significant resources invested in its preparation with an extensive list of tasks to execute. Furthermore, the plan was submitted to the government in 2021 but was neither reviewed nor budgeted, which impaired its implementation. In 2022, the government adopted the principles of the multi-year national plan for road safety enhancement for 2022–2027, which is an evolved version of the '50 to 30' Plan. However,



as a pilot phase, the initial stage of the plan's implementation included selecting a cluster of local authorities where the plan's recommendations would be promoted, with a budget allocation of only NIS 80 million. The government's decision stipulated that further budgeting for the plan would be examined as part of the approval of the next state budget.

Budgets Allocated to Fight Road Accidents

Consolidation of Budgets Allocated for the Fight – in the RSA's reports and on its website, there is no consolidated list of all the budgets allocated to government bodies for performing road safety activities by the MOT, the police, the MOT's infrastructure companies, the Courts Administration, the Ministry of Education, and others. Instead, only the RSA's budgets and its contributions to those of the Ministry of Education and the MOT are included. This information is neither measured nor published by any other governmental body. Due to the absence of organized reporting by these bodies, it is impossible to track these budgets. Budget allocations are sometimes designated for general activities, only a portion of which are for road safety (such as salary payments or traffic court activities). In addition, budgets are sometimes not directly allocated for road safety but for activities that contribute to road safety (such as road maintenance).

National Road Safety Authority


Staffing Levels at the RSA – as of January 2023, there were unfilled positions at the RSA. Out of 72 positions, nine (about 12%) were not staffed. The RSA stated to the State Comptroller's Office that it believes there is a need to update the organizational structure in line with the roles defined by law for the RSA and that the shortage of certain personnel compromises the RSA's functioning.


Appointing Council Members – the RSA Council operated for about two years, from April 2020 to February 2022, without a quorum and it lacked many members. During this period, the then-Chairman of the RSA addressed the offices of various ministers and other departments in the Ministries of Finance, Health, and Internal Security regarding appointing their representatives to the RSA Council. However, the Ministers of Transportation, Internal Security, and Education appointed their representatives to the Council only in June 2022, while the Ministers of Finance and Health did not appoint representatives. In addition, during this period, the government did not appoint public representatives to the Council. Furthermore, from August 2023 to December 2023, the Council operated without a Chairman. The failure to appoint council members hindered the council's operation.


Appointment of CEO – in January 2021, the RSA's former CEO completed her tenure, and a new one was appointed in June 2022. The lack of a quorum in the RSA Council delayed the CEO's appointment, resulting in an acting CEO serving for about a year and



a half. The absence of a quorum and the delayed appointment of a CEO reflect a contradiction between the government's actions and the importance of the fight against road accidents, potentially compromising the organization's routine functioning, work processes, and achievement of its goals.

 **The RSA's Budget** – since the RSA was established, its budgets have been used for its activities and allocations to other bodies have significantly decreased, from about NIS 382 million in 2008 to about NIS 141 million in 2022. The budget reduction occurred partly because some funds initially allocated in the RSA's budget to be transferred to other bodies are now directly budgeted within those bodies' budgets. This has impaired the RSA's ability to outline processes and actions to fight road accidents, particularly during a period of significant population growth, increased mileage, a rise in the number of vehicles and road length, and numerous transportation changes, such as the introduction of electric micro-vehicles.

 **Participation in Other Bodies' Budgets** – in its initial years of operation, the RSA participated in the budgets of several bodies; however, it failed to influence the allocation of funds for various activities based on professional considerations nor supervise the expenditure and implementation of these actions. Over the years, the government's budget model regarding road safety has changed: in 2008, the RSA allocated about NIS 170 million to various bodies for road safety activities. Over time, the RSA's participation in these bodies' budgets gradually decreased. For some, funding was even discontinued (for example, budgets that at their peak were about NIS 104 million for the police, about NIS 10 million for judicial salaries, and NIS 3 million for the Ministry of Welfare). In 2022, the RSA contributed about NIS 19 million to fund activities solely for the Ministry of Education and the MOT. The reduction in the RSA's participation in other bodies' budgets further diminished its influence on shaping policy in road safety and integrating government activities in this area. Furthermore, its capacity to oversee budget utilization and the implementation of actions by other bodies was undermined. The RSA lost the ability to monitor the effectiveness of these measures. All of this is contrary to the recommendations of the Sheinin Committee adopted by the government, and without achieving significant improvement in road safety conditions.

 **The RSA Internal Budgets** – in 2014–2021, there was a decline in the budget allocated to the RSA's units, particularly in the flexible budget used for operational activities. This budget decreased from about NIS 125 million in 2008 to about NIS 40 million in 2021. This reduction compromised the RSA's ability to achieve its goals. It diminished its operational capacity across its various units to undertake proactive actions that, as recommended by the Economic Committee, the RSA should be directly in charge of.









Preparation of the '50 to 30' Plan – the State Comptroller's Office commends the RSA and the MOT for the preparation of the '50 to 30' Plan. However, as stated above,






the plan did not include cost estimates and budgetary sources for its actions. It was submitted to the government in 2021 but was neither reviewed nor budgeted.

Key Recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Minister of Transportation, together with the authorized bodies in charge of the RSA's operations – the MOT, the Ministry of Finance, and the Prime Minister's Office, and with the assistance of relevant professional bodies – define powers and provide appropriate tools to enable the RSA to lead the fight against road accidents and achieve its goals.
-  Given the data indicating the government's failure to effectively address the complex issue of road accidents, to fulfill the government's commitment to reduce road fatalities, the State Comptroller's office recommends that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transportation renew the activity of the Directors General Committee to regularly coordinates the various bodies, make decisions and remove obstacles.
-  The Minister of Transportation should submit the reports required by the National Road Safety Authority Law to the government and the Knesset regarding the implementation of the annual plan by the RSA and the progress made in achieving the targets set in the plan. In addition, the Prime Minister should report to the Knesset annually on the implementation of the annual plan by the RSA and the progress in meeting the goals determined under the law, demonstrating the Prime Minister's commitment, as the highest-ranking official, to the issue.
-  It is recommended that the RSA management complete the strategic plan in detail and submit it for approval by the Minister of Transportation and the government, including measurable targets, encompassing and obligating all bodies involved in its implementation, and imposing reporting responsibilities on them. In addition, it is recommended that the Ministries of Finance and Transportation budget the plan and that the MOT continuously monitor the achievement of the targets and coordinate with the RSA to update the plan as needed.
-  It is recommended that the RSA, the MOT, and the Ministry of Finance establish a comprehensive and transparent reporting structure for the total budgets allocated to the fight against road accidents, the budget execution rate, and the actions performed. This information should be made public, along with the estimated economic cost of road accidents to the economy.
-  It is recommended that the RSA fill the unstaffed positions. It is also recommended that the RSA Council examine whether the current workforce headcount standard and terms of employment sufficiently meet the RSA's needs. If necessary, the RSA should contact the authorities in charge of this area and request the tools needed to fulfill its role.



-  The Ministers of Transportation, Finance and Health should appoint representatives from their ministries to the RSA Council as prescribed by law and demonstrate their commitment to the fight against road accidents. In addition, the Minister of Transportation should ensure that the council always include the number of public representatives required by law and that a permanent chairperson is appointed.
-  It is recommended that the RSA Council, the Minister of Transportation, and the Ministries of Transportation and Finance examine whether the budgets allocated to the RSA adequately address its tasks and ensure its ability to meet its goals especially since the RSA's activity may reduce the economic costs of road accidents, at about NIS 16 billion per year.
-  With the appointment of new management to the RSA the RSA Council, the Minister of Transportation, and the Minister of Finance should reconsider the funding model for the activity of government bodies related to road safety. It is recommended to review the roles and authorities of the RSA concerning the allocation of road safety budgets based on cost-benefit considerations, focusing on risk factors and ensuring supervision and control over their use to make it a relevant and influential body. Additionally, measurable targets should be set to assess the efficiency of budget use and to increase allocations to bodies and activities that significantly contribute to road safety. This would also help incentivize the bodies involved in the fight against road accidents to prioritize this issue.






Chapter Three – The Human Factor

Key Findings



Road Safety Education

-  **Appointment of Road Safety Coordinators in Schools** – according to a circular from the Director General of the Ministry of Education, every school is required to appoint a road safety coordinator (ZAHAV coordinator) (ZAHAV – Hebrew acronym for "road safety") to be in charge of conducting road safety activities for students, teachers, and parents. However, in the 2021–2022 school year, about a quarter of the schools in Israel did not have a ZAHAV coordinator (936 out of 3,684 schools). This rate was slightly lower in the 2020–2021 school year, at 23%. A more detailed examination of the 2021–2022 data shows that 77.9% of schools in the Jewish sector had ZAHAV coordinators, compared to only about 60% in the Arab sector. The lowest rate of coordinators is in the Arab sector, even though the rate of child casualties in their communities is significantly higher than in the Jewish ones.
-  **Road Safety Education in Early Childhood** – despite the Ministry of Education's recognition of the importance of road safety education in early childhood, there has been a decline in educational programs for kindergarten-aged children. In 2022, the Ministry stopped funding the "ZAHAV in Kindergarten" program, in which retired volunteers conducted road safety activities in kindergartens. In addition, the 'Moving in an Automotive World' program, to establish a learning framework for road safety education in kindergartens, was modified and is now delivered by kindergarten teachers with neither special-purpose kits nor by teams specializing in the subject.
-  **Education on Two-Wheeled Vehicles** – according to RSA data, in 2022, 24 riders of bicycles, electric bicycles, and electric scooters were killed. Nonetheless, since these vehicles do not require a driving license, training (practical or theoretical) for their riders is not included in the MOT's driver training programs. Nevertheless, as of January 2022, the Ministry of Education initiated a pilot for a new traffic education program focused on two-wheeled vehicles for ninth-grade students in secondary schools. The ZAHAV Division developed this program. In the first year of the pilot, the program was implemented in about 100 classes; in the second year, it was expanded to about 200 classes. As of the



audit date, the pilot program is operating in only about 200 out of about 5,300 ninth-grade classes in Israel (3.8%), which means that most riders of these vehicles do not receive relevant training.

- ZAHAV Patrols** – policemen in the ZAHAV section in the Traffic Division are in charge, among other things, of supervising the activity of ZAHAV patrols in schools and training students to serve in them. Since the 2018–2019 school year, the number of ZAHAV policemen positions has been reduced (from 41.75 in 2017–2018 to 11.75 in 2022–2023). The most significant disparities in training exist in the ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) and Arab sectors. This is primarily due to inadequate infrastructure which prevents the implementation of training. In addition, some schools in the ultra-Orthodox sector do not permit the entry of policewomen. Thus, in the 2022–2023 school year, only 26 classes in the ultra-Orthodox sector were approved for training (out of 1,486 classes in the entire sector), and 22 were actually trained. In the Arab sector, participation in the program was approved and implemented for only 75 classes (out of 1,638 classes in the entire sector). According to documents from the Traffic Division and RSA, the ZAHAV system cannot meet its goals and tasks due to its limited operation. The alternative response provided through community policemen and ZAHAV coordinators in schools is ineffective, and students do not receive the continued instruction crucial for the activity's assimilation. In addition, according to the documents, local authorities, the Ministry of Education, the RSA, and school principals complain about gaps in training.

Training and Medical Fitness of Drivers

- MOT Guidelines for Driving Schools** – the MOT's Licensing Division has not updated the regulations and guidelines for driving schools and instructors for nearly 20 years. For example, procedures for licensing driving schools, certification of driving instructors, and student cards have not been updated. It was also found that the MOT does not have a unified and updated compendium of all the instructions and regulations provided to driving schools and instructors.
- Theoretical Learning Process** – gaps were found in the theoretical driving studies, especially regarding students who did not participate in traffic education in the 10th grade: students often take the theoretical exam without having acquired all the necessary knowledge; some students need to strengthen their understanding through frontal instruction; the learning method should be improved by reducing the focus on memorizing materials and greater emphasis on understanding the principles and importance of traffic rules, together with familiarity with the traffic environment, road users, and the interactions between them; the content taught does not include night driving and the effects of fatigue, peer pressure, alcohol, and drugs on driving ability; and there is no computer simulation of dangerous situations.
- Practical Driver Training Process** – the content taught as part of the practical driving lessons should be updated and improved. For example, students do not experience



diverse road and weather conditions, gain proficiency in using technological systems incorporated in vehicles while driving, or are not trained in hazard perception. Regarding two-wheeled vehicles – motorcycles and scooters – no written curriculum existed until 2023.

- 📌 Restrictions on Young Drivers** – the audit identified difficulties in implementing the graduated driver's license program, which requires new young drivers to be accompanied by an experienced driver. The audit found that some young drivers do not meet the required number of accompanying hours mandated by the Traffic Ordinance. There is a lack of information and guidance for parents about the content and goals of the accompanying program. Despite the program's benefits, it is essential to note that, apart from the young driver's and their parents' declaration, there is currently no way to enforce the law and ensure that a young driver has received the required accompaniment. These issues reduce the program's benefits and effectiveness.
- 📌 Physician Reports on Patient Medical Unfitness to Drive** – in 2015 it was recommended that in case a diagnosis that requires reporting is entered, the health system's IT automatically presents doctors with the option of reporting to the Medical Institute for Road Safety. This recommendation was not implemented.
- 📌 Guidelines for Driving Under Medication and Medical Cannabis** – the Ministry of Health and the MOT have not established detailed guidelines regarding which medications, including medical cannabis, compromise driving ability, the dosages involved, and the waiting period before driving can be safely resumed. Consequently, an enforcement challenge arises, for which the police lack the appropriate technological and legal means of conducting these checks.

Publicity

- 📌 Budget of the Education and Public Relations Division at the RSA** – in 2018–2022, there was a significant decrease in the budget execution of the Education and Public Relations Division and the activity it carries out (from about NIS 28.5 million in 2018 to about NIS 7.9 million in 2022). The RSA noted in its 2022 budget that if additional resources were made available, it could easily undertake more tasks without changing the existing organizational structure. Accordingly, it previously submitted to the MOT a request for an additional budget for 2020, which included, among other things, a significant increase in the public relations budget.

Enforcement

- 📌 Policy Setting and Multi-Year Enforcement Programs** – in 2019–2022, the Ministers of Internal Security policy changed every year. Consequently, some components included in the policy one year were absent in others. For example, the



minister's policy for 2019 included enforcement against recidivist offenders (repeat offenses in a short time); the 2020–2021 policy included promoting an administrative traffic court; and the 2021–2022 policy addressed road safety only within the goal of reducing crime and violence in the Arab sector and mixed cities. Frequent changes in government ministry policies regarding complex processes diminish the chances of achieving goals and results. It was also found that the police lack a long-term systemic work plan to fight road accidents. Moreover, annual work plans are influenced by changes in key positions: the Minister of National Security (formerly known as the Minister of Internal Security), the Chief of Police, and the Head of Traffic Division. Each official has a different standpoint and emphasis regarding the fight against road accidents, to which work plans must be adapted. The inconsistency in emphases and work plans stems partly from the lack of a mandatory multi-year strategic plan for road safety that obligates all relevant government ministries to follow it.

📌 Formulating Enforcement Plans and Coordination Between the RSA and the Israel Police – the RSA and the police coordinate targeted activities; however, the RSA

is not involved in formulating the Ministry of National Security's plans. Examining the work plans of various units within the Traffic Division in 2018–2021 raised tasks that included coordination and cooperation with external entities, such as road authorities (infrastructure companies under the MOT) and local authorities. However, the Traffic Division workplans did not include coordination and cooperation with the RSA and MOT. Consequently enforcement and public relations activities are not integrated, and the potential synergy benefits are not realized. The audit also found that each Traffic Division unit prepares an annual work plan; however, no comprehensive national enforcement plan exists.

📌 The Organizational Structure of the Traffic Division in the Israel Police –

enforcement on inter-city roads is carried out by Traffic Division policemen, whereas, enforcement within urban areas is handled by traffic officers subordinate to the command levels in police districts and stations and the Traffic Division provides them with professional direction. Due to this organizational structure, a gap exists between the responsibility assigned to the Traffic Division and its authority to deploy traffic officers within local authorities according to its professional judgment and the needs of road safety activities. Given this structure, traffic police officers in stations and districts are not exclusively dedicated to traffic; they also perform additional tasks based on the station's needs. This organizational structure, along with limited resources and workforce, hampers the enforcement of traffic laws by the Traffic Division, particularly within local authorities. Furthermore, the police cannot generate accurate information on the actual engagement of Traffic Division and district policemen in activity unrelated to traffic enforcement.



Resources of the Traffic Division of the Israel Police

- **Personnel** – despite government decisions from 2005 and 2017 to strengthen the traffic police and increase the number of officers, and despite the high growth rate since 2005 in the number of vehicles (89%), mileage (59%), and road area (40%), the audit found that from 2017 to June 2023, the workforce headcount standard in the Traffic Division, particularly the National Traffic Police, remained relatively stable at 1,044 positions within the Traffic Division, including 550 positions in the National Traffic Police by 2023. It was further noted that over the years, there had been a gap in filling positions, particularly in 2023, where about 13% of the Traffic Division workforce headcount standard (137 positions) were not filled, and in 2022, about 20% of the regional traffic police positions (201 positions) were not filled. In addition, amidst numerous urgent issues facing law enforcement, traffic police are sometimes directed to perform tasks unrelated to traffic law enforcement. This may indicate that traffic law enforcement on roads is given low priority. Consequently, police presence is constantly lacking, precluding effective prevention of dangerous offenses and handling of deliberate criminal behavior.
- **Police Vehicles** – the Traffic Division has 264 safety inspection mobile units available; however, due to workforce shortages, only 120 safety inspection mobile units are operational per shift, compared to the target set by the government decision in 2005 of 450 safety inspection mobile units per shift (about 27%). In OECD countries, there is one safety inspection mobile units per 10 kilometers, whereas in Israel, there is only one safety inspection mobile unit per 100 kilometers.
- **Fixed Enforcement Cameras** – although the government decision from 2005 stipulated 300 fixed cameras for enforcing speeding and red light violations (A-3 cameras), as of 2022, the police only had 121 active cameras (about 40%).

Police Enforcement Activity

- **Speed Enforcement** – the number of fixed speed cameras per capita in Israel is significantly lower than most European countries: 17 cameras per million residents versus 67 to 211 cameras per million residents in the top five countries with the highest number of cameras. These figures indicate a low level of electronic enforcement despite the efficiency and other advantages of electronic enforcement tools.
- **Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Alcohol** – although the Traffic Ordinance explicitly prohibits driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and despite existing data showing an increase in the use of these substances, there is no comprehensive information on the extent of the phenomenon or the number of enforcement actions taken. The annual number of traffic tickets issued for driving



under the influence of alcohol and drugs has decreased by about 55% since 2014, from 9,771 to 4,422 in 2021.

- **Seat Belt Usage** – compared to European countries, the seat belt usage rate in Israel is low, especially in the rear seats of vehicles (about 70%). This rate is low in the Arab sector, about 64% in the rear seats and 68% in the front seats, compared to 91% in the front seats in the general population. The number of tickets issued annually (about 121,000 in 2021) is high, indicating the severity of the problem.
- **Handling License Disqualifications** – in 2021, there was a record number of license revocations (about 19,600); in about 75% of cases (around 14,600 instances), the licenses were not surrendered as required. In addition, from 2019 to 2021, an average of about 5,000 traffic tickets per year were issued to drivers whose licenses had been revoked yet continued to drive illegally, posing a risk to human life. This indicates a broad scope of the phenomenon. The State Comptroller's Office considers the failure to establish a database of disqualified drivers – by the Israel National Digital Agency, the Ministry of National Security, the Israel Police, MOT, and the Courts Administration, as mandated by law 17 years ago, as a serious issue. The absence of a comprehensive and reliable database containing information on license revocations imposed by various authorities and their validity impairs the police's ability to enforce effective measures against dangerous drivers who drive with revoked licenses, thereby undermining deterrence against traffic offenders, some of whom are serial offenders.
- **Enforcement Effectiveness** – in its research the police adopted the data on the number of road accidents and casualties involved as a benchmark for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of enforcement activity. According to this benchmark, a review of the data in 2012–2022 indicates that 2012 had the lowest number of fatalities and severe injuries throughout the period (290 and 1,734, respectively). However, this reduction was not maintained or replicated in the following years (in 2022, there were 351 fatalities and 2,607 seriously injured). This data indicates that the police's enforcement activity over the past decade has not decreased accidents and casualties. The audit found that the effectiveness of enforcement in Israel is not optimal, partly due to the following factors: a lack of resources; failure to coordinate enforcement activity with other road safety activities (for example, the demerit point system was changed but enforcement activity was not increased to support the change); enforcement activity is done according to the capacity of the judicial system rather than purely professional considerations (such as safety importance, justice, efficiency, and effectiveness).



- 👎 Enforcement by Local Authority Inspectors** – in a State Comptroller audit report published in 2022, it was found that some local authorities began enforcement under the Law for Streamlining Municipal Supervision and Enforcement in Local Authorities (Traffic) as early as 2018. Some local authorities trained inspectors but they did not issue traffic tickets; in others, the implementation of the law was not approved by the city council, and therefore, the inspectors were not granted enforcement authority. It was also found that the Ministry of Internal Security did not monitor the extent of the law's implementation in the local authorities. In its response to the audit, the Ministry of Internal Security stated that it has neither the tools nor the resources to monitor the law's implementation and that such monitoring is not required by law. In addition, it was found that the MOT had not regulated granting additional powers to local authorities' inspectors, as stipulated in a 2018 government decision.
- 👎 Conversion and Cancellation of Traffic Tickets** – each year, tens of thousands of requests are filed for converting penalty tickets to warnings (about 39,000 on average in 2019–2022) and over 100,000 requests for adjudication (about 129,000 on average in 2019–2022). These requests indicate that in some cases, the recipients of the tickets did not accept the police's decision, or they believed there was a real chance to change it. Handling and responding to these requests draws significant resources from both the police – to review the requests, decide on appropriate action, and potentially prove their stance in court if needed; and from the court system – to adjudicate each case and make rulings. Indeed, a relatively high rate of tickets are ultimately canceled (7% in 2019 and 11% in 2020), yet the police do not have statistical data regarding the reasons for the cancellations. Moreover, these processes increase the time gap between the commission of the offense and the payment of the fine, thereby weakening the effectiveness of enforcement actions. For example, in 2019–2022, the length of time to pay fines for tickets where requests for conversion or adjudication were filed was 34% longer compared to fines paid for tickets for which no appeal was filed for fines issued manually and 51% longer for fines from A-3 cameras (annual average).
- 👎 Presumption of Reliability for Electronic Enforcement Devices** – in the absence of legislation regarding the presumption of reliability of electronic enforcement devices, it is sufficient for a defendant accused of a traffic offense to deny the enforcement instrument's reliability. Even if there is no substance to his claims, the burden of proof regarding the device's reliability falls on the prosecution, potentially leading to costly and lengthy proceedings involving expert testimony from both domestic and international experts. Despite the bill on the presumption of reliability being introduced over 14 years ago, it has not been approved. This situation undermines enforcement effectiveness, increases the burden on the courts and the police, and constitutes a barrier to adopting more effective electronic enforcement systems, such as those used in many countries worldwide.



Judicial and Penal System

👎 The Burden on Traffic Courts – in 2018–2021, an average of nearly 137,000 traffic cases were opened yearly. Each judge handles about 3,400 cases annually. In addition, until 2020, the number of open cases increased almost yearly, indicating that the rate of case closures was lower than that of new cases being opened. The number of traffic judges (about 40) has not increased since 2016; however, the backlog of open cases grew by about 16% in 2016–2021, thus increasing the burden on each judge. In 2021, the average case processing time was 5.5 months. Consequently, fines are paid long after the offense, diminishing the effectiveness of the penalties.

👎 The Caseload in Traffic Courts by District – there is significant variability between districts in caseload per judge. Israel's central regions – the central, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem districts – have a substantially lower caseload compared to the north, Haifa, and south districts. For example, in 2021, the caseload in the north district was over twice that of the Tel Aviv district (4,857 cases per judge in the north district compared to 2,215 in the Tel Aviv district). Additionally, from 2019 to 2021, the national caseload increased by about 4.4%, but this increase was not uniform across districts. The caseload decreased in the central and Jerusalem districts, whereas in the north, Tel Aviv, and south districts, the caseload increased. In particular, the north and south districts experienced a significant rise in caseload per judge, about 20% (for instance, in the south district, the caseload increased from 3,613 to 4,360 cases per judge).

👎 Requests for Trial – the rate of cases resulting from requests for trial has increased over the years, from 23% in 2015 to 59% in 2019. The advancement of long-term solutions to address the issue of court congestion and the time gap between committing a traffic violation and being penalized for it has halted. For example, discussions on the bill to convert "elective violation offenses" into administrative infractions have not concluded, and discussions regarding the presumption of reliability for electronic enforcement devices were halted in 2017. Consequently, court congestion continues to grow, legal proceedings are getting longer, many cases are being dismissed, leniency is granted to drivers (mainly through the cancellation of point penalties), and the burden of proof for traffic offenses is placed on the police.

👎 Police Traffic Prosecution Department

- **Personnel** – the increase in the number of traffic cases (from about 104,000 in 2014 to about 135,000 in 2021) and not increasing the number of traffic prosecutors in the police (as of 2022, there are 137 positions, ten of which are unfilled) reduced the number of prosecutors present on traffic court hearing days. This situation undermines the proper judicial process, creates a heavy workload, and results in long response times.










- **Interfaces Between the Police and the Courts** – gaps exist in some computer interfaces between the police prosecution and the court system. Due to these gaps, changes in the offense after an indictment has been filed are sometimes not reported to the police, leading to inaccurate entries in the criminal record. The police do not receive information on the date the verdict is delivered to the defendant or the date the driver's license is surrendered to the court, compelling the police to proactively contact the court to verify that the defendant has been notified of the disqualification or to check whether the disqualification period has ended. Information on appeal rulings is not automatically transmitted to the police, leaving the prosecution dependent on the information being transmitted by the prosecutor handling the case. Changes in verdicts or delays in executing a sentence are not communicated to the police as required.
- **Interfaces Between the Police and the MOT** – at present, the police prosecution does not file indictments in cases where a driver is found driving while disqualified under the point system because the Licensing Division does not adequately document the disqualification process conducted by it. In addition, no technological interfaces enable the transfer of investigation materials, data, and approval for surrender from the Licensing Division at the MOT to the police.
- 👎 **Point System** – the point system implemented in Israel is perceived as more complex than those in other countries in the number of offenses included, the method of calculating points, and the variety of corrective measures.
- 👎 **Defensive Driving Courses** – the success rate of participants completing defensive driving courses has decreased, from about 92% in 2017 to about 79% in 2021. An MOT study in 2017 indicated that improvements in the content and teaching methods of defensive driving courses are needed to contribute to prevent traffic violations. For example, the course does not include practical examples using a simulator or media tools. The State Comptroller found that as of the conclusion of the audit, the recommended changes had not been implemented.

Key Recommendations

- 💡 It is recommended that the Ministry of Education ensure that road safety coordinators are appointed in all schools and reduce disparities between the various sectors of Israeli society.
- 💡 It is recommended that the Ministry of Education consolidate the findings from the pilot program on traffic education for two-wheeled vehicles and accordingly expand the program









to address the training needs of riders of non-motorized vehicles (bicycles, electric bicycles, and electric scooters) that do not require a driving license.

-  It is recommended that the police and the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the RSA, develop a program with specific goals for ZAHAV school patrols and conduct training in all classes. This should include bridging gaps vis-à-vis the ultra-Orthodox and Arab sectors. It is recommended that the police, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, determine the number of positions required to operate school patrols and improve the quality of education in the program.
-  It is recommended that the Licensing Division consider improving the theoretical learning process. It should enhance the understanding and comprehension of required materials among driving students, implement necessary changes in the learning format, and monitor its effectiveness over time. In addition, the Licensing Division should consider adding to the theoretical curriculum, for students not enrolled in formal transportation education in the 10th grade, information such as nighttime driving, the effects of fatigue, social pressure, alcohol, and drugs on driving ability, and computerized simulation of hazardous situations. It is also recommended to assess whether changes in the format of the theoretical exams could improve comprehension of the studied material.
-  It is recommended that the MOT, jointly with the RSA, consider the need to update and expand the curriculum for practical driving lessons. For example, additional training for hazard perception and using technological systems while driving should be considered.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Health, the Israel Police, the MOT, and the RSA cooperate to establish guidelines for driving under the influence of medications, including medical cannabis. The police should be provided with appropriate technological and legal tools for enforcement in this area.
-  It is recommended that the Minister of National Security and the Traffic Division develop a comprehensive multi-year national enforcement plan focused on key risk factors, implement proven international best practices and set measurable annual goals. In addition, they should collaborate closely with the RSA to coordinate policy decisions, develop work plans, and strengthen the link between enforcement and education efforts, thus creating synergy between their activities.
-  It is recommended that the police and the Ministry of National Security consider bridging the gaps between the responsibility assigned to the Traffic Division and its authority regarding enforcing traffic laws in urban areas. In addition, it is recommended that the police ensure that human resources to enforce traffic laws are channeled primarily for these needs while maintaining some degree of flexibility for necessary cases.
-  It is recommended that the Traffic Division, in coordination with the RSA, define the number of vehicles and workforce needed to adequately fulfill the tasks assigned to the Traffic Division and other units involved in traffic law enforcement. This is in considering the changes in the



field since 2005. Based on this examination, the Ministries of National Security and Finance should meet these needs in line with government priorities.

-  It is recommended that the Traffic Division, in coordination with the RSA, define the required quantity of electronic enforcement tools of each type. Based on the updated review, the Ministries of National Security and Finance should consider meeting these needs.
-  All Authorities Authorized to Revoke Driving Licenses – the Licensing Authority, the police, the courts, and military courts, must cooperate to ensure that drivers whose licenses have been revoked are prevented from driving. This could be achieved through strict enforcement of the surrender of revoked licenses or by other technological means. In addition, the police must enforce this issue. The Israel National Digital Agency, in cooperation with the Ministry of National Security, the police, the MOT, and the Courts Administration should establish the license revocation database as soon as possible.
-  It is recommended that the police thoroughly analyse the reasons for the numerous appeals from traffic ticket recipients and the reasons for canceling some of them. This is to determine whether certain types of offenses or enforcement methods are more reliable and to adjust enforcement activities accordingly, alongside implementing highly effective measures in improving road safety.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Justice, the Courts Administration, the Ministry of National Security, and the police contend with the burden on the courts and its negative implications, including concluding discussions on the proposed legislation to convert traffic offenses into administrative violations. In addition, it is recommended that case processing times be reduced.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of National Security, in collaboration with the police and the Ministry of Justice, complete the legislative process to establish the presumption of reliability for electronic enforcement devices over devices whose reliability has been proven. This, considering the need to increase enforcement efficiency and alleviate the burden on the courts and the police while safeguarding drivers' rights.
-  It is recommended that the MOT ensure accurate documentation of the license revocation process. Furthermore, it is recommended that the police and the MOT improve their information interfaces so that the information necessary for the police's work flows smoothly between them.



Chapter Four – The Infrastructural Factor

Key Findings



Prioritization of Infrastructure Projects – the model used in Israel for prioritizing road improvement projects is based on the number of road accidents and casualties rather than other factors such as existing infrastructure, hazards, and the road's maintenance level. According to the "50 by 30" program, (developed by the RSA and the MOT), various countries around the world take a preventive approach in this context, and it recommends adopting methodologies for rating road safety based on multiple risk characteristics and prioritizing projects according to these ratings.

Handling Infrastructure on Inter-city Roads



Rectifying Deficiencies Raised in the Previous State Comptroller Reports – previous State Comptroller reports have highlighted numerous gaps regarding road safety infrastructure on inter-city roads. These include the lack of infrastructure such as rest areas, stopping bays, crawler lanes, narrow shoulders that do not allow for safe stopping, budget constraints that preclude expansion of road maintenance work, and insufficient treatment of safety deficiencies in parts of Highway 90. The current audit has found that these have not been fully addressed and that most gaps still exist. For example, Highway 90 has not yet been treated along its length.



Addressing High-Risk Locations – in 2017–2021, only about 72% of the budget authorization to commit was allocated for high-risk areas, agreed upon in the multi-year plan, at about NIS 830 million compared to the planned NIS 1.15 billion. This sum also reflected a decrease of about 33% from 2014–2016. An examination of the cash budget execution indicates that the reduction in budget authorization to commit led to lower execution volumes of projects in 2021–2022 (about NIS 170 million and NIS 190 million, respectively), particularly in the first half of 2023 (about NIS 51 million). This is despite the large backlog of projects at identified high-risk locations awaiting execution. It should also be noted that since 2021, Netivei Israel has operated without a five-year plan, which is supposed to provide a structured and transparent framework for its activities and project prioritization.



Improving Safety on Dangerous Roads – high-risk areas on inter-city roads are identified based on a significant number of accidents at specific points or short segments. Consequently, roads with numerous fatal accidents distributed along their length are not treated as high-risk areas. Examples of such roads include roads 71, 232, 55, 90, 60, and 264. In this context, the State Comptroller's Office examined two case studies: (a) Highway 65, connecting the Caesarea Interchange on the coastal plain to Nahal Amud in the Galilee, on which numerous accidents occur. In 2015–2019, there were 164 accidents on this road, resulting in five fatalities and 446 injuries. As a result, and following repeated appeals from the heads of local authorities through which the road runs, a project to upgrade part of the road was included in Netivei Israel's five-year plan for 2017–2021, with an approved budget of about NIS one billion. Despite this, Netivei Israel issued tenders for work on the segment only in July 2023. (b) Highway 90, which runs across Israel from the north starting in Metula to Eilat, is characterized by numerous safety defects, such as poorly arranged entrances to communities along the road, narrow shoulders in most parts, lack of a median barrier in some sections, dark and unlit areas, and cracked road sections with potholes and depressions. In 2003–2020, there were 2,480 accidents on this road, resulting in 251 fatalities, a third of which occurred in the southern part of the road between Arava Junction and Eilat. Despite previous audit reports by the State Comptroller's Office regarding the dangers of this road, particularly its south part, it was found that the road had not yet been treated along its entire length.

Treatment of Urban Infrastructure

Funding for Safety Projects – in 2016, the Economic Affairs Committee raised the need to increase the budget allocated to improving urban infrastructure by NIS 150 million per year. However, this recommendation was not implemented. Moreover, concerning the allocated budgets, in 2021–2022, there was a decrease in the utilization of the safety fund budget to improve safety infrastructure in local authorities (for example, in 2022, about NIS 204 million were allocated, but only about NIS 70 million were utilized). Even though in these years the RSA transferred an annual budget of NIS 120 million to the MOT to improve safety in cities and towns, part of this budget was used for other purposes by the MOT, which did not align with the budget's original designation.

Involvement of the RSA in Allocating Budgets for Safety Projects – the current work method, whereby budgets are transferred from the RSA to the MOT, which then decides on their allocation to various authorities, does not allow the RSA to fulfill its legal responsibility, i.e., to increase funding for improving transportation infrastructure and road safety measures in urban areas, and supervise the implementation of the funded actions. The RSA is legally required to establish funding criteria with the approval of the Minister of Transportation; however, the MOT sets the criteria for projects receiving funding assistance without RSA involvement. The RSA has no control over allocating and



utilizing the budgets it transfers to the MOT. It does not have the means of monitoring and ensuring that these budgets are used to improve road safety in local authorities.

📌 Safety Projects in Local Authorities – in 2017–2019, a significant portion of safety projects in local authorities approved for funding by the MOT as part of the call for proposals process was not carried out at all. The budget was not utilized at all in 44% to 71% of the projects. This is despite the MOT's regulations, which state that projects should begin within a year from the day of receiving budgetary authorization. Even among the projects that did commence, there were those where budget utilization was low. For instance, in 12% to 15% of the projects during these years, the budget utilization rate was less than 50%, despite authorizations being valid for three years and these projects being supposed to have already been completed. This means that approved safety projects were not advance and no solution was given to the safety issues identified in the cities and towns.

📌 Monitoring Project Implementation and Learning Lessons – the MOT does not collect data on applications that were submitted but did not receive budget approval, and it lacks an information system for managing data on all projects. Therefore, it cannot gather information on all projects or assess the scope of needs in local authorities, and it is difficult to track the stages of project progress. Furthermore, there is no follow-up on the benefits of projects after their completion.

📌 RSA Audits of Local Traffic Sign Authorities – out of 283 local traffic sign authorities, the RSA has not audit 55 (including 45 municipal sign authorities). Specifically, in 2021, fewer audits were performed compared to previous years (nine audits compared to an average of about 31 audits in 2014–2020); in 2018, only one audit was conducted in local traffic sign authorities belonging to local authorities, and in the following years, no audits at all were undertaken in these authorities. Even in the authorities where audits were conducted, no follow-up audits were performed in cases where many deficiencies were found. Hence, the existence of hazards could pose safety risks to road users.






Key Recommendations

💡 To prioritize safety projects it is recommended that the MOT and Netivei Israel consider, in collaboration with the RSA, adopting a model for ranking roads according to their danger level based on various characteristics, including mapping infrastructure and road hazards.

💡 It is recommended that the MOT and Netivei Israel develop a multi-year plan to address the gaps identified in previous audit reports regarding road safety infrastructure on inter-city roads. This includes infrastructure for heavy vehicles (widening shoulders, establishing rest



areas, stopping bays, and crawler lanes), road maintenance and upgrading safety along the entire length of Route 90.

-  It is recommended that Netivei Israel, the MOT, and the Ministry of Finance formulate and approve Netivei Israel's five-year plan and determine the resources allocated to high-risk areas while considering the economic costs incurred from road accidents. The actual funding during the program years should match the amounts specified in the five-year plan.
-  It is recommended that the RSA and the MOT examine the reasons for the low utilization of the safety fund budget and ensure that the funds transferred by the RSA for road safety improvements in local authorities are indeed used for their intended purpose. This includes increasing RSA's involvement in allocating funds according to the RSA Law, and in formulating criteria for project funding, and including RSA representatives in the joint committee that prioritizes the projects. In addition, it is recommended to enhance RSA's involvement in supervising the projects' implementation.
-  It is recommended that MOT examine why budget authorizations to commit allocated by it for safety projects in local authorities were not used. Accordingly the MOT should ensure that the local authorities carry out the necessary projects.
-  It is recommended that the MOT and the RSA establish a computerized system to consolidate information on all work processes for the approval and budgeting of safety projects in local authorities and track their implementation through reports from the local authorities. This will enable the MOT and RSA to supervise project execution, draw conclusions, and improve budget allocation. In addition, it is recommended that control methods be adopted to track the benefit derived from these projects after their completion. This is of particular importance given the limited budgetary framework, which results in unapproved projects each year due to budget constraints.
-  It is recommended that the RSA increase the number of audits of local traffic sign authorities to audit all the authorities. It is also recommended to conduct follow-up audits on the authorities every few years, in line with their characteristics, the number of deficiencies found, and their severity.



Chapter V – The Vehicle Factor

Key Findings






Integration of Safety Systems in Vehicles – in 2013, the provisions of Regulation 3/13 came into effect, regulating incentives to promote the use of advanced safety systems that help reduce road accidents. The MOT updates them annually according to technological developments, usage rates of various systems, and their relevant standards. It was found that the required actions defined in the '50 to 30' plan and the RSA recommendations were not implemented, including integrating crash test scores into the incentive system, setting targets for vehicle scrapping, and providing incentives for scrapping older vehicles. It was also found that the incentives were determined only for passenger vehicles and trucks with a total weight of up to 3.5 tons, with no explicit reference to life-saving technological means in buses, trucks, and motorcycles, despite the large proportion of these vehicles in severe accidents (in 2021, the involvement of motorcycles in severe accidents was 641 accidents per billion kilometers traveled; buses – 145; trucks over 12 tons – 55; and private vehicles – 40).

Regulating the Use of Digital Tachographs – the digital tachograph is expected to be introduced in Israel only in 2025, about 20 years after the government decided to adopt it in Israel, and it is significantly behind the European Union. As a result, the ability to enforce provisions regarding driving hours and speeds of heavy vehicle drivers is limited since it requires a physical examination of the data recorded on paper discs by the analog tachograph on an individual level and because their records can easily be falsified.


Shortage of Manpower and Essential Equipment for the Vehicle Inspection and Control Department at the MOT (MOT's Inspection Department) – the issues raised in the 2020 State Comptroller's report regarding the shortage of workforce, vehicles, and essential equipment for the MOT's Inspection Department have not been resolved, despite repeated requests from the MOT's Inspection Department to the MOT administration and the Ministry of Finance. The shortage means that the MOT is unable to conduct sufficient enforcement regarding vehicle integrity, safety officers' activity, and cargo transportation. In particular, since June 2021, the department has not weighed trucks due to a lack of serviceable weighing devices. This is despite the test findings








indicating that these tests succeeded in identifying many vehicles with serious defects and overloaded trucks.

-  **Funding and Implementation of Safety Activity in the MOT's Inspection Department** – in 2018–2021, there was a 30% reduction (from NIS 3.7 million to NIS 2.6 million) in the budgets transferred from the RSA to the MOT for funding safety activity, including vehicle integrity inspections using MOT safety inspection mobile units and supervision of traffic safety officers. Consequently, there was a decrease in the number of inspections carried out (a decline of about 7.5% between 2019 and 2021), continuing a trend that began in previous years. In addition, it was found that after "deficiencies requiring rectification" are discovered, where the driver can continue driving and is required to repair the defect within a limited time frame and bring the vehicle back for reinspection, the MOT Inspection Department lacks the tools to monitor repair of the detected defects.
-  **Vehicle Maintenance** – vehicles have components, such as airbags, whose condition is not checked as part of roadworthiness tests. Furthermore, a vehicle's condition can deteriorate in the period between tests due to high mileage, making these vehicles potential safety hazards on the roads. It was found that the MOT in 2017 failed to increase the frequency of roadworthiness tests for commercial vehicles despite their high involvement in accidents.
-  **Purchase of Short-Term Compulsory Vehicle Insurance Policies** – purchasing compulsory vehicle insurance for short periods is widespread. For example, in 2022, about 5% of all vehicles in Israel (about 211,000) were insured for less than three months. This could indicate that many vehicles are traveling the roads without compulsory insurance. It was also found that the police do not enforce the law on this issue and that the MOT and the Capital Market Authority, Insurance and Savings Authority do not cooperate to identify these cases and prevent uninsured vehicles from being driven.

Key Recommendations

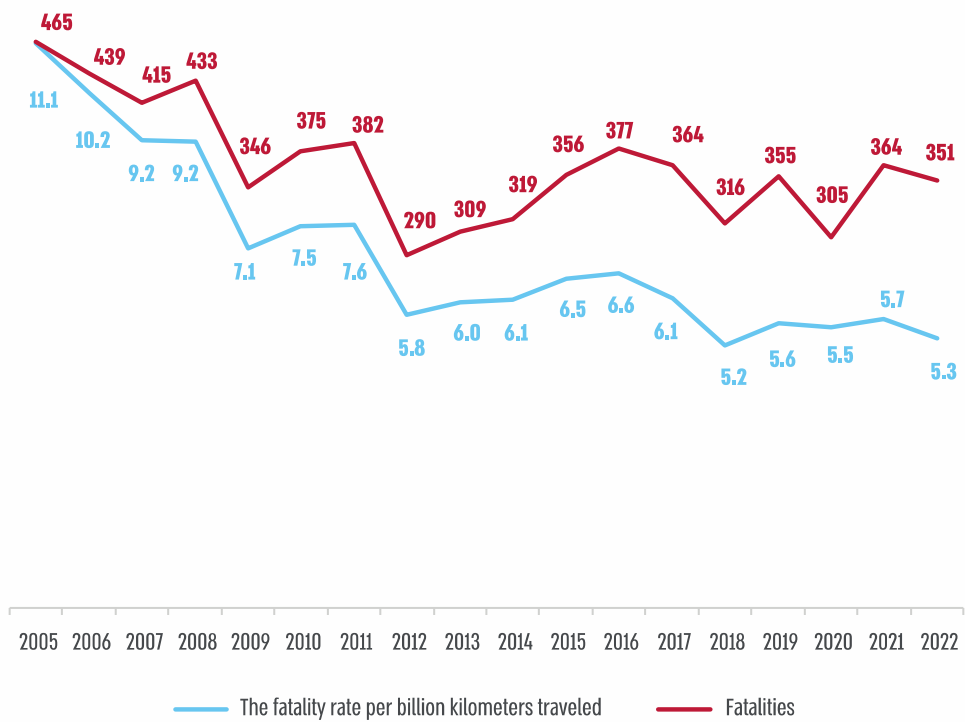
-  It is recommended that the MOT consider adopting the RSA's recommendations regarding the promotion of equipping new vehicles with advanced safety systems. The Ministry should continue, in cooperation with the RSA, to monitor the development of new technological means and encourage their installation in private cars and trucks weighing no more than 3.5 tons. In addition, it should consider whether to mandate or incentivize the installation of safety systems in heavy vehicles and motorcycles as well. Furthermore, it is recommended to consider incentivizing the scrapping of old vehicles.



-  It is recommended that the MOT introduce digital tachographs without further delay. Among others, it should work with the Ministry of National Security and cooperate with the police to approve the bill in the Knesset authorizing the police to use the digital tachograph.
-  It is recommended that the MOT and the Ministry of Finance strengthen the capabilities of the MOT's Inspection Department by allocating the necessary resources, including personnel, vehicles, and equipment – to provide a professional response to the tasks assigned to it. This is due to the importance of the division's activities in identifying and preventing safety defects.
-  It is recommended that the MOT, RSA, and the Ministry of Finance examine the impact of the ongoing reduction in the budget for MOT's safety inspection mobile units on the number of inspections conducted. Based on these results, they should consider the optimal budget allocation for these inspections and their distribution according to the type of inspection. In addition, consideration should be given to the number of weighing devices required for MOT's safety inspection mobile units, and the two purchased weighing devices should be deployed. Furthermore, it is recommended that the RSA and the MOT, in collaboration with the police, develop and enhance the application of inspection findings, extract lessons learned, and use them to shape policies in various areas in the coming years of work.
-  It is recommended that the MOT consider the need to increase the frequency of roadworthiness tests for vehicles in appropriate cases or add tests under relevant circumstances, such as for vehicles with high mileage. In addition, it is recommended that the MOT and the RSA raise drivers' awareness of the importance of the integrity of the safety systems in vehicles and encourage the testing of these systems as part of regular vehicle maintenance. Furthermore, the State Comptroller's Office reiterates its recommendation that the MOT establish a central information database on the history of vehicle involvement in accidents and set rules for inspecting safety systems following accidents.
-  The police, the MOT, the Capital Market, the Insurance and Savings Authority, and the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the RSA, should adequately enforce the law regarding mandatory insurance.



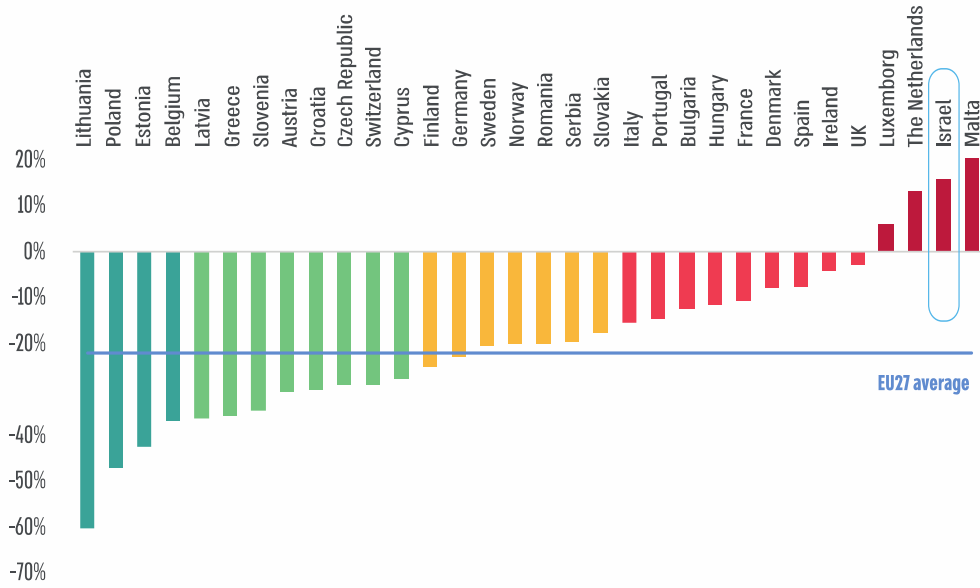
The Number of Fatalities in Road Accidents, 2005–2022



According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, processed by the State Comptroller Office.



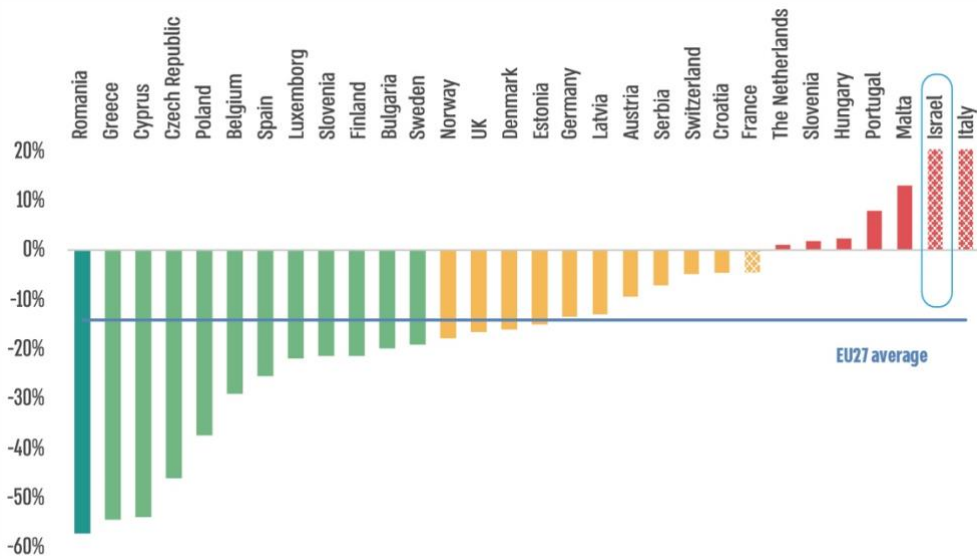
The Change Rate in the Number of Fatalities in Road Accidents, 2012–2022



According to *ETSC, Ranking EU Progress on Road Safety – 17th Road Safety Performance Index Report (2023)*, processed by the State Comptroller's Office.



The Change Rate in the Number of Fatalities in Road Accidents, 2012–2022



According to ETSC, Ranking EU Progress on Road Safety – 17th Road Safety Performance Index Report (2023), processed by the State Comptroller's Office.



Summary

Every year, hundreds of people are killed and thousands are injured in road accidents in Israel. This results in immense pain, sorrow, and significant economic damage, estimated about NIS 16 billion annually. The fight against road accidents is a continuous struggle that requires substantial resources and sustained effort. Although road accidents have been a persistent topic in daily discussions for many years, the data indicate that until now, no adequate solution has been provided for this complex problem. The various governments' measures over the past decade have not had a significant impact on the number of accidents or reduced the number of fatalities and injuries from road accidents, in contrast to trends observed in many European countries during the same period.

The audit found deficiencies in various aspects of the fight against road accidents, both at the systemic level, such as the absence of a leading authority with the necessary powers to fight road accidents, the lack of a funded multi-year strategic plan, the failure to convene a committee of ministry directors-general to address the issue, and the lack of reports to the Knesset on the matter; and regarding the actions of the various government bodies involved. The audit found that over the past decade, the budgets allocated to road safety and the personnel dedicated to this issue have progressively decreased in each of the responsible bodies. Consequently, there are significant gaps in the following fields: educational programs in kindergartens and schools; driver training processes, verifying drivers' medical fitness; enforcement and public awareness activities; traffic courts' workload; road safety infrastructure on intercity roads and on urban roads; and ensuring vehicles' roadworthiness. Huge gaps were found in the Arab sector.

The multitude of factors affecting the scope of road accidents makes the fight against them complex. Since the human factor is responsible for most road accidents, addressing this factor in conjunction with actions to improve infrastructure and vehicle safety is necessary. All government bodies accountable for road safety, including the MOT, the RSA, the Israel Police, the judicial system, and the Ministry of Education, should rectify the deficiencies raised in this report. Success in this crucial struggle begins with the personal responsibility of all road users. It continues with the establishment of a leading and empowered authority, the formulation of a funded strategic plan with clear and measurable goals, the independent operation of each relevant body, their coordinated and joint efforts, and, above all, the commitment of the Prime Minister and all government ministers. International experience in countries that have managed to reduce the number of casualties in road accidents demonstrates that this is not a matter of fate but an attainable goal that saves lives. Many countries worldwide refuse to accept the loss caused by road accidents and have set a goal of zero fatalities in road accidents.

The MOT must place this issue at the top of the agenda and address all the deficiencies identified in the report.