# The changing focus of our work

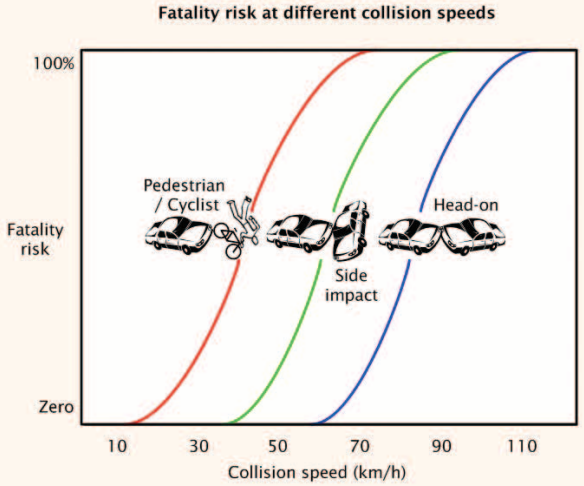
Each of us knows the part of the system we can influence to be safer. It is helpful to think about who else we need to share information with and work more closely with, or how we need to work differently to create a safe road system.

| From | To |
|---|---|
| Aiming to reduce crashes | Aiming to reduce deaths and serious injuries |
| Asking: why did that person crash? | Asking: why was that person so seriously injured in that crash? |
| Blaming the driver for the cause and severity of a crash | Recognising road or vehicle design plays a part in some crashes, and that good design minimises their severity |
| Reacting to crashes or incidents | Proactively identifying highest risks and working across the whole system to reduce them |


# The importance of speed

We want to make sure that if a crash does happen, it will be at a speed that allows people to survive.

Speed at the time of a crash is the biggest predictor of crash forces. In a Safe System, when speeds need to be high, the rest of the system needs to be much more forgiving so that if there is a crash no-one will be hurt or seriously injured.




## How the Safe System approach will result in safer journeys

*Safer Journeys: New Zealand's Road Safety Strategy 2010–2020* has a vision of a safe road system increasingly free of death and serious injury.

This vision challenges everyone who influences road safety to change the way we think about road safety and the way we work together to make journeys on New Zealand's roads safer for everyone.

**For more information**
visit www.saferjourneys.govt.nz

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New Zealand Government

# Embedding the Safe System approach to road safety

A Safe System recognises that people make mistakes and are vulnerable in a crash. It reduces the price paid for a mistake so crashes don't result in loss of life or limb

Mistakes are inevitable – deaths and serious injuries from road crashes are not

Safer Journeys

**As system designers who influence road safety, we all need to identify what we can do in our jobs to make our road system more forgiving.**

Let's all do everything we can to make sure simple mistakes don't turn into tragedies.

## Why we need a Safe System

Scandinavian research shows that even if all road users complied with road rules, fatalities would only fall by around 50% and injuries by 30%. This is supported by recent South Australian research. So if everyone obeyed the road rules, New Zealand would still have more than 140 deaths on the roads each year.

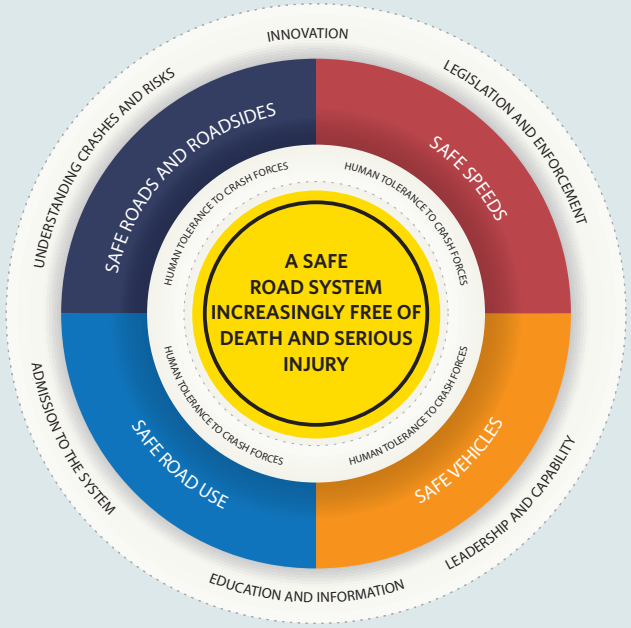
We know that driver error causes many crashes. The Safe System approach works on the principle that it is not acceptable for a road user to be killed or seriously injured if they make a mistake.

We need to look beyond the driver, and identify and address all the causes of crash trauma.

A safe road system is greater than the sum of its parts

System designers include planners, engineers, parents, policy makers, educators, enforcement officers, vehicle importers, suppliers, employers, utility providers, insurers, asset managers, the media, fleet managers etc.

# What is the Safe System approach?




The Safe System approach aims to create a forgiving road system based on these four principles:

### PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES

We need to recognise that people make mistakes and some crashes are inevitable.

### PEOPLE ARE VULNERABLE

Our bodies have a limited ability to withstand crash forces without being seriously injured or killed.

### WE NEED TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

System designers and people who use the roads must all share responsibility for creating a road system where crash forces do not result in death or serious injury.

### WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN ALL PARTS OF THE SYSTEM

We need to improve the safety of all parts of the system – roads and roadsides, speeds, vehicles, and road use so that if one part fails, other parts will still protect the people involved.

# What a Safe System looks like

When we have a safe road system, everyone will expect a very low road toll and serious injuries will be increasingly rare. All parts of the system will be much safer than they are now. For example:

- **vehicles** will increasingly have advanced safety features, including electronic stability control, front and side curtain airbags and head restraints, collision avoidance systems and better maintenance of tyres and brakes
- **roads and roadsides** will be safer because transport and urban planning and road design will accommodate errors. Surfaces will be improved and roadside hazards removed or barriers installed
- **speed** will be managed to safe levels through more appropriate limits, and there will be smarter self-explaining roads and roadsides that show people what safe speed means
- **road users** will be alert and aware of the risks and drive or ride to the conditions. There will be more in-vehicle technologies to give drivers safety feedback, ensure alertness and reinforce compliance with the road rules.

As well as asking 'Why did that driver crash into the power pole?' we now ask 'Why does that power pole need to be there and how can it be made safer?'

The Safe System approach doesn't take the road user out of the picture or diminish their responsibilities. Instead of laying the majority of blame on the road user, it recognises the need for all system designers and system users to share responsibility for what happens when a crash occurs.