

The Swedish Police Road Safety Policy



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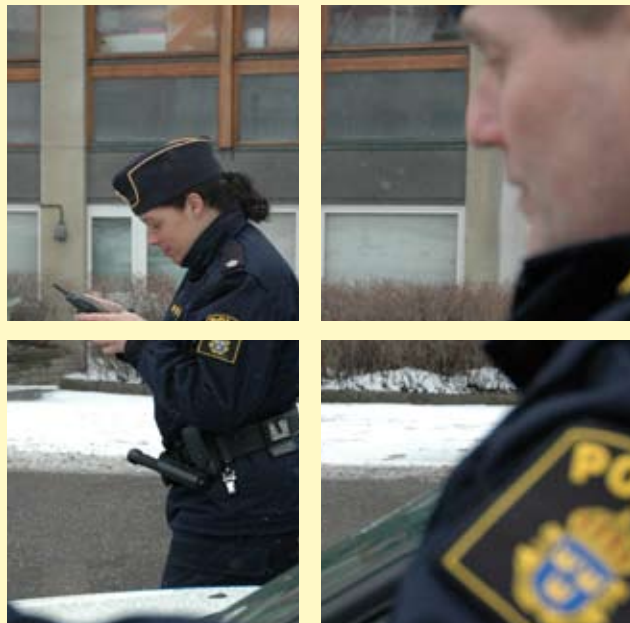
Police Road Safety

Policy in Brief

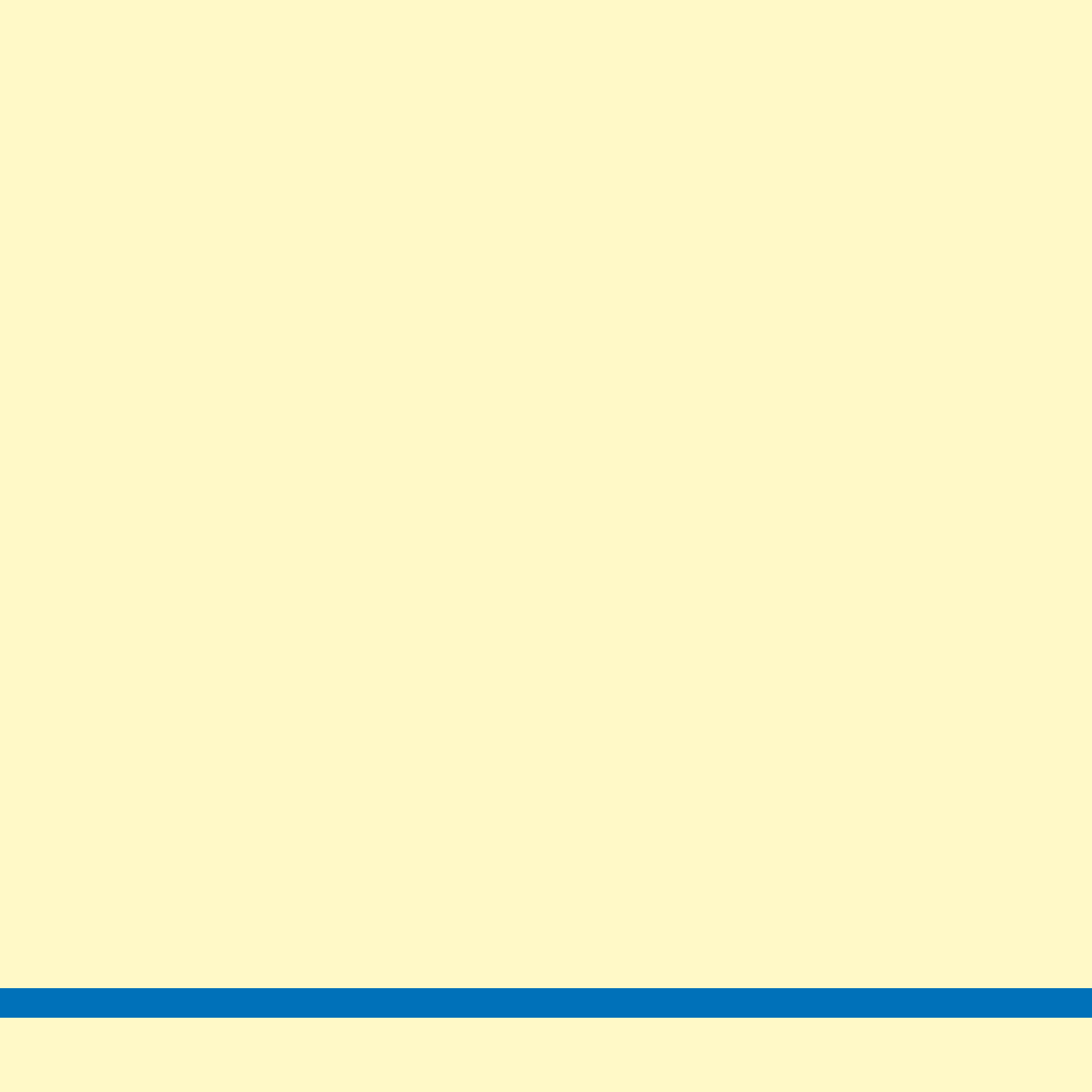
Every year there are hundreds of road deaths and thousands of people seriously injured in road traffic. Measures to prevent accidents taken by the Police are of the greatest importance to reduce the number of accidents and as a result the number of people injured and killed.

The Police invest in achieving:

- The same level of activities in the whole country with a national policy and annual plans of action on a joint basis.
- A uniform way of working through Police methodology as to planning and follow-up, as well as carrying out these activities according to Intelligence led policing.
- Increased number of controls that influence the conduct of road users. They are carried out by all uniformed patrol police officers as an integral part of combating crime.
- More activities for the prevention of dangerous situations. It is important to increase cooperation on preventive activi-



ties within the police organisation as well as with external actors on a local, regional and national level



The Police Road Safety Policy

Sweden's long-term road safety goal is that there should be no fatalities or seriously injured people in road traffic at all. This goal was ratified by the Swedish Parliament in 1997 and is based on the "Vision Zero" programme. An intermediate goal is to reach 270 traffic fatalities at the end of 2007. This is a great challenge to all actors in the traffic area. The most important task of the Police to reach this goal is:

- Preventing dangerous situations and breaking the traffic law.
- Contributing to road users complying with the traffic laws.

Desired development

To increase the capability of the Police on road safety the whole police organisation will work on the basis of a national strategy. It is a long-term ambition and will be supplemented with annual plans that will describe the work in a more tangible way step-by-step.

The aim and overarching objectives for the next five year period:

- Increasing efforts within the road safety area, from traffic supervision to accident



prevention measures.

- The level of ambition of the different police authorities on road safety will be the same in the whole country and the police authorities will work in a more uniform way.
- The efforts of the Police within road safety will be an integral part of the other Police tasks, such as combating crime.

From traffic supervision to accident prevention measures

To take advantage of existing possibilities of development a new broad approach is needed. Police must think more of taking of accident prevention measures and not only in terms of traffic supervision.

It is for instance required that the Police work in a more preventive way - an approach that is strengthened by cooperation within the police organisation and with other actors on a national, regional and local level.

Influencing traffic behaviour

By undertaking a large number of controls and by reporting the incidents where the traffic law is not respected, driver's behaviour is improved. Therefore the main task of the Police, on road safety is supervising, controlling and reporting traffic violations. Research demonstrates that police controls are effective if they are carried out in a correct way.

In order to handle the cases in an effective way, on-the-spot fines should be used as much as possible.

To enable more controls to be carried out it is necessary that not only traffic patrol officers participate, all uniformed patrol police officers should participate to a greater extent and



control drink driving, speed, and the use of the safety belt.

For certain tasks, such as controlling of the vehicle condition, driving and rest periods and carriage of hazardous goods, aggressive driving, special qualifications are required. Experts must for this reason be put engaged in all police authorities - as a resource belonging to the own police authority or as a resource pool to be shared in cooperation with other police authorities.

Equivalent activities in the whole country

To be treated equally from a law and order point of view is a democratic right and citizens expect the Police to maintain safety, security and order on the same level in the whole country.

For this reason it is of great importance that the accident prevention measures have a joint basis and are carried out according to the national road safety policy and annual plans. Existing joint methods for operational planning, implementation and follow up must also be used.

The controls must be carried out in a planned way and be based on intelligence as a part of the work linked to combating crime. This means that police officers undertake controls



during their shifts in combination with other tasks.

A part of combating crime

Criminals must also use the roads and there are strong connections between criminal activities and involvement in traffic accidents. More controls also contribute to the fact that the Police will detect more criminals and discover crimes other than traffic violations.

The information a police officer can obtain in connection with controls of vehicles and drivers can be a reason for taking further measures to investigate crimes other than traffic violations



Priority areas

There are four priority areas for the Police accident prevention measures:

- speed
- drink driving
- use of seat belts, child restraints and helmets
- aggressive driving

Speed

Speed is key to determining the level of impact of a traffic accident. If everyone complied with the speed limits, traffic researchers mean that 100 lives would be saved every year. Research also shows that if the average speed is lowered two kilometres an hour the number of people killed in accidents would be reduced by ten percent every year.

One way of contributing to reduce the average speed and increase road safety is lowering the reporting limit at speed controls. The Police will lower the reporting limit at controls to six kilometres an hour. This implies that a driver will be fined when he/she drives 76 kilometres an hour on a road where it is permitted to drive 70 kilometres an hour. The same limit should be applied no matter what measuring method is used.



Drink driving

A large number of drivers that are involved in traffic accidents are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Some have a very high percentage of alcohol which is an indication of addiction.

It is for this reason important that many drink driving controls are carried out. One of the goals is that the Police should carry out two million breath tests every year. To manage this it is necessary to carry out a breath test every time a driver is stopped by a police officer.

When a driver is suspected of using drugs, the police officer undertakes an on-the-spot test. If the suspicion is confirmed, the driver will be taken back to the police station for further tests.

In addition to on-the-road enforcement Police should cooperate with other actors to combat

the addiction of alcohol and drugs. There are formalized networks between the Police, the social service, the public health service, the correctional care service and others throughout the whole country.

Protective equipment - safety belts, child restraints and helmets

The safety belt is definitely the most important safety device in the car - in the front seat as well as in the backseat. Children need more protection in the car than adults in case of a collision.

The use of a helmet can reduce the number of fatalities and injured people in traffic. Moped riders also constitute a group with a low level of observance of the regulation wear a helmet.

Working to increase the use of protective equipment is a rather simple measure that furthers road safety.

Aggressive driving

Aggressive driving implies a type of driving that threatens the safety of other road users. Aggressive driving involves a high risk of accidents and causes many serious accidents every year. The Police will counteract aggressive driving by supervision and cooperation with external actors.



Examples of aggressive driving include: allowing for a too short distance between vehicles, dangerous overtaking, no observance of red lights, and illegal street racing.

Responsibility

The Police traffic accident prevention measures are a shared responsibility for the National Police Board and the police authorities.

The National Police Board is responsible for setting strategic direction for the work, coordinating the national operational management, develop annual plans and evaluate performed work.

The police authorities in every county are responsible for integrating the national strategy and plans into their own local plans and operational activities. Here it is important to emphasise that the Commissioner of the County Police departments and the operational management carry the responsibility for traffic accident prevention and not, as previously the traffic police chiefs.





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