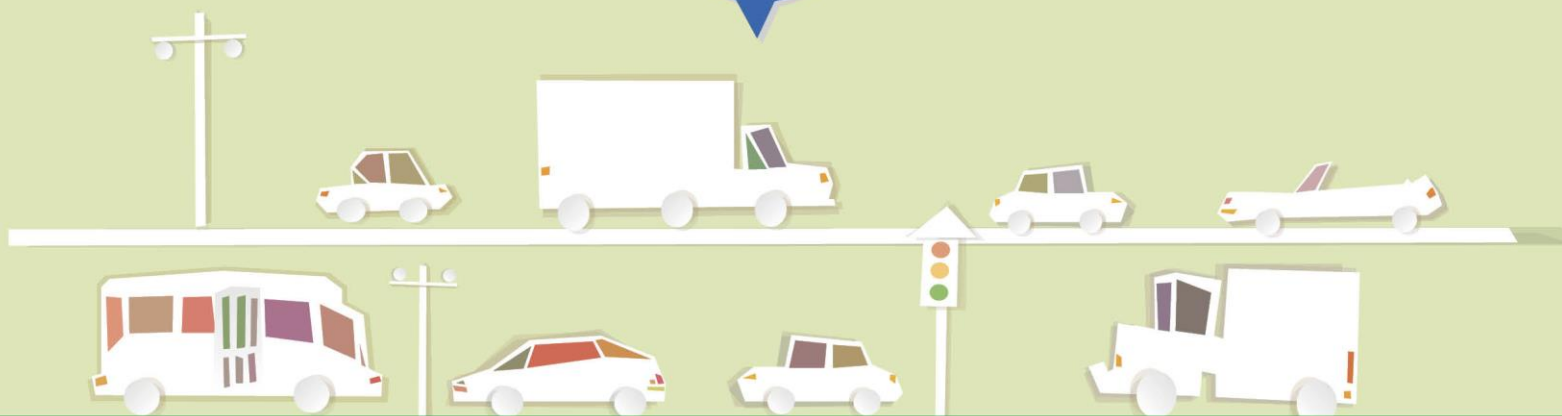


THEMATIC FILE ROAD SAFETY 3

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT



Thematic File Road Safety 3 - Traffic Enforcement (Summary)

Thematic File Road Safety 3 – Traffic Enforcement (2015)

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Under 'Traffic enforcement we find the complete process of criminal prosecution means, police surveillance, legal handling procedures and recording of offences with the aim of ensuring that road users conform to law and order safely. Traffic enforcement is preferably a part of an integrated approach of traffic safety where measures in the fields of Engineering, Education and Enforcement support or strengthen each other. Traffic enforcement especially influences subconscious traffic violations. Errors, forgetfulness and blunders are better corrected by changes in the infrastructure.

According to the scare-technique-theory enforcement has an effect because the citizen, through fear of punishment, chooses to follow the law. According to this theory the objective and subjective chance-of-getting caught attitude is what needs to be adjusted to restrict the behaviour of road users. Regarding traffic, it is the frequency, visibility and unpredictability of traffic controls which increase the subjective idea of getting caught and with it bring about the general preventative effect and related safety effect of enforcement. The standardized theory emphasises the importance of anchoring the laws and rules in the personal sense of justice and personal norms of citizens. This means that as many citizens as possible must be convinced of the importance of laws and rules.

Effectiveness supervision

Research in different European and non-European countries has shown that an increased level of policing (via more manned checks or more camera controls), has shown that it leads to increased compliance with speed limits, safety belt compliance and legal alcohol limits. Safer traffic behaviour translates into less accidents and victims.

There is a limit to what can be achieved in traffic with policing. The effects of policing are often strongly linked to time and place, i.e., road users change their driving behaviour when controls are expected, but often regress to breaking the law at other times and places. Enough reason to selectively place policing in times and places where risks are demonstrably higher.

Traffic enforcement also needs to be integrated into the general goal of traffic safety. Therefore controls need to focus on risky behaviour on the one hand, such as speed, driving under the influence, safety belt behaviour ... and, on the other hand, places and situations in which these behaviours are pernicious.

In part 3 attention is given how to deal with these risky behaviours in Belgium.

Traffic penalties

The end point of traffic maintenance is imposing a penalty. Punishment serves different goals: reprisals, safety of the society, behavioural influence on the guilty party, behavioural influence on society and compensation for the victim. Within criminal law we see two evolutions. On the one hand we see a tendency to deal with traffic violations in an extrajudicial manner (immediate collection, mediation, amicable settlements ...). On the other hand a more cognitive corrective approach is taken with education and services.

An overview of all possible actions within the Belgian judicial system regarding traffic violations is given in part 4.



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