

TARIKH	15 MEI 2025 (KHAMIS)	SURATKHBAR	BH / UM / NST / TS / HM / KOSMO
TAJUK ARTIKEL	HUMAN COST OF IGNORING SAFETY DATA		
M/S	16 (VIEWS)	KATA KUNCI	DOSM, DATA
BIDANG	SAFETY		

Human cost of ignoring safety data

THE Department of Statistics (DOSM) collects extensive national data, including detailed statistics on occupational safety and health. But are we using this valuable information effectively?

For health and safety in the workplace, data consistently shows that approximately 70% of fatal workplace accidents stem from just three primary causes – falls from height, being struck by a moving vehicle, and being struck by a moving object.

Available data reveals an even more startling fact concerning Work-Related Road Safety (WRRS); injuries occurring while commuting to and from work significantly outnumber injuries happening within the physical workplace itself. In 2024, Malaysia reportedly recorded 731 commuting fatalities compared to 314 industrial fatalities.

This means WRRS incidents tragically result in more than twice the number of deaths compared to accidents at the work site.

Tragically, many employers still view commuting safety as solely the employee's personal responsibility.

This perspective is short-sighted, as employers have a profound moral obligation to extend their duty of care.

Leveraging DOSM data on commuting accidents could inform proactive, life-saving measures like written safe driving policies and training.

The tragic loss of nine Federal Reserve Unit personnel in a collision between their transport vehicle and a lorry on Tuesday must shift focus squarely onto the silent, persistent human toll on our roads.

Data on this preventable human loss is available year after year, yet efforts to address it feels disproportionate to the scale of the tragedy compared to less frequent, high-profile disasters like the MH17 shootdown.

Adding to the worry is the emerging trend in occupational

diseases with a staggering 85% of causes related to hearing impairment, primarily noise-induced.

Musculoskeletal disorders also contribute significantly.

These are chronic conditions that often develop gradually, making them invisible and thereby conveniently “forgotten” by many employers, as evident in the lack of basic hearing protection among vulnerable workers in high-noise environments.

Compounding this is a perceived lack of rigorous enforcement by authorities.

It is time to intelligently leverage DOSM's valuable statistics and dedicate adequate budget and resources to focus on preventive efforts where they are most needed – addressing fatal accident hot spots through enhanced HIRARC (Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, and Risk Control), taking responsibility for work-related journeys through robust WRRS initiatives, and tackling the silent epidemic

of occupational diseases.

There are some commendable efforts underway, however. Notably, non-government organisations like Alliance for A Safe Community have been actively partnering with the relevant authorities, such as the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), PERKESO (Social Security Organisation), and Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), to foster a more proactive safety culture in workplaces, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Hopefully, such dedicated efforts will gain significant traction in the years to come and inspire more widespread action.

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