

Legislation: The end or means to road traffic safety?

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**World Health
Organization**

Content

- What does road safety law refer to?
- How has legislation been effective as part of a complete road traffic safety programme?
- What problems with legislation have emerged?
- What makes RS legislation good?
- What you can do in public health?
- References and resources



What does road safety "law" refer to?

- No simple answer

- Laws + regulations + ordinances etc.
- National, State, Local
- "Federal" systems context
 - Adoption of federal (national) laws by states and localities
 - Flexibility of states and localities in a Federal system
- Case laws – When does judicial interpretation set precedent?



- By "type"

- Civil
- Administrative
- Criminal

What does road safety "law" refer to?

- By topic

- Road traffic laws:

- Licensing – requirements for driver licenses, including insurance requirements, etc.
- behaviour-regulating – drink-driving, seat-belt wearing, helmet-wearing, speed reduction, child restraints, etc.

- Emergency/post crash:

- Technical – e.g. ambulance standards
- Professional licensing/certification – e.g., for first responders
- Facility – e.g., emergency facility standards, inter/intra facility transfers requirements

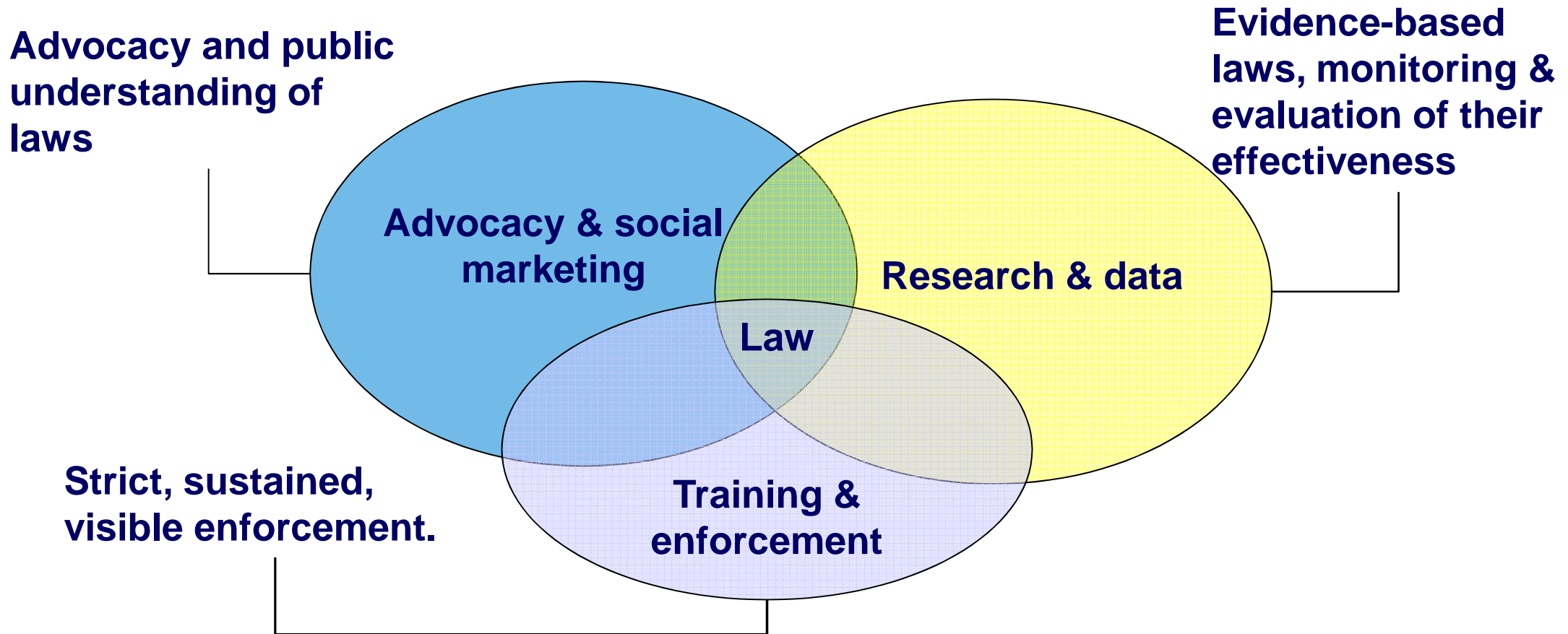
What does road safety "law" refer to?

- Motorized vehicle safety-related laws
 - Technical vehicle standards
 - Manufacturing (and imports)
 - Other technical standards – e.g., motorcycle helmet standards
- Others
 - Mass transport
 - Road design, construction and maintenance

How has legislation been effective. . .

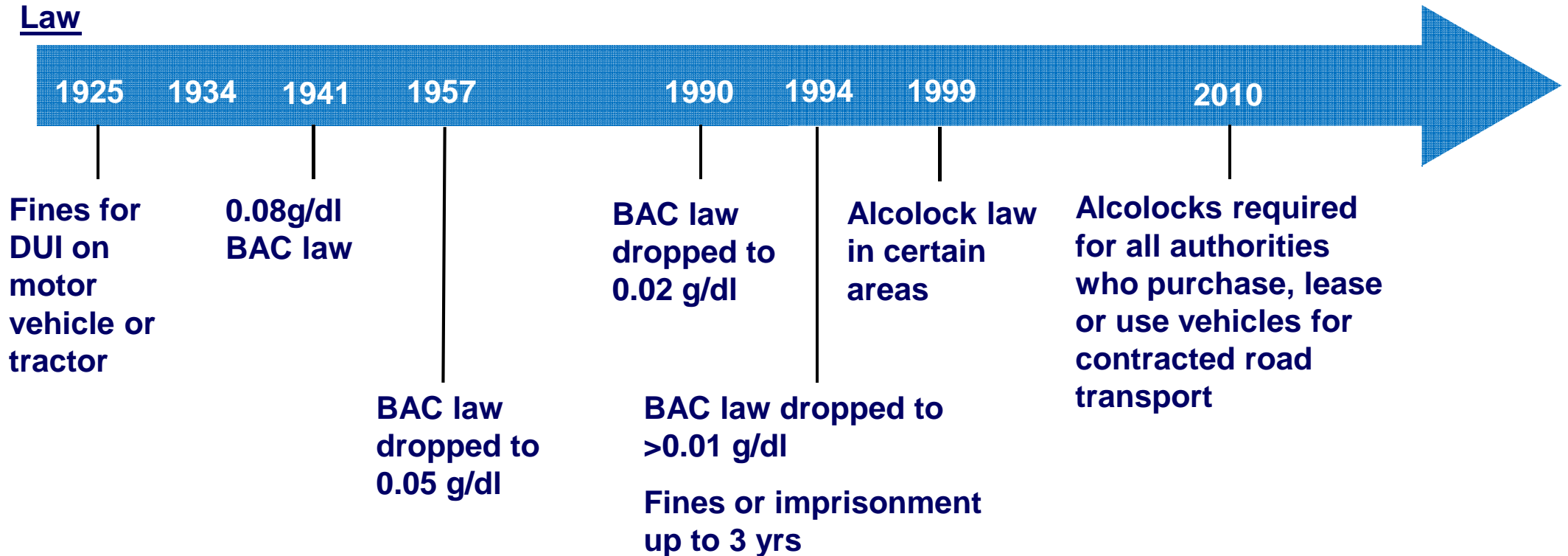
- . . . as part of a complete road traffic safety programme?

Evidence-based interventions + Public education + Sustained and visible enforcement



How has legislation been effective. . . ?

Drink-driving in Sweden



RBT Intervention: Over 1 million RBTs (17% of population) annually – 2nd highest in Europe (Finland = 34%). Testing anywhere, regardless of suspicion. Compulsory RBT for all involved in injury crash. Voluntary rehabilitation for those with alcohol problems. Strict enforcement.

Result: Proportion of drunken drivers involved in crashes decreased from 14% to 9% (period unspecified)

How has legislation been effective. . . ?

Motorcycle helmet wearing in Vietnam

Changes in laws

Viet Nam's First helmet law: helmet wearing prescribed only on certain roads. Difficult to enforce. Limited effectiveness.

Various amendments

Helmet standards for adults & children RS Law
Penalties for not wearing helmets.

Mandatory helmet wearing by all riders and passengers, on all roads, and substantial fine increase.

Mandatory secure fastening of helmets and penalties imposed for non-fastening.

Enforcement with respect to children

1995

1998-2000

2001

2007

2008

2010

Between Sept-07 and Mar-08

16% reduced risk of head injuries

18% reduced risk of death

Effectiveness

What problems with legislation have emerged?

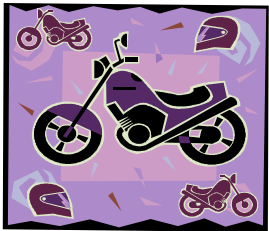
✗ Laws not based on evidence, not comprehensive.

✓ There are solutions the problem.



Set limits taking into account nature and purpose of road and vulnerable road users. 50 km/h or less in urban areas.

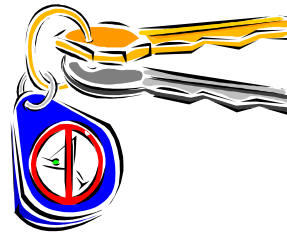
Local authority to reduce limits where vulnerable road users are particularly at risk.



Mandatory helmet use for all motorized 2-3 wheelers.

Cover all riders & passengers, engine & road types.

Helmets meet standards.



BAC at or below 0.05 g/dl.

BAC at or below 0.02 g/dl novice/young drivers



Mandatory child restraint use, by type and age of child



Manufacturers and assemblers required to fit seat-belts in all seating positions.

Mandatory seat-belts for all occupants.

What problems with legislation have emerged?

- Coverage

- Who (e.g., front seat passengers only)
- What (e.g., not all vehicle types)
- Where (Federal vs. State vs. local; not all road types)

- Enforcement challenges

- How? E.g., use of speed cameras, evidentiary issues related to drink-driving
- What? Lack of technical standards (e.g., helmets)
- Capacity and training

What makes RS legislation good

- Evidence-based
 - Address the type of interventions that work
- Comprehensive (or complete)
 - Intervention: define the intervention - what to do/not do
 - Coverage: who, what, where, when?
 - Fines and penalties: reasonable and strike a balance between deterrence and punishment
 - Enforcement: How and by whom?
 - Keep exceptions to a minimum
- Enforcement
 - Deterrence and punitive



What you can do in public health?

- More on effective interventions in low- and middle-income countries
- Monitor road safety trends vs. laws and effectiveness in your country
- Inform and educate non-research community
- Keep us informed of any changes in laws for monitoring



Wrap up and questions

- Legislation: end or means to road traffic safety?
- Only part of a complete package!



References and resources

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