

Summary:

Road safety inspections: safety effects and best practice guidelines

This report describes current practice and knowledge regarding the safety effects of road safety inspections. A road safety inspection is a systematic inspection of an existing road for the purpose of identifying traffic hazards and propose measures to correct these defects.

It is concluded that road safety inspections are targeted at elements that are known to be risk factors for accident occurrence or injury severity. Furthermore, it is concluded that road safety inspections lead to proposals for measures designed to correct the hazards identified. If these measures are carried out, one may normally expect road safety to be improved. This conclusion is based mainly on the Handbook of Road Safety Measures (Elvik and Vaa 2004), as very few evaluations of the effects of road safety inspections have been reported.

To be an effective instrument in road safety management, road safety inspections should identify known traffic hazards, should propose treatments of these and should ensure that these treatments are actually carried out. The possibility of developing best practice guidelines for road safety inspections is discussed. Some preliminary general guidelines are proposed. The details of inspections must, however, be adapted to the specific conditions of each country. There does therefore not seem to be a need for developing very detailed guidelines at the international level. An exchange between countries of experiences made is strongly encouraged.