



Getting a grip on driver safety

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Safer roads remain a shared responsibility

1.19 million

people lose their lives in road traffic accidents each year.

Europe's roads are among the safest in the world, yet progress in reducing deaths and serious injuries has slowed.¹ Achieving the EU's ambition of halving fatalities by 2030 will require stronger action, consistent enforcement, and commitment from both governments and businesses.

Road safety progress in Europe has slowed and it's a mixed picture across the continent

EU data for 2024 shows only a 3% reduction in fatalities compared to the previous year and results vary widely across member states²: Sweden leads with the lowest fatalities at just 22 deaths per million people, while

Romania (86) and Bulgaria (78) record some of the highest rates.³

Larger countries such as France, Germany and Italy see the highest absolute numbers, with Spain reporting a 4% rise in deaths and France achieving a 5% fall.³ The UK also saw, limited progress, with 1,633 people killed in 2024, a 1% increase on the year before and nearly 30,000 people were killed or seriously injured.

Motorcyclist and pedestrian deaths rose, while car-occupant and cyclist fatalities declined slightly.³

Despite advances in vehicle technology and stricter safety rules, vulnerable road users remain at greatest risk. In urban areas, more than 70% of deaths involve pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.³ The Netherlands reports that nearly 40% of road fatalities are cyclists.⁴

¹ [EU road fatalities drop by 3% in 2024, but progress remains slow](#)

² [EU road fatalities drop by 3% in 2024](#)

³ [Reported road casualties GB, provisional results: 2024](#)

⁴ [Traffic mortality down by 42 percent](#)

The main causes of fatal crashes across the continent remain unchanged: speeding, alcohol, distraction, and failing to wear seatbelts or helmets.⁵

With progress uneven and often slow, Europe faces a pressing need to strengthen enforcement and encourage safer behaviour and businesses have an important role to play.

A bright spot is Helsinki where, as of July 2025 (for 6 month period), there had been zero road deaths.⁶ This has been credited to streets redesigned for safety, more enforcement, lower speed limits and encouraging walking and cycling.

Driver safety is critical

Work-related road accidents are a major issue across Europe. Around half of all vehicles on the road today are registered to companies⁷, which means employers play a big role in shaping driving behaviour. When company cars are involved in crashes, the costs are not just financial, they affect people, morale, and reputation too.

The European Commission estimates that the socio-economic cost of road accidents is around 180B and twice the EU's annual budget and this doesn't take into account the cost of disabilities resulting from accidents.⁸ For businesses, the impact of even non-fatal accidents includes time off work, emergency medical costs, vehicle repair, higher insurance premiums, and damage to reputation.

The data also shows that company-car drivers are at higher risk. Studies reveal their collision rate is around 50% higher than that of private motorists. For this reason alone, organisations have a responsibility and a clear incentive to take road safety seriously.



⁵ [Three main factors causing fatal crashes \(European Commission report\)](#)

⁶ [Helsinki records zero road deaths](#)

⁷ [Decarbonise Corporate Fleets - communication from the commission to the European parliament](#)

⁸ [Socio-economic costs and the value of prevention - European Commission](#)

Why has road safety progress stagnated?

Despite safer cars and stronger policies, Europe has struggled to maintain momentum on road safety in the last decade. More than 90% of accidents are caused by human error such as poor anticipation, inappropriate reactions, or violations of traffic laws.¹ The leading risk factors remain the same year after year:

Leading accident risk factors:

- Speeding
- Alcohol
- Driver distraction (phones and other devices)
- Not wearing a seatbelt or helmet

In addition to these factors, drowsiness and drug-impaired driving continue to play a role.

These patterns highlight the limits of vehicle technology alone. **To make real progress, Europe must address driver behaviour more directly** and companies can be part of the solution.

Legislation across borders

The European Commission has set an ambitious long-term goal of zero road deaths by 2050, with an interim target of halving deaths and serious injuries between 2020 and 2030.⁹

In December 2024, the EU adopted a new Cross-Border Enforcement Directive.¹⁰ This strengthens cooperation between member states, expands the list of traffic offences that can be enforced across borders, and ensures drivers face penalties even if they break the rules outside their home country. For companies operating international fleets, this means drivers are accountable no matter where in Europe they travel.

⁹ [European Commission welcomes launch of Global Plan for the UN Decade of Action on Road Safety 2021-2030](#)

¹⁰ [New rules for better cross-border enforcement of traffic laws](#)

The automotive industry continues to invest heavily in safety technologies

New EU rules made a range of advanced safety features mandatory in all new cars, vans, and buses.

These include intelligent speed assistance, reversing safety aids, drowsiness detection, and black-box data recorders.¹¹

At the same time, telematics and connectivity are transforming fleet safety.

Fleet managers can now monitor driver behaviour in real time, spot risky habits like harsh braking or speeding, and take proactive action. Dashcams, distraction detection, and real-time reporting are increasingly being used to support coaching and feedback.

Technology is not a silver bullet, but when combined with better training and strong policies, it can make a big difference.

Vehicle safety features fall into two broad categories:

Passive safety: technologies that protect occupants during a crash, such as airbags, seatbelts, and crumple zones.

Active safety: systems designed to prevent accidents, e.g. automatic emergency braking, lane-keeping assistance, and driver distraction warnings.

¹¹ [New rules on vehicle and automated mobility](#) (European Commission) July 2024

What companies can do

For employers, road safety is more than a moral obligation, it can also be a legal one. In many countries, company vehicles are considered a workplace, which means employers are responsible for ensuring their employees are safe behind the wheel.

An effective fleet safety programme does three things:

- 1. Prevents accidents** by improving driver behaviour
- 2. Strengthens reputation** by showing a commitment to employee welfare and responsible business.
- 3. Reduces costs** through fewer repairs, lower insurance premiums, and less downtime.

At Ayvens, we support customers with our 3d coverage safety programme, which combines driver training, vehicle data monitoring, and strategic insights. This approach helps fleets build a culture of safety while reducing real-world risks.



The 3d coverage programme follows a clear four-step model:



Insights – identify safety risks through data on accidents, claims, and driver behaviour.



Safety goals and roadmap – set clear targets, aligned with EU objectives, to halve injuries and cut collision rates.



Implementation – deliver training, tools, and communication to help drivers improve and adopt safe habits.



Monitoring – track KPIs like claims frequency and injury rates and adjust policies accordingly.

By turning data into action, fleets can make measurable improvements and move closer to zero avoidable accidents.

Conclusion

More than 1.19 million people die in road traffic accidents worldwide every year. In Europe, progress has slowed, and vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists, remain at high risk.

The EU's goal of halving deaths and serious injuries by 2030 is achievable, but only with stronger action from governments, consistent enforcement across borders, and real commitment from businesses.

At Ayvens, we believe companies can make a major difference. By embedding driver safety in fleet policies, using data to drive change, and supporting drivers with the right tools and training, we can reduce accidents, save lives, and protect communities.

Safer driving benefits everyone: fewer collisions, lower costs, healthier employees, and stronger businesses. Zero avoidable accidents is not just a vision it's a goal we share with our customers.

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