

Qatar launches National Road Safety Strategy



By David Salt and Emma Higham

On January 13th, 2013 the Minister of State for Interior Affairs, HE Sheikh Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Chairman of the National Road Safety Committee, launched the 10-year National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) which seeks to raise road safety awareness and ultimately to reduce the number of serious injuries and deaths suffered in traffic accidents in Qatar.

This new initiative to promote road safety builds on the provisions of Decree No.(19) of 2007 which sets out the provisions of the Qatar Traffic Law (Traffic Law) which replaced and augmented the provisions of the previous Traffic Law (Law No.(13) of 1998).

Terms

Some material definitions include:

- **Vehicle**, being all types of land transportation designed to be pulled on wheels or tracks and a **Motor Vehicle**, being a Vehicle which operates with an engine, including all kinds of automobile, including cars, minibuses, trucks and taxis.
- **Driver**, being a person who controls the direction of the Vehicle or the animals pulling it.
- **Road**, being any path, whether enclosed or open, where Vehicles and/or people can pass either with or without permission.

Registration

All Motor Vehicles must be registered with the competent authority in order to operate in compliance with the Traffic Law. Proof of ownership together with the current registration fees must be submitted before a certificate of registration is issued.

Licence

All Motor Vehicles once registered must be licensed. In order to obtain a licence the owner of the Motor Vehicle must prove that the Motor Vehicle is registered, road worthy and insured. Licences must be displayed prominently and must be replaced within 30 days of expiry.

In addition to the Motor Vehicle requiring a licence, its Driver, with some exceptions, will also require a licence. Applicants must be Qatari, over eighteen years of age, in good health, not convicted of a crime and must have passed the current examination requirements. Non-Qatari applicants will usually be issued with a licence if they can prove that they are validly working and residing in Qatar.

Licences for both Motor Vehicles and Drivers and proof of registration must be carried by Drivers at all times.

Administrative Measures and Procedures

The Traffic Law contains some forty detailed articles setting out the responsibility of Drivers, Passengers and Pedestrians on Roads. Where a Driver breaches any of the provisions of the

Traffic Law the competent authority has various means of penalising him or her, including, revocation of driving licence, for a period not exceeding ninety days. In some cases the Motor Vehicle may be impounded for the same period where the Driver is for instance, driving after his or her Driver's licence has been revoked, driving recklessly, or violating traffic signals.

Impounded Motor Vehicles will only be returned to the owner when the initial breach has been remedied and any fines paid. Any Motor Vehicles impounded for more than six months may be sold and the proceeds used to settle any fines.

Penalties

The Traffic Law also provides a point structure for traffic offences. A serious breach such as running a red light will attract seven points whereas a lesser offence such as driving a Motor Vehicle emitting noxious gases will attract three points.

Depending on the number of points a Driver collects and how many times he or she has reached that number of points his or her licence may be revoked.

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