



16 STORY IDEAS



IN THIS BOOKLET WE USE A BASIC FORMAT — WHAT IS MY STORY’S FOCUS? WHO SHOULD I TALK TO? WHAT DO I ASK? — TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH VARIOUS KINDS OF ROAD SAFETY STORIES. THEY RANGE FROM SIMPLE COVERAGE OF A ROAD CRASH TO MORE AMBITIOUS STORIES ON ROAD SAFETY AS A CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE. THE LIST IS BY NO MEANS EXHAUSTIVE. ITS PURPOSE IS TO POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND HELP YOU THINK ABOUT VARIOUS WAYS TO APPROACH ROAD SAFETY STORIES IN A WIDER CONTEXT.

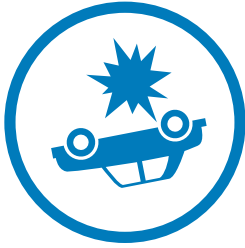
FIVE TIPS TO SHIFT FROM CRASH REPORTING TO ROAD SAFETY REPORTING

By Subhendu Ray, Editor,
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Subhendu Ray is former Assistant Editor at *The Hindustan Times* in Delhi. In that role, he graduated from city traffic police beat to road safety beat and published tens of in-depth feature stories on a variety of topics related to road traffic injuries and road safety.

1. A road crash is not just a random incident: dig deep and ask why it happened.
2. Keep a record of your road crash stories, reuse the material, make links, and look beyond the single event.
3. Do not consider that a fatal crash is “covered” just because you wrote about it when it happened. Follow up on it, and write about it until the reasons for the crash have been fully investigated.
4. Don’t wait for a crash to happen; write on trends and get the experts’ views.
5. While writing a story, keep in mind that you and your readers are all road users: what you write about applies to you all.



what is my story's focus?

→ A fatal crash

who should I talk to?

→ Police and other first responders at the scene; police commanders

what do I ask?

→ What caused the crash?
→ What are the risk factors related to the crash?
→ Is there anything that could have prevented the incident?
→ What are traffic police doing to prevent these situations?
→ What could police do differently? → What type of data systems are in place to record crashes? → Are these systems interlinked with those of other relevant entities?



what is my story's focus?

→ Law enforcement

who should I talk to?

→ Senior police officials, political leaders, legal professionals, road safety experts.

what do I ask?

→ Are road safety laws consistently enforced? → If not, what is the reason –lack of resources such as manpower, equipment or finances? Corruption? → Can traffic police safely enforce traffic laws? → Are there measures in place to protect them from being injured while on duty?



what is my story's focus?

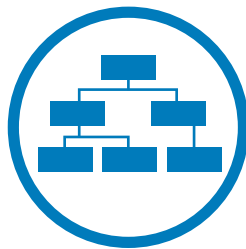
→ A specific road safety problem that you have identified and a potential solution

who should I talk to?

→ Government officials from the relevant transport agency or ministry, road safety experts from academia or from NGOs

what do I ask?

→ How do you define the problem?
→ What is the evidence that supports this conclusion?
→ How can the problem be fixed?
→ Is there evidence to support the proposed solution?
→ What have neighbouring countries done? → What are the main obstacles to fixing the problem?



what is my story's focus?

→ A “big picture” road safety management story

who should I talk to?

→ Government officials from the ministry of health, interior or transport; other lead agencies (e.g. road safety authority or boards)

what do I ask?

→ Who is responsible for road safety in the country?
→ How is road safety managed?
→ How does the responsible agency coordinate with relevant governmental institutions?
→ What needs to be improved?
→ What types of data systems are in place? Are they inter-linked, e.g. how are injuries and fatalities recorded?
→ Who has access to that information? → How are the data used to improve the safety of roads?



what is my story's focus?

→ Specific groups of road users

who should I talk to?

→ Road users' organizations in your country, such as bicyclists, pedestrians, taxi drivers, traffic officers. In addition, people witnessing the problem such as street vendors

what do I ask?

→ What are the dangers or hazards facing a specific group of users? → Why are they different from other road users? → What data are available on this group? → Can these users be protected by a specific legislation or infrastructure? → What are the best practices in this area? → What is the evidence for them? → Are best practices applicable to the reality in your country? → How and why?



what is my story's focus?

→ Road safety as a local public health issue

who should I talk to?

→ Hospital and clinic administrators, ministry of health, senior police officials and road safety experts

what do I ask?

→ What percentage of your hospital or clinic intake is for road traffic injuries? → What type of care do people injured in traffic need? → What is the average time they spend at your facility? → What is the average cost of the care? → What happens to the patients once they leave your facility? → What resources are needed to respond to the problem: beds? specialists? operating rooms? X-ray machines? emergency units? recovery units?



what is my story's focus?

→ Services for post-crash care

who should I talk to?

→ Rehabilitation and physiotherapy centres and victims and victims' associations

what do I ask?

→ What percentage of your patients were injured in traffic crashes? → What are the physical challenges they face? → How does their life change after a serious injury? → What happens to the patients once they leave your facility? → What is the average cost and duration of services for one injured person? → What are the challenges of working with people seriously injured in road traffic crashes?



what is my story's focus?

→ Emergency services

who should I talk to?

→ Emergency medical service personnel and managers, both private and public, hospital emergency room personnel

what do I ask?

→ What emergency services are available in your country? → What services are lacking? → Who pays? What are the pros and cons of each type of service and of privately owned providers and public ones? → What do hospital emergency room personnel say about the quality of local emergency services? → What complications result when crash victims are taken to hospital by untrained people? → Are there laws to protect lay people who voluntarily help people involved in a crash from lawsuits?



what is my story's focus?

→ Standards and technology as part of the solution

who should I talk to?

→ Industry and academic experts, personnel at testing facilities, staff from Global NCAP, consumer groups, police officials and road safety experts

what do I ask?

→ What are the latest technological solutions to prevent certain behaviour or to enforce legislation? → Which vehicle manufacturers have the best safety records? → Are there laws mandating safety features in vehicle? → Are there laws on standards of safety equipment, such as helmets? → How do local laws measure up to international standards? → Are standards available and accessible to all and enforced at industry and user level?



what is my story's focus?

→ Availability and affordability of safety measures or interventions

who should I talk to?

→ Consumer organizations, market research agencies, retailers, international organizations such as Global NCAP

what do I ask?

→ What is available on the market? → Do the products on the market such as helmets and child restraints meet legal standards? → What do consumers think about these products? → What do market research studies say about consumer attitudes towards these products and consumer behaviour?



what is my story's focus?

→ Road safety as a political and development priority

who should I talk to?

→ Politicians from various representative parties, especially during election periods, or candidates, mostly during election periods; officials from relevant government agencies, road safety experts and road safety NGOs

what do I ask?

→ Have any local or national politicians made road safety a political priority? → What issues are they raising and why do they think it should be a priority? → What is the rationale behind making road safety a development priority? → What is the evidence behind that? → Are there data to support the argument for making road safety a development priority?



what is my story's focus?

→ Alternative transport as a safer and greener alternative.

who should I talk to?

→ Environmentalist or environmental organizations, urban planners, especially those working on sustainable mobility or alternative transport models

what do I ask?

→ What are the viable transport alternatives in your city? → Is anyone promoting these alternatives? → What are the economic and health benefits of these alternative forms of transport? → Is there a relation between safer roads and more liveable cities? → What is “sustainable mobility”, and how does it relate to road safety?



what is my story's focus?

→ Safer roads and better transport infrastructure

who should I talk to?

→ Road safety engineers, infrastructure specialists, including those from the World Bank, iRap and the European Commission

what do I ask?

→ How can we build roads that are both safe and efficient?
→ How much does it cost to include safety in the construction of roads? → Are there related statistics?
→ Who decides what safety norms are to be included and how?
→ Do local laws require safety features to be built into new roads? → How equitable is the traffic and road environment and the infrastructure?
→ Does it include the features and needs of vulnerable road users?



what is my story's focus?

→ Economic cost-benefit analysis of road safety

who should I talk to?

→ Economists, especially those specializing in health costs and development, international organizations, government ministries, investors and business people, development specialists

what do I ask?

→ How does the cost of prevention compare with that of care? → What is the impact of traffic injuries and fatalities on GDP? → How are indirect costs calculated?
→ Is there a correlation between road traffic injuries and poverty? → Does a poor road safety record put off investors and slow economic development?



what is my story's focus?

→ Road safety legislation

who should I talk to?

→ Legal experts, legislators,
road safety interest groups,
police, research organizations
and academics specializing
in road safety

what do I ask?

→ What is missing or wrong with the legislation of the country? → Which countries have the best road safety laws? → What makes a good road safety law, and why? → Where can I find information on best practices? → Should compromises be made to ensure that the laws can be implemented and enforced in a particular country? → How is input from stakeholders used to shape legislation? → Are road safety laws reviewed and updated? → How frequently? → How is the public notified of changes?

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