

Leidschendam, 29 April 2009

**30 km/h roads much safer than 50 km/h roads**

*An extra one third decrease of in-patients possible*

**30 km/h roads are considerably safer than 50 km/h roads. It is, however, possible to reduce the number of serious casualties still further. This is the research conclusion in the report [Pedestrian and cyclist road safety on 30 km/h access roads](#) published by SWOV Institute for Road Safety Research. The report only investigates crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists on 30 km/h roads.**

Since 1989, more than 30,000 kilometres of road length have been converted into 30 km/h access roads. These roads are much safer for pedestrians and cyclists than 50 km/h roads. In spite of this, between 1995 en 2007 the number of severely injured pedestrians and cyclists in collisions with motor vehicles has increased from 27 to 590. The annual number of fatalities increased from 3 to 16. For a large part this can be attributed to the increase in the number of 30 km/h roads, but particularly the number of casualties among cyclists showed a more rapid increase.

It is important that the speed limit on a 30 km/h road is a credible limit. At present this is not the case on many roads and drivers are inclined to drive faster. If all 30 km/h roads were to have a credible speed limit, this would save 200 severe injury casualties annually, especially among cyclists. This amounts to a decrease of one third.

In crashes on intersections involving cyclists the large number of crashes on priority intersections is remarkable. Such intersections do not really belong in Zones 30. Also in this situation a credible speed limit can reduce the number of casualties.

Approximately two thirds of the crashes involving children between the ages of 0 and 9 years-old happen while crossing the road. Suitable measures that make safe crossing possible are lacking at three quarters of the locations. This measure can save a maximum of 50 casualties per year.

Converting 50 km/h roads into 30 km/h roads has resulted in a substantial decrease of the number of casualties among pedestrians and cyclists. Therefore SWOV recommends continuing the conversion of residential roads into 30 km/h access roads with an optimal layout. To do this, however, it is necessary to determine the characteristics of the ideal 30 km/h road. SWOV also recommends tightening and elucidating the present standards for an optimal layout of 30 km/h roads. Furthermore, it is necessary to investigate which layout criteria priority intersections in Zones 30 are required to meet.

SWOV report R-2006 [\*Pedestrian and cyclist road safety on 30km/h access roads\*](#) is available in pdf. The report is in Dutch, but it has an English summary.