

Entire police force to watch roads for unsafe drivers

Patrols now authorised to flag down drivers, issue spot fines

- By Siham Al Najami, Staff Reporter
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Dubai: Drivers beware. The next time you weave through lanes, be aware that chances are now greater for a police officer to flag you down for violating Dubai's traffic rules.

A new rule implemented beginning this week gives the approximately 20,000 members of the Dubai Police force the authority to issue traffic fines and impound vehicles whose registration has expired.

Earlier, only traffic police officers totalling about 800 could issue such fines.

The new regulation is aimed at curbing the number of road violations and ensure motorists are more conscious of their driving, said Major General Mohammad Saif Al Zafein, Director of the General Department of Traffic at Dubai Police.

All access

"Any officer stopping a motorist for any road violation will have access to his/her traffic violation record and will be able to issue a fine or take action in coordination with the traffic department," said Al Zafein.

Senior traffic officers will monitor the roads day and night. "I will personally take to the roads to monitor the driving of motorists and issue fines. This is being done to change the general perception about senior officers and that it is the duty of every officer to monitor driving habits. And I believe when motorists see that officers are present to ensure they follow the rules they will be more conscious," Al Zafein said.

In the first quarter of 2009, the total number of traffic fines issued totalled 727,054. This year, the figures dropped to 608,776.

This drop in fines is attributed to many reasons but one of them is due to the increase in patrols monitoring the streets.

"Patrol units from police stations backed-up traffic officers to curb violations," he said.

According to Al Zafein, the number of on-the-spot fines issued to motorists in the first quarter this year reached 278,964, compared to 251,336 in the same period last year.

Truck drivers committed 6,416 offences in the first quarter of 2010 compared to 1,852 during the same period in 2009. There were 3,884 motorists who were caught jumping red lights in the first quarter of 2010 compared to 2,612 in 2009.

"The number of accidents and injuries has decreased, and that is because a lot of people are taking more precautions now, such as fastening their seatbelts," said Al Zafein.

- 800: traffic police officers in Dubai
- 20,000: approximate number of personnel in police force
- 608,776: traffic fines issued in first quarter
- 278,964: on-the-spot traffic fines issued

First quarter traffic violators

The three most dangerous roads with the highest number of fatalities are Emirates road, Dubai Bypass road and Dubai-Al Ain road.

In the first quarter of 2010, 62 people were killed whereas it was 69 in the first period of 2009

"The most dangerous road in the emirate so far is the Emirates road which holds the highest number of fatalities. This is for several reasons such as the existence of both trucks and cars on one road, and the reckless driving that occurs there," according to Maj Gen Mohammad Saif Al Zafein, Director of the General Department of Traffic at Dubai Police.

The indicator of traffic fatalities that the department aims to reach is 11.8 person for every 100,000 of the population a decline to last year's indicator which reached 12.9.

"From the statistics of the first quarter of 2010 it is idealistic to meet this indicator thus we have a range from 11.8 to 12.5," said Maj Gen Al Zafein.