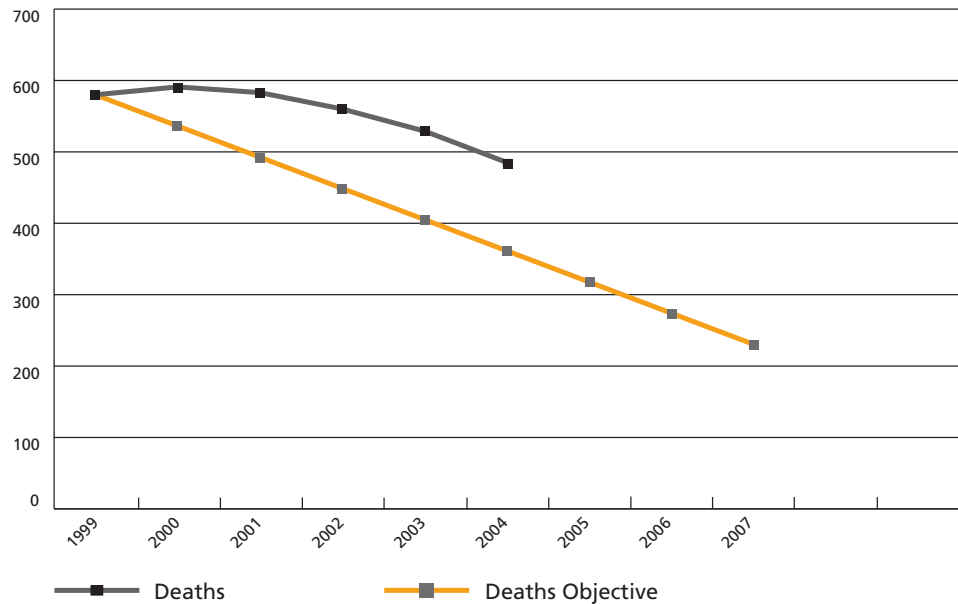


## 6.24 SWEDEN



**General Road Safety:** Sweden's deaths continue to drop although it will be difficult to reach the 2007 target. Sweden has one of the lowest fatality rates per million in the EU at 54 in 2004. The National Road Administration has the overall sectoral responsibility for the entire road transport system. The Road Safety Office has sectoral responsibility for speed, seat belt use, drink-driving and road building. An 11 point programme on improving road traffic safety was published in 1999 and set a 2007 target for reducing road deaths and accidents. It also included a priority on 'handling of traffic offences'. "Vision Zero" has provided the long-term guidelines for Swedish Road Safety policy since 1997. A bill on "continued action for road safety" (Government Bill 2003/04:160), proposed that the long-term goal of road safety initiatives remain the same. One of the measures included in the bill was the need to develop support systems and more effective surveillance to encourage compliance with road traffic laws.

The police are vested with the authority to develop new strategies and modify existing ones for the enforcement of traffic rules. It is the task of Sweden's 650 traffic police to enforce traffic law. A new Swedish National Police Plan was presented to start in January 2006. It is then up to the 21 counties to set up regional plans. Accordingly, traffic safety varies from county to county.

**Speed:** As past of the 2003 Road Safety Bill the National Road Administration has been given the task of developing a strategy for gradually adjusting speed limits based on Vision Zero. Sweden employs a mixture of mobile laser and fixed camera devices to enforce speed limits. About 350 speed cameras are installed in places where there is a high death rate. Enforcement is targeted on high risk accident sites, around sensitive areas such as schools, and on secondary roads. The Road Safety Bill (2003) appointed a committee of inquiry to examine the possibility of extending the use of automatic speed control systems using speed cameras. If there are no budget limitations, Sweden aims to install a total of 700 boxes with 700 cameras linked to a new digital online system by 2007.

**Alcohol:** Sweden has long tested a high percentage of its drivers for drinking. Every driver who is stopped for whatever reason is automatically breath tested. In Sweden, the legal blood alcohol level is 0.2mg/ml. A special provision exists for drivers who have their driving license for less than two years. In case of suspension they must re-take both the theory and practical driving tests. The Road Safety Bill (2003) proposed granting the police the right to confiscate property (car-keys) to prevent an alcohol-related offence. Improvements have been made recently with better technology for roadside checks which have been introduced in some police patrol cars

**Seat belts:** An enhanced enforcement operation was carried out in 2002 which combined with information and a doubling of the on-the-spot fines. This resulted in a 5% increase in wearing of seat belt wearing from 79% to 84%. Further seat belt campaigns linked to enforcement have led to further increases in wearing rates. Seat belt checks are undertaken in combination with other checks on all roads at all times. Enforcement is concentrated in urban areas where the seat belt wearing rate can be as low as 60%. So-called "blitz" enforcement actions of one week are repeated in Sweden every 6 months.

**Follow-up of offences:** All detected alcohol and seat belt offences are followed up. Sanctions vary according to severity. For speeding offences, the legal responsibility rests with the driver where recognition problems arise. There are discussions about shifting the responsibility to the owner.

**Information:** The presence of automated speeding cameras is indicated on the roadside, this includes information that personal data will be registered according to the legislation. Campaigns are run by the National Society for Road Safety, Road Administration and local authorities. There were no nationwide speeding campaigns in 2003/4. A "Don't Drink and Drive Campaign" has been run by the Swedish National Road Administration 2003-2007 targeting young people. The Swedish police join in on the annual TISPOL enforcement campaigns. The police also conduct two seat belt wearing campaigns linked to enforcement annually. The police communicate the impact of their enforcement activities and results in, for example, higher seat belt wearing rates and saved lives to the media. Sweden has also participated in the EU Euchires campaign aimed at increasing safety restraint use of young children.

In conclusion, speed enforcement has led to an increase in speeding offences from 2003 to 2004. New speed cameras have reduced deaths at camera sites by 70% and the number of people injured by 40%. Speeds have been reduced by 5 km/h at fixed camera sites. Random breath tests increased slightly to 1.6 million in 2004. Numbers of seat belt checks are not collected in Sweden. Offences rose slightly from 2003 to 48,344 in 2004. Seat belt wearing rates remain high in Sweden.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop the automatic speed enforcement network.
- Introduce owner responsibility in following up offences.
- Re-start nationwide speeding campaigns linked to enforcement.