This research paper comes as part of the Higher Traffic Council’s (HTC) efforts to prepare studies, researches, and awareness campaigns on scientific bases to improve traffic services in Kuwait and to present those interested in this field with a full view of the traffic situation in the country in terms of violations and accidents.

The paper, entitled “Prospective view of traffic problems in Kuwait,” was prepared by HTC Secretary Colonel Dr. Abdullah Al-Traiji, head of Kuwait University’s geographic information consultation unit Dr. Jassem Al-Ali, and head...
of HTC’s information unit
Captain Abdulillah Al-
Abdulsalam.
It focuses on population
demography and its
relation to granting drivers’
licenses, the number of
licensed vehicles, traffic
accidents, and subsequent injuries (slight, severe)
and deaths.
It also offers a prospective based on projected
population growth and forecasts the number of
accidents, injuries and deaths that may occur in
the future.

Population distribution

To begin with, the study indicated that Kuwait’s
population stood at around 1.5 million in 1990,
of which 58% were non-nationals. In 2006, there
were more than three million people in the country,
with 53% non-nationals. Statistics show that in
1999, population concentration was in Hawally
Governorate and then shifted to Farwaniya
Governorate, mainly due to
expatriates.

Accident frequency

The study showed that the
number of traffic accidents was
constantly growing, and that
in 1995 this number stood at
24,045 and then almost tripled
to 60,410 in 2006.
It said that between 1995 and
2001, there was an increase of
3.5 to 5.6% in traffic accidents,
while between 2002 and 2004
this was between 17.3 and
23%. It also indicated that most
accidents occurred in the
governorates of the Capital
(Asima) and Hawally,
followed by Farwaniya.
This is mainly due to the
flow of cars to and from
government institutions,
private companies, and
shopping centers that are located in these areas.
Moreover, the study showed a drop in the number
of injuries and that there was fluctuation in terms of
severity. However, there was a rise in the number
of traffic-related deaths over the past decade.

Injuries and deaths

Ironically, the study showed there was almost
an equal number of slight injuries in the six
governorates between 2004 and 2006, while
Capital and Jahra governorates recorded an
increase between 1995 and 2001. Ahmadi
Governorate also witnessed an increase between
2001 and 2003, and there was an especially large
hike in 2002 in the same governorate.
As for serious or severe injuries, there was an increase in Jahra between 1995 and 2001, while Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate was the one with the least injuries. The number of injuries for all six governorates fluctuated between 1995 and 2006.

In terms of traffic-related deaths, these increased over the past decade and the increase was especially evident in Jahra and Ahmadi between 2002 and 2006, while again in Mubarak Al-Kabeer the numbers were at their lowest.

Meanwhile, the number of deaths in Farwaniya, Ahmadi and Jahra fluctuated between 1995 and 1998 and increased in Hawally between 1999 and 2000.

If we compare the number of accidents, injuries and deaths, we find that the number of injuries is low when compared to accidents between 1995 and 2006, where the total number of injuries and deaths ranged from 1,222 and 2,564 while the number of accidents was between 64,000 and 60,000.

**Missing data**

The study noted that there was some important information that had to be reported in order for the study to be complete, as there was no comprehensive system for recording reported accidents and classifying their types in the different governorates. Furthermore, statistics published by the Traffic Department’s information and statistics unit do not show the actual number of accidents and injuries because some traffic-affiliated departments fail to deliver all statistics. There is also no accurate description of the type of injuries due to lack of coordination between the traffic and health sectors in the country.

**Vehicles**

The study showed a 6 to 9% annual increase in the number of vehicles, with the exception of 2003 when the increase was 4%, and that the greatest increase of 9% was between 2004 and 2005. Also, it indicated that the greatest number of vehicles were registered in Capital, Hawally and Farwaniya, and that there was a general increase in licensed private cars compared to construction and public transport vehicles.

**Drivers’ licenses and accidents**

Moreover, the study showed constant growth in the number of drivers’ licenses granted between 2000 and 2004, while the increase was 22% in 2005. However, in 2006, this increase dropped to 3% due to the issuance of regulations for granting expatriates drivers’ licenses. When comparing granted licenses
to the number of accidents in three periods (1995, 2000, 2006), there is a clear increase in accidents. Accident frequency rose in all governorates with the increase of granted licenses in 2006.

Violations

As to the types of violations, we find direct tickets to be far greater than indirect ones between 1997 and 1999, while in 2000 and 2001 indirect tickets increased due to the use of cameras. Many of these were not listed under the governorates where they were recorded, while is yet another problem with the recording and classification of tickets and traffic violations.

In the interest of research, the paper classified violations and tickets according to their nature, thereby allowing researchers to benefit from them in their work:
- Behavioral: intentional violations when driving
- Administrative: failing to carry documents (driver’s license, vehicle license)
- Technical: failing to meet vehicle safety requirements

The study showed that most violations were in this order: behavioral, administrative, technical. It also showed that traffic awareness was “absent” despite awareness campaigns of the traffic sector, indicating a need for increasing these efforts.

Future population growth

The study showed that population growth would continue to increase and that by 2020 there would be more than eight million people living in the country, with expatriates concentrated in Farwaniya and Hawally. This growth must be accompanied by horizontal and vertical infrastructure expansion. The number of accidents recorded in 2006 reached 60,000, and this is expected to reach 80,000 by 2010, only four years from now, and for the concentration to be in Capital and Hawally. It called for conducting specific researches to determine factors contributing to accidents, as well as placing legislations and adopting mechanisms to curb speed, which has grave social and economic consequences.

Injuries, deaths and violations

The research paper showed a conflict in analytical statistics related to traffic injuries, as they show a drop in number in coming years, clearly far from projections that indicate an increase in the number of traffic-related injuries.

It also noted that the number of deaths in 2006 stood at 460 and would rise to 580 by 2010 due to speeding and lack of abidance by traffic regulations. Most of the victims will be youth, and this is a loss that cannot be compensated. It added that the number of traffic violations in 2006 was at 2,757,485 and would reach 6,638,940 by 2010. It stressed the need for a study to determine reasons leading some drivers to disrespect laws so as to place an effective awareness plan.

Moreover, the study made a number of recommendations that would have a positive impact on Kuwait’s traffic situation.