

Keynote Address
Hon. Fayval Williams
Minister of Science, Energy & Technology
JGRA Road Safety Blood Drive
June 5, 2019 @ 10 AM

Salutations:

- **The Hon. Norma Walters, CD- Custos Rotulorum, St. Ann**
- **Mr. Mikael Phillips- Opposition Spokesman, Transport & Mining**
- **ACP Calvin Allen-Head of the Public Safety and Traffic Enforcement Branch**
- **Mr. Bobby Hammond- Road Safety Chairman & Director**
- **Mr. Victor Anderson-Programme Coordinator, National Road Safety Council**
- **Mr. Gregory Chung- JGRA President**
- **Mr. Jeremy Barnes- Chief Operating Officer, FESCO**
- **Members of the media**
- **Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen**

A very pleasant morning to you all!

The pleasure is mine to share in the Jamaica Gasolene Retailers Association's annual Road Safety launch and Blood Drive.

It is my first appearance in a forum of this kind since becoming Energy Minister and I appreciate the welcome and the message that you are spreading to so many Jamaicans.

As a major player in our petroleum industry, the JGRA has supported this initiative for over 30 years and along the Road Safety Unit, the Ministry of Transport and many partners, you have kept the road safety message at the forefront of the Jamaican consciousness and for that you must be commended.

Road safety & Jamaica

Ladies and gentlemen, the World Bank reports that each year, 1.25 million people lose their lives on the world's roads and another 20 to 50 million are seriously injured.

Locally, on a daily basis we hear of horrific crashes which maim and rob the lives of so many promising men and women of this country.

The news is even more devastating when we realize that the lives of our children, the future of this nation, have been lost in road accidents.

For the past few years, more than 300 Jamaicans have died annually on our nation's roads. **These are over 300 lives too many!**

Figures from the Road Safety Unit show that:

- 389 road fatalities were recorded in 2018
- So far, with just five months into 2019, over 186 persons have died on our roads

This situation is untenable!

Ladies and gentlemen, the carnage on our roads robs Jamaica of innovators, problem solvers, budding scientists, entrepreneurs and a host of professionals, that had they been afforded the opportunity to live, would have contributed greatly to this country.

Cost of road traffic deaths

Road traffic deaths are also costly!

In addition to the emotional and personal losses that road crashes incur, the impact to our productivity, economy and health care system is just as great.

The World Health Organization state that:

- Road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product (GDP).

A 2017 World Bank report entitled, "**The High Toll of Traffic Injuries**," state that:

- Road traffic injuries are the single largest cause of mortality and long term disability among people aged 15-29, which is the prime working age and tertiary level cohort;
- The report noted that welfare benefits equivalent to **6 to 32% of the national GDP** can be realized from reducing road deaths and injuries by 50% over 24 years; and finally,
- Actions to reduce road traffic injuries can help countries increase productivity, enhance the well-being of their populations, and build **human capital**.

Charge to Road Users

Ladies and gentlemen, **road safety is everybody's responsibility!**

As Energy Minister, I have a personal interest in the road safety message.

From the loading racks to the service stations, petroleum fuels our transport sector. When we examine our petroleum consumption activities, road and rail transportation accounted for 33% of petroleum consumed in 2018.

It is my charge to every motorist, that when you pull up at the pumps, **fuel up to live not to die! Too many lives are being lost on our nation's roads!**

Drive with care, be patient, and look out for others. **The life you save may very well be your own.**

Closing

As I close, I must reiterate that we owe it to ourselves and each other to be safe on our roads.

My commendations once again to the JGRA and its many partners for championing this cause. Continue to spread the road safety message so that more lives can be saved.

Thank you.