

Decade of Action for Global Road Safety

May 11, 2011 marks the official launch of the Decade of Action for Global Road Safety. The goal is to raise awareness of road safety's impact on public health and reduce road crashes by 2020. We're using this date to remind Americans living in or visiting Slovakia of some useful tips on driving here.

Road Conditions:

Roads in Slovakia typically are safe and well maintained. Four-lane highways exist on main routes of western and middle part of Slovakia, but most roads outside of built-up areas are two lanes only. Be careful – on smaller roads, aggressive drivers can attempt to pass at unsafe speeds and pose a serious hazard. Due to poor lighting and narrow, winding roads, we do not recommend nighttime driving outside of built-up areas.

From November through March there is often heavy snowfall, which is not adequately cleared from many rural roads. Roads in the mountainous northern part of the country are particularly prone to hazardous conditions during winter months. Winter tires are required by law when there are snowy conditions, and chains are necessary in certain mountainous areas.

In Slovakia, **headlights must be used at all times (day and night) throughout the year**. The maximum legal speed on highways is 130 kilometers per hour (78 mph). On smaller roads the maximum speed is 90 kph (54 mph). The limit in towns is 50 kph (31 mph). It is strictly prohibited to use cellular phones while driving. Safety reflection vests and first aid kits must be located in each vehicle. Seat belts are compulsory and baby car seats are required for all children under 36 kg.

Driving under the influence of alcohol is strictly prohibited. The blood alcohol tolerance level is zero percent. Penalties for drivers involved in car accidents involving injury or death are decided by a court of law. Penalties for minor offenses are not generally large, but foreigners are sometimes targeted for additional sums. If you suspect this has occurred, you should ask for a written receipt and note the name and number of the traffic officer imposing the fine.

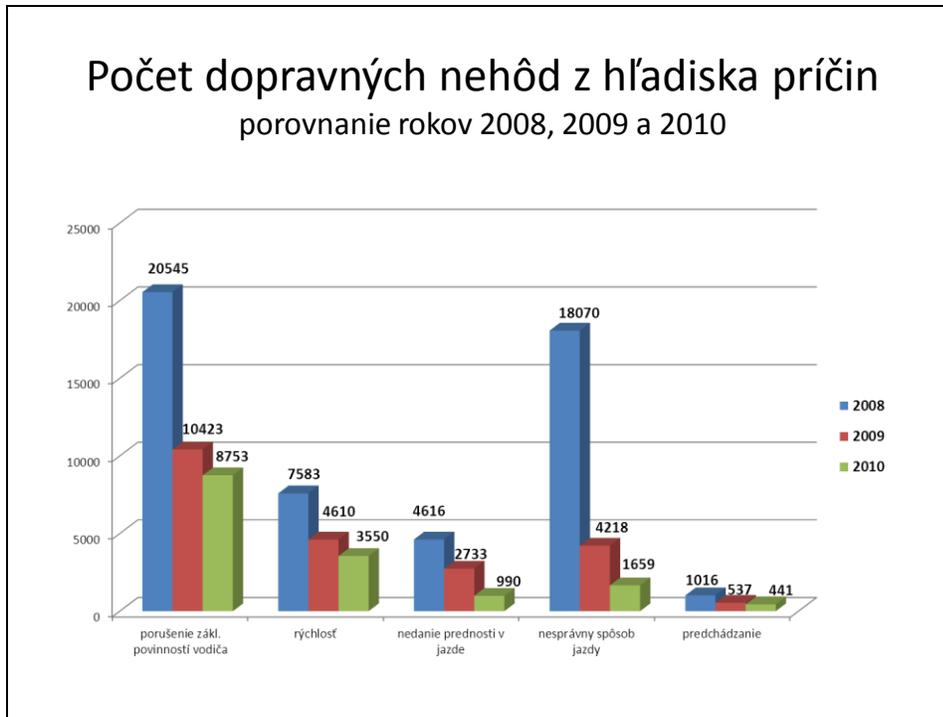
If you wish to find out more about the Decade of Action for Global Road Safety, please visit the WHO web page at http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/meetings/2011/road_safety/en/.

To get better idea on traffic safety in Slovakia for the past several years, please see the charts below:

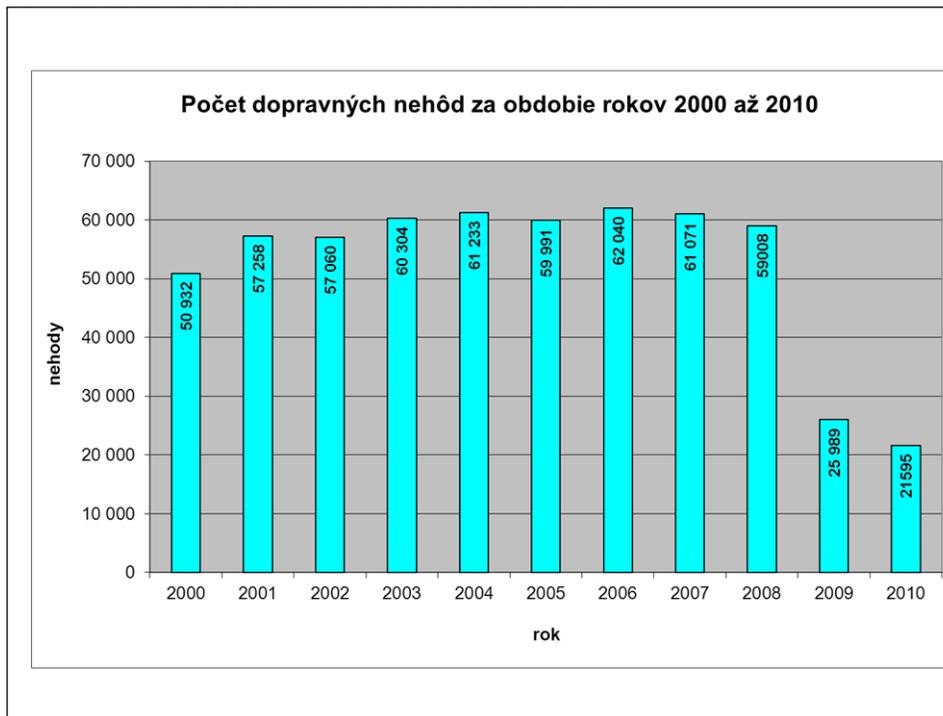
Number of Car Accidents Based on the Reason

Comparison of the years 2008, 2009, 2010

Reasons: violation of essential rules by drivers, speeding, violation of right of way, incorrect driving, passing on two-lane road



Number of Car Accidents For the Years 2000 - 2010



Source: Ministry of Interior of SR, Press Conference, January 17, 2011

DRIVING IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Austria

Highway decal valid for 10 days for vehicles up to 3,5 t costs 7,90 €.

Winter tire obligation on vehicles up to 3,5 t is valid from November 1 to April 15, if the road condition requires it (generally the same requirement as in Slovakia) applies to both axles with the minimum of 4mm tread profile.

Vehicle over 3,5t must have winter tires on one axle between November 15 and March 15 regardless of road condition.

Czech Republic

Highway decal valid for 10 days for vehicles up to 3,5 t costs 250,- CZK.

Winter tire usage is regulated by the road signs. Vehicles up to 3,5 t must have winter tires on relevant roads from November 1 to March 31 on both axles with profile of 4 mm.

Vehicles over 3,5 t are required to use winter tires on at least one axle wherever the road sign regulates that.

Germany

Good news: No highway decals for vehicles up to 12 t.

Usage of winter tires for vehicles up to 3,5 t remains unchanged, i.e. they are required if roads are covered with snow or ice. Nota bene: In case of traffic accident, for purposes of insurance the vehicle without the winter tires is automatically considered to have caused the accident.

NEW: Vehicles over 3,5 t and buses with more than 8 passengers must be equipped with winter tires if the road condition is winter-like, regardless of period of the year and without time limitation. That means even in case of snowfall in August...

Hungary

4 day highway decal for vehicles up to 3,5 t costs 1 650,- HUF.

Winter tire usage has legal no regulation.

Poland

Vehicles up to 12 t are not subject to road toll. Road toll for vehicles over 12 t remains unchanged. Winter tire usage is not required.