



RoadPeace

The national charity for road crash victims

CRASH
not accident.

Campaign Pack

Help end the
language of denial.

This pack is designed to help you encourage others to stop using the word 'accident' when referring to road danger.

'Accident' *implies* the crash was unpreventable, and that no one was at fault. It is inappropriate, upsetting for families, and serves only to propagate the idea that road deaths are an acceptable pay-off for having roads.

We have created these resources to help you educate and persuade people to stop using the word 'accident', and use 'crash' or 'collision' instead.

- > **Who to target?**
- > **Write to the media and authorities directly**
- > **#crashnotaccident – using social media**

“I can't help but get upset when people call a crash an accident. I lost my leg in a crash with a lorry. It was preventable – and even though the driver didn't intend for the crash to happen, it was still his fault.”

Victoria, crash victim

Who to target?

'Accident' is so widespread, it can be difficult to know where to start. It is worth explaining to anyone who uses it why they shouldn't*, but RoadPeace feels there are two priority groups who need to rectify their language'.

> The media

Use of 'accident' by the media is more damaging than an individual using it, because they reinforce its use. A news report which refers to an 'accident' will have hundreds of thousands of viewers, normalising the word to every single person.

Media examples:

National newspapers, regional newspapers, radio, TV.

> Organisations and bodies whose responsibility it is to respond to and prevent crashes

Use of 'accident' by agencies whose responsibility it is to deal with crashes and victims is extremely damaging. They are often a voice of authority, and therefore the use of the word by them carries more weight. They are also often dealing with victims directly after a crash; using 'accident' directly to a bereaved family can be very hurtful. On top of that, these are the organisations that should know better. They are best placed to understand the effects of language as they deal with victims or policies on how to prevent crashes.

Authority examples:

Government bodies e.g. Department for Transport, Justice bodies e.g. Judges, Coroners, Crown Prosecution Service, Police

What to do

If you see or hear the word 'accident', RoadPeace has produced resources to help you tell them why they shouldn't use it.

> Send them a letter

Download our letter template [here](#). You can edit it, print and post, or copy and paste it into an email.

> Send our briefing sheet

RoadPeace has produced a briefing sheet which explains why the word 'accident' is so damaging. Endorsed by leading health organisations and campaign groups, it's a useful document. Download the briefing sheet [here](#). Print and include in the letter you send, or attach it to your email.

**Remember that compassion is key. People will often not know the implications of the word, and it is easier to persuade someone with understanding than anger.*

Not getting anywhere?

People can sometimes be resistant to change. Keep us updated on progress and email info@roadpeace.org if you have any questions or need any help.

#crashnotaccident

Using social media

Calling out organisations and individuals who should be using appropriate language on social media is effective because it's in the public domain. Not only will they be more likely to engage, other people who see the conversation will learn about **Crash Not Accident**.

What to do

If you see the word 'accident' being used inappropriately, comment on the post. Say why you think using 'accident' is inappropriate and **#crashnotaccident**, as well as **@RoadPeace**

Point them to our **website** with more information. Sometimes you may get a bit of backlash – people don't always like being corrected! But that is ok. Make sure you tag **@RoadPeace**, and we will be on hand to support.

Thank you for your help. Remember to share your successes with us at info@roadpeace.org

