



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF  
TRANSPORT, MR FIKILE MBALULA ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE RELEASE OF THE 2021 FESTIVE  
SEASON FATALITY STATISTICS AT GRASMERE  
TOLL PLAZA ON 18 JANUARY 2022 AT 10H00**

Deputy Minister, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga

Chairperson of the RTMC Board, Mr Zola Majavu

Members of RTMC Board

Acting Director-General, Mr Mthunzi Madiya

Acting CEO of the RTMC, Ms Liana Moolman

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones during the 42 days of the festive season's Arrive Alive campaign and our well wishes to all those who are still recuperating in hospitals and at home.

I also convey a word of gratitude and appreciation to all law enforcement officers, emergency services and health professionals who worked long hours, sacrificing family time, to help us save lives on our roads.

We have just concluded one of the most challenging festive season campaigns, which stretched our resources to the limit, putting a strain on our law enforcement operations.

Over this past festive season, we saw some of the most heart-wrenching crashes claiming many lives in a single crash. On 12 January, a head-on collision claimed 17 lives and injured 8 on the N1 near Mookgophong, Limpopo. The bus driver lost his life along with the passengers due to the bus catching fire that entrapped them inside immediately after impact. In another crash in Mpumalanga, which claimed the life of Emalahleni Municipality Mayor, 3 people died. We have seen a total of 34 major crashes, accounting for 223 fatalities. This is in contrast with the 13 major crashes responsible for 72 fatalities.

Despite the challenges, we remained resolute and persevered through it all.

It is also important to appreciate that the festive season campaign is not implemented in a vacuum, but is firmly located within a broader safety campaign, 365 Days Action Agenda. This is anchored on policy framework that is rooted in law and reinforced by a social pact with the motoring public and organs of civil society to change behaviour on our roads.

Our arsenal of interventions aimed at delivering a reduction of 25% of fatalities on our roads includes policy and legislative interventions. The design of our road traffic management system is premised on the appreciation that while Provincial roads, traffic and parking fall within the ambit of exclusive Provincial legislative competence, maintaining national norms and standards is necessary to ensure effective performance by municipalities of their executive authority.

This is equally true of maintaining economic unity of the republic and arrest the negative impact of road fatalities and crashes on the economy. There is no better illustration of the need to maintain economic unity of the Republic than the reality that the long-term liabilities of the Road Accident Fund are now government's largest contingent liability. We anticipate that claims against the RAF will increase to R518.7 billion in the 2023/2024 financial year.

A fragmented system that fails to recognise the importance of a system grounded on national norms and standards in order to maximise its effectiveness will only result in chaos and serve as a perverse incentive for unlawful behaviour.

This principle is evident in all our laws that regulate road traffic matter in the country, with the primary legislation regulating road traffic being the National Road Traffic Act of 1996.

This law is further bolstered by the Road Traffic Management Act of 1998, which establishes an institutional arrangement that recognises the executive authority of Provinces and municipalities.

The Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offence provides an adjudication system for infringements of the rules of the road determined by the National Road Traffic Act. AARTO is the final piece of the puzzle in the implementation of a new road traffic management system by the democratic state. The importance of AARTO in driving behaviour change of motorist and providing disincentives for unbecoming conduct cannot be overemphasised.

It is for these reasons that we have decided to appeal the ruling of the Pretoria High Court declaring the AARTO Act unconstitutional and invalid.

As we continue to use legislative instruments to strengthen the road traffic regulatory framework, Parliament is currently seized with the proposed amendments to the National Road Traffic Act, to reduce the permissible alcohol limit for motorists. We believe this is an important element in our efforts to arrest the scourge of fatalities on our roads.

The plight of the trucking industry remains on our radar as it plays an important role in contributing to the country's economic growth. We have begun the process to amend our National Road Traffic regulations in order to regulate Professional Driving Permits both within South Africa , SADC , Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and East African Community. This will culminate in the standardization as well as harmonization of protocols with member states of these communities.

We will continue to give impetus to our 24/7, 365-days campaign with high visibility of our integrated law enforcement activities across the country.

From 1 December 2021 to 11 January 2022 we announced various measures that were to be undertaken as part of our Festive Season campaign aimed at promoting safety on our roads. We also called upon South Africans to observe and obey the rules of the road and behave in a manner that would save life and limb.

Our 2021 festive season enforcement targets placed great emphasis on:

- a) Speed reduction
- b) Seatbelt and restraint compliance
- c) Drunk driving
- d) Pedestrian safety and
- e) Patrolling identified dangerous roads/routes at the time when dangerous conditions are prevalent or dangerous behaviour is known to occur

A significant amount of financial resources were invested to promote awareness, intensify law enforcement interventions and exponentially increase visibility of our law enforcement officers.

The back-to-back extended long weekends that characterised the 2021 festive period posed a big challenge to road safety and the rainy weather proved to be a complicating factor. According to the South African Weather Service heavy rains measuring between 100 and 200 millimetres fell in many Provinces during the month of December 2021. In some Provinces, torrential rainfalls measuring between 200 and 500 millimetres were experienced resulting in damage to infrastructure including roads and bridges.

While we note this objective reality, we must equally accept that in a significant number of instances the competence of our drivers leaves much to be desired.

The fact that an overwhelming majority of fatal crashes were because of a single motor vehicle overturning and head-on collisions requires of us to pay serious attention to the competence of our drivers. Our interventions going forward will pay serious attention to this.

During the Festive Season campaign, our traffic law enforcement officers conducted 651 roadblocks throughout the country and they issued 264 690 fines for various traffic offences.

Of particular interest is that 21 431 of these fines were for drivers who failed to wear seatbelts while 22 766 were for people who were driving without licences. It is our intention to ensure that the law bites and driving on our roads without a driving licence carries a heavy penalty, otherwise the mooted points demerit system will make no difference in driver behaviour.

A total of 4 251 un-roadworthy vehicles were discontinued while 4 073 vehicles were impounded.

To clamp down on drunken driving, speed and other moving violations, the officers arrested 6 169 motorists and 1 586 of these were for drunken driving.

A total of 605 drivers were arrested for driving at excessive speeds of between 190 km per hour to well above 220 km per hour. The highest speedster was arrested in Limpopo travelling at 225 km an hour.

Driving under the influence of alcohol, failure to wear a seatbelt, excessive speeding, disregarding road conditions and signs reflect a negative conduct that contributes to fatalities on our roads. This is the reason why human factors contributed 79% to the occurrence of fatal crashes while road factors contributed 11% and vehicle factors 10%. A driver with the highest alcohol level of 2.43mg was arrested in Johannesburg on 22 December 2021.

Our Festive Season campaign statistics reveal that road fatalities increased in seven (7) Provinces and declined in two (2) Provinces. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal are the only provinces that recorded a decline in fatalities while the Northern Cape and Western Cape recorded the highest percentage increases in fatalities.

The main causes of the road fatalities during this period were:

- I. jaywalking
- II. speeding
- III. wet or slippery road surfaces
- IV. overtaking across barrier lines, and
- V. poor visibility.

A total of 1 685 fatalities were recorded over this festive period which is a 14% increase on the previous period.

The Eastern Cape recorded the largest decline in fatalities with a reduction of 7.9% or 210 fatalities compared to the same period last year, when it had 228 fatalities. We want to congratulate and commend the Eastern Cape leadership for the sterling work as they marshalled their troops towards the attainment of this significant reduction.

Similarly, KwaZulu-Natal recorded a significant 6.5% decline in fatalities. The province recorded 275 fatalities as compared to 294 in the same period last year. Keep up the good work and remain shining stars.

It is disturbing to note that the Northern Cape recorded the highest increase of 97%, moving from 33 fatalities in the previous period to 65 in this period.

The Western Cape equally recorded a massive 55.6% increase in the percentage of fatalities moving from 133 fatalities the previous period to 207 in this period. We need to get to the root cause of this drastic increase and address it in a decisive manner.

North-West recorded a 25.3% increase moving from 95 fatalities in the previous period to 119 in this period.

Mpumalanga recorded an increase of 24.3% moving from 152 fatalities in the previous period to 189 in this period.

Limpopo recorded a 16.5% increase moving from 194 fatalities in the previous period to 226 in this period.

Gauteng recorded a 15.5% increase moving from 238 fatalities in the previous period to 275 in this period.

Free State recorded the lowest increase of 7.2% moving from 111 fatalities in the previous period to 119 in this period.

What is alarming is that we have had more fatalities per crash this year compared to the previous periods. This resulted in high passenger fatalities this year compared to the previous period. Passenger fatalities constituted 38% in the current period compared to the previous 32%.

Pedestrian fatalities significantly decreased from 41% previously to 31% in the current reporting period.

Driver fatalities increased from 27% in the previous period to 28% in this period, while cyclist fatalities increase from 1% in the previous period to 3% in the current period.

Most fatal crashes involved light motor vehicles followed by light delivery vehicles, minibuses, and trucks.

The figures indicate that many vehicles involved in fatal crashes had a high number of occupants and most crashes occurred between 17h00 and 19h00 particularly on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Light motor cars contributed 49% to the total crashes followed by light delivery vehicles at 17%. Minibus vehicles contributed 8% and trucks accounted for 6%. The taxi and freight industries must do more to reduce the number of crashes caused by their vehicles as they contributed higher fatalities per crash compared to other vehicles.

Necessary actions will be taken to turn the situation around. Building on the previous and recent experiences, the Department will continue to improve its enforcement policies and strategies, and upscale public safety campaigns. The finalization of the classification of traffic policing as a 7-day job will receive our top-most priority.

In addressing driver competency and putting in place measures to eliminate fraud, we are making significant progress in rolling out computerized learner's licence testing.

Through the RTMC, we are augmenting the capacity of Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs) and will be launching online services in February 2022 to improve service delivery and minimize the need for a motorist to visit a DLTC a number of times. This would mean motorists are able to access services in the comfort of their homes.

Processes to digitalise driving licence renewal procedures are in the pipeline and will result in a paperless process. This will include online eye-testing, where the eye test result will be automatically uploaded and linked to the user application.

Long term interventions include integration of driving licence simulators into the testing procedures. This will entail testing the motorist's level of knowledge of the motor vehicle and rules of the road before actually getting into the vehicle. The recording of the driving licence testing and digitalizing test results will also be part of this innovation. This will also include a new functionality to complete the renewal of driving licences online.

We have, with the publication of the 2022 RTMC Regulations on 14 January 2022, taken the first step towards implementing measures to curb lawlessness on our roads.

The Regulations amongst others, introduce online services to the public, for booking for learner's license tests, renewal of Drivers Licenses, motor vehicle registration and licensing as well as online vehicle licence renewals. This will aid in addressing the corruption associated with the issuing of these licenses and or rendering of the services.

As I conclude, I must recognise and thank those South Africans who continue to obey the laws of the road and made it to their destinations without any incident. This they achieved by simply adhering to the rules of the road, driving within the speed limit, buckling up, avoiding the use of cell phones while driving, using roadworthy vehicles, remaining calm irrespective of challenges confronting them on the roads, taking regular stops to avoid fatigue and avoiding the use of alcohol while driving.

Achieving the goals that we have set for ourselves and achieving a 25% reduction in road fatalities remains a daunting task that we must tackle collectively.

We must stay the course if we are to succeed and work together to change behaviour that perpetuates lawlessness.

We will now commence with the task of planning for the next peak travel period by ensuring that we allocate resources appropriately, that we plan and manage overtime and we reduce fatalities every day of the year.

Though the picture may seem bleak and the hope for those who lost their loved ones may seem like a faint light in a distant horizon, we remain steadfast in our commitment to confront lawlessness and rogue behaviour on our roads. We will forever be inspired to tell the truth no-matter what the circumstances might be. Let me once again reiterate what our fellow freedom fighter Amilcar Cabral once said.

*“Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories.”*

We all shoulder the responsibility to ensure that our behaviour saves life and limb on our roads and we become our brother's and sister's keepers.

I thank you.