



NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

THE IMPACT OF SANS 10399 ON THE BUS INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Road to Safety 2001-2005 Strategy has identified a need for the introduction of a policy that regulates certain operational safety issues for all bus, taxi and freight operators, to ensure that passengers and freight are moved in a safe, reliable and cost effective manner. In order to address this operational safety issues, the Department has decided to commence with the development of a vehicle quality management system for bus operators. The South African Bus Operators Association had already initiated some development work for a quality management tool for the bus industry, this effort has since laid a platform for the development of management system for the bus industry.

The objectives of this code are to provide a basic minimum quality standard that will promote the movement of passengers in a safe, efficient and reliable manner. It is therefore the intention, to create a platform on which transport operators can base their quality policies and to ensure that the quality

systems that are currently being managed by them, meet the highest standards.

More than 1 million passengers are transported on our country's road network daily. These passengers are generally from the poorest communities. They have a right to be transported safely, on suitable and well-maintained vehicles driven by trained and responsible drivers who form part of the value chain. It is therefore, Government's duty to put in place systems in order to ensure that our public transport systems meet these challenges.

It is without doubt that we have a very tight vehicle-manufacturing standard, which equates with any other standard in the world. In fact our vehicle designs and vehicle parts standards is derived for the European Economic Commission for Europe and many of our buses, especially coaches and other luxury buses are fully imported.

The failures in the system, which attributes to bus accidents are inadequate driver training and vehicle maintenance programmes. We have heard of a bus where the brake linings were tied with wire to hold it together. This bus was involved in an accident killing and injuring several passengers. This irresponsible attitude will not any longer be tolerated.

Bus operators are required to develop their own quality management systems, particularly vehicle maintenance programs. The SANS 10399 prescribes that specific safety checks be undertaken daily, and in this regard, a minimum daily safety inspection sheet and scheduled maintenance has been prescribed in the code. Transport operators are also required to develop and implement scheduled maintenance programmes under controlled conditions. This will encourage bus operators to ensure that relevant safety checks are done and corrective actions take place when the standards are not met. The operator is also required to continually review his vehicle quality management system at planned intervals to ensure continuing stability, suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

The code also provides for the development and maintenance of quality systems at top management level, thereby committing management to the goals of the organization in terms of quality and safety of passengers, staff and the community (other road users).

The operator is required to appoint personnel with the appropriate qualifications, training and experience and have a satisfactory knowledge of the job to be performed. The code also requires the operator to provide for refresher courses and continued training for its entire staff. It is expected that professional drivers will receive practical and theoretical training on an ongoing basis. Human errors have played a significant

role in almost all of the 127 fatal accidents involving buses for the first six months of last year. A total of 157 people lost their lives in these accidents. In this regard, adequate and comprehensive driver training cannot be emphasized enough.

Operators will also be required do to extensive route planning, especially those involved in the transportation of tourists and organised parties. Proper route planning, by both the operator and the driver, will ensure that the driver familiarise himself with the route to be taken.

With the introduction of the code, the operator will be subjected to internal and external performance assessments in the form of audits. The audit tool and the enforcement system have not been developed at this point in time. The Department, together with the South African Bus Operators Association and possibly the South African Bureau of Standards and other stakeholders, will hold discussions in developing a suitable performance assessment programme as soon as an implementation plan has been compiled. It is envisaged that the code will be workshopped at suitable locations in the country and that the Department will, with the co-operation of the bus industry, commence with the implementation of pilot projects with the assistance of some of the previously disadvantaged operators and operators with unacceptable high accident rates. The dates for implementation will be announced in due cause.

The advantages of this code includes inter alia:

- it is responsive to the needs of the industry. Such a requirement is one of the first in the world. Operators implementing SANS 10399 will be partly complying to International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9000 quality accreditation system;
- it is applicable to all sectors of the bus industry, including commuter services, tourist services, inter-city services, school services, organised parties and cross-border transport services. Irrespective of the nature and size of the operation, all operators will in future be required to compliance with the requirements of the code;
- it will lead to the improvement in productivity of operators and thereby reducing operating costs. As part of the quality management system, the operator will be required to continually assess the performance of the operation, and thereby make informed decisions based on scientific information obtained from the management system.
it will lead to the reduction in accidents, which would have otherwise be attributed to unfit vehicles and quality system failure. The code also provides for a maintenance guideline for luggage trailers. Those operators using luggage trailers will now be able to also maintain these trailers according to the highest standards.
- it will lead to the reduction in road accidents. As part of the Country's drive to reduce the accidents on our roads, Cabinet has endorsed the Road to Safety

Programme. The publication of the SANS 10399 today is a testimony of Government's seriousness of its intention to create an environment that will lead to the reduction in our road accidents. Even if it takes drastic measures such as this.

There are also other measures in terms of driver training and testing requirements, medical testing for professional drivers and vehicle visibility and pedestrian education, that are currently being addressed. These projects, which are defined in the Road to Safety 2001-2005 Strategy, have all been structured to reduce the carnage on our roads.

Compliance to this code, will initially be voluntary. The Department is pleased with the positive response which the South African Bus Operators Association has displayed both in the development of the code and their request to make this code a mandatory document.

The National Road Traffic Act will be amended in due cause to provide for the compulsory implementation of the code in due cause.

