

Chapter 35

South Africa

*This chapter presents 2015 and 2016 road safety data for South Africa. It looks at trends in traffic and road safety from the years 1990 to 2015 and road user behaviour patterns. This includes regulations on speed, drink driving, drugs and driving, distracted driving, fatigue and seat belt usage. The chapter reviews South Africa's road safety strategy and national targets, along with recently implemented safety measures and current research projects.**

* The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) joined the International Road Traffic and Accident Database group in 2016. Data included in this report have not been validated by IRTAD. All data stem from RTMC. For more information please contact: MagadiG@rtmc.co.za.

South Africa has made strides in reducing road crash fatalities since their peak in 2006. However, numbers still remain high and recent years have seen an increasing trend once again. In 2015, there were 12 944 reported road fatalities, a 2% increase over 2014. In 2016, a total of 14 071 deaths were reported, an increase of 9% over 2015. South Africa's fatality rate in 2016 was at 25.2 per 100 000 inhabitants. Pedestrians accounted for 38% of the fatalities in 2016, with children being particularly affected.

Road safety data collection

Definitions applied in South Africa

- Road fatality: Any person killed during or immediately after a crash, or death directly attributable to a crash within 30 days of such a crash.
- Seriously injured: Any person sustaining injuries to such an extent that hospitalisation is required. Serious injuries include fractures, concussion, internal injuries, severe cuts and lacerations, severe shock, etc. which require medical treatment, hospitalisation and/or confinement to a bed.
- Slightly injured: Any person sustaining minor cuts and bruises, sprains and light shock which may be treated at the scene of the crash or at home.

Data collection

In South Africa, the police and traffic authorities collect motor vehicle crash data using Accident Report (AR) forms. The data collection procedure is conducted on behalf of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), which has a legislative responsibility to report on the information.

Data is then sent to RTMC which generates, consolidates, interprets, analyses and compiles State of Road Safety reports. Fatal crashes are reported within 24 hours using quick response forms. South Africa records fatalities in accordance with the 30 day international standard.

The Culpable Homicide Crash Observation Report (CHoCOR) forms are used to collect fatal crash data on a daily basis. The South African Police Service (SAPS) is the primary source of the fatal crash data. RTMC receives a list of all recorded fatal crashes from SAPS as well as the CHoCOR forms from the various police stations. RTMC then captures, processes and verifies the data in order to compile a consolidated report. There are continuous engagements with provinces to validate the integrity of the submitted information.

The management of road traffic information across the local, provincial and national authorities continues to be ineffective. Police records alone are usually inadequate to carry out an analysis on the nature and consequences of serious injuries and other risk factors associated with crashes. To address this, initiatives are being undertaken to strengthen co-operation between the bodies involved in road traffic data. In an effort to move towards an integrated road traffic information management, a new database is being developed in

collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in partnership with Statistics South Africa (STATS SA).

There is currently a process underway to expand the data sources by obtaining road crash information from other stakeholders.

Information included in this report corresponds to the consolidated set of the SAPS data.

Most recent safety data

Road crashes in 2016 – Provisional data

In 2016, 14 071 road fatalities were reported by RTMC, a 9% increase compared to 2015.

Most road crashes were recorded during the months of April, July, September, October and December with more than 1 000 per month. This is linked to school and work recess periods whereby there is significant amount of travelling.

The main highlights of 2016 in terms of traffic safety are as follows:

- Approval of the national road safety strategy by the National Assembly.
- Establishment of a review committee for road traffic law enforcement to harmonise law enforcement in the country.
- Launch of road safety drama series on a public broadcaster. The drama series was aimed at educating and creating awareness on road safety matters.
- The 3rd National Road Safety Summit (21-22 November 2016). The National Department of Transport, its Road Traffic Entities and public and private stakeholders held a summit which placed emphasis on monitoring mechanisms that will ensure efforts towards reduction of road injuries and fatalities are implemented.
- National Road Traffic *Indaba* (national conference) in December 2016. The *Indaba* focused on the following key areas: improved and integrated law enforcement; best practices in the law enforcement fraternity; economic impact of road crashes; norms and standards of law enforcement; new technologies to improve efficiency in law enforcement; improved working conditions for traffic law enforcement officers.

Road crashes in 2015

In 2015, 12 944 road fatalities were reported by RTMC, a 2% increase compared to 2014.

Trends in traffic and road safety (1990-2016)

Registered vehicles

The number of registered vehicles increased by 2.2% in 2016 when compared to 2015. Passenger cars represent 58% of the motorised fleet, light duty vehicles 20%; trucks 3%, motorcycles 3% and buses and minibuses 3%.

Road safety

Crashes and casualties

Between 1990 and 2000, the reported number of road fatalities fluctuated around 9 500 per annum. After 2000, the number increased significantly and reached a peak in 2006 with more than 15 000 reported road deaths. The country has since implemented a wide range of interventions which have produced positive results and a steady decline in fatal crashes between 2006 and 2014. However, the number of reported road deaths increased again in 2015 and 2016.

Aware of the current road safety challenges, the Department of Transport aims, through its road agencies, to:

- make roads and roadsides safer
- strengthen traffic law enforcement
- set safer speed limits
- promote the development of safer vehicles
- encourage people to behave more safely on the roads.

The support of all stakeholders, communities and individuals is needed for a successful implementation of these measures.

Rates

In 2016, there were 25 road deaths per 100 000 inhabitants. There has been gradual improvement since 1990, when the rate was of 30 fatalities per 100 000 population.

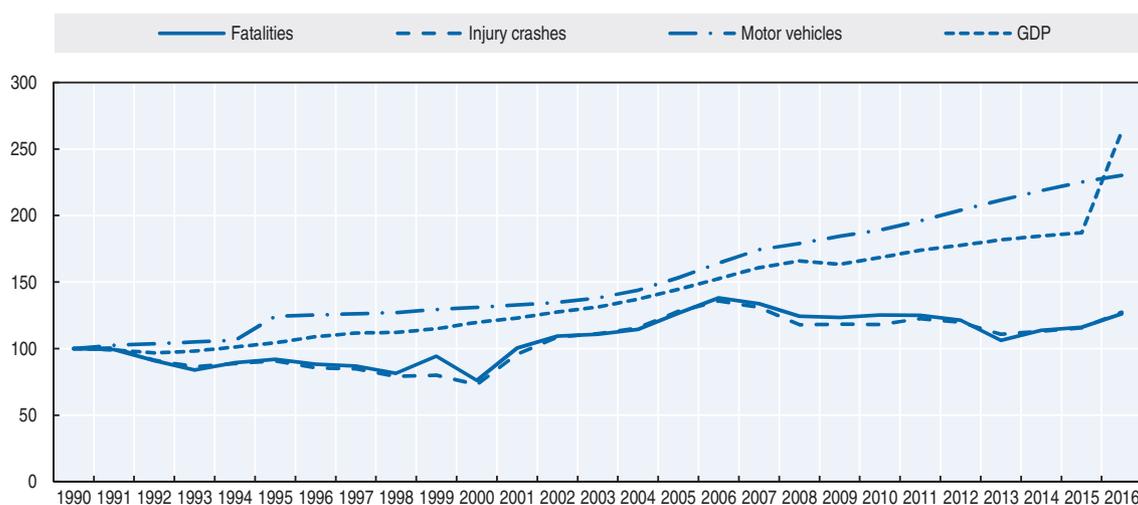
The fatality risk expressed in terms of road deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles was at 9.8 in 2016. The rate has nearly halved since 1990 mainly due to the strong increase in the vehicle fleet.

Table 35.1. Road safety and traffic data

	1990	2000	2010	2015	2016	2016 % change over			
						2015	2010	2000	1990
Reported safety data									
Fatalities	11 157	8 494	13 967	12 944	14 071	8.7	0.7	65.7	26.1
Fatal crashes	9 174	6 679	10 837	10 613	11 676	10.0	7.7	74.8	27.3
Deaths per 100 000 population	30.3	19.0	27.4	23.6	25.2	7.0	-8.2	32.8	-16.9
Deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles	24.2	14.0	15.3	11.1	9.8	-11.3	-35.9	-29.9	-59.5
Traffic data									
Registered vehicles (thousands)	4 616	6 074	9 134	11 710	11 964	2.2	31.0	97.0	159.2
Registered vehicles per 1 000 population	125	136	179	213	214	0.4	19.2	57.7	70.6

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933580859>

Figure 35.1. Road safety, traffic and GDP trends index 1990 = 100



Source: World Bank (2017) (GDP; constant prices).

Road safety by user group

In 2016, pedestrians alone accounted for 38% of reported fatalities, motorised vehicle passengers accounted for 33% and motorised vehicle drivers for 26%.

Road safety by age group

Children are very much affected by road crashes in South Africa and are particularly vulnerable as pedestrians.

Economic costs of traffic crashes

The high number of road traffic crashes and their associated consequences have a significant impact on the South African society, which in turn continues to hamper socio-economic development and impacts on the well-being of all South Africans. This impact is measured in terms of human lives lost, 'pain, grief and suffering', as well as an increasing cost to the economy.

The total cost of road crashes in 2015 amounted to an estimated ZAR 142.95 billion, or 3.4% of GDP.

Recent trends in road user behaviour

Speed

The table below summarises the main speed limits in South Africa.

Table 35.2. **Passenger car speed limits by road type, 2017**

	General speed limit
Urban roads	60 km/h
Rural roads	100 km/h
Motorways	120 km/h

Drink driving

In South Africa, the maximum authorised blood alcohol content (BAC) is 0.5 g/l. There is a lower limit of 0.2 g/l for professional drivers of public transport and heavy goods vehicles.

A crash is defined as alcohol-related when one of the participants has a BAC above the legal limit.

Based on crash reports from 2015, 5.5% of fatalities involved a driver with a BAC above the legal limit, and 1.8% involved a pedestrian with a BAC above the legal limit.

Drugs and driving

Driving while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs having a narcotic effect, or with an excessive amount of alcohol in the blood or breath is prohibited. Drug driving measures are not yet enforced.

Distraction

The National Road Traffic Act states that no person shall drive a vehicle on a public road holding a cellular or a mobile telephone or any other communication device in one or both hands or with any other part of the body.

In 2016, the RTMC published a research report on distracted driving. It shows that drivers frequently engage in secondary activities while driving. Passenger-related distractions (i.e., looking at, talking to or listening to a passenger) constitute the most common distraction. Other secondary distractions include using electronic devices, grooming, eating and person or object-related distractions. The important question to answer is what constitutes normal driving and is it possible that distracted driving has become the norm rather than the exception.

Sleepiness and fatigue

The estimation of fatalities due to sleepiness and fatigue is still a challenge in South Africa.

Seat belts and helmets

All new motor vehicles must be fitted with seat belts for all passengers. Since 2005, seatbelt use is compulsory for drivers and all passengers of cars and minibuses registered after 1 January 2006. The driver is responsible for ensuring that infants are seated with an appropriate child restraint. The seat belt wearing rate is very low, estimated in 2010 at 4.5% for the drivers and 5% for front seat passengers. There has not been any more recent survey on the use of seatbelts.

The wearing of a protective helmet on a motorcycle, motor tricycle, a motor quadricycle, and passenger in the side-car attached to a motorcycle or pedal cycle is compulsory for both the driver and the passenger.

Helmets are compulsory for cyclists. In practice, it is not enforced.

Table 35.3. **Seat belt wearing rate**
%

	2010
Front seat	
Driver	4.5
Passenger	5

National road safety strategies and targets

Organisation of road safety

The RTMC, established in April 2005, is the lead agency for Road Safety in South Africa. It reports to the Department of Transport. Other major road agencies that also have a responsibility to contribute towards road safety are:

- Road Accident Fund (RAF)
- Road Traffic Infringements Agency (RTIA)
- South African National Roads Agency (SOC; Limited) (SANRAL)
- Cross-Border Roads Transport Agency (CBRTA).

In addition, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the Department of Roads and Public Works, the Department of Safety and Security, the Provincial Traffic Authorities, Statistics South Africa, and the emergency medical services are important stakeholders.

The RTMC's shareholders are composed of provincial representatives from each of the nine provinces. The shareholder group also comprises a representative from the South African Local Government Authority (SALGA) with the Minister being the Chairperson.

The RTMC is responsible for:

- enhancing the overall quality of road traffic service provision, in particular to ensure safety, security, order, discipline and mobility on the roads
- protecting road infrastructure and the environment through the adoption of innovative practices and implementation of innovative technology
- introducing commercial management principles to inform and guide road traffic governance and decision making in the interests of enhanced service provision
- optimising the utilisation of public funds
- regulating, strengthening and monitoring intergovernmental contact and cooperation in road traffic matters
- improving the exchange and dissemination of information on road traffic matters
- stimulating research in road traffic matters and effectively using the resources of existing institutes and research bodies
- developing human resources in the public and private sectors that are involved in road traffic.

The Road Safety Advisory Council was established in 2014, with the main objective to provide strategic advice to the Minister of Transport. It is composed of representatives of different sectors (automotive industry, road engineering, NGOs, transport companies, motor insurance companies, civil society organisations, etc.).

Road safety strategy 2016-30

In 2015, the Department of Transport and its other road agencies, began developing the National Road Safety Strategy 2016-30 which is aligned with the United Nations Decade of Action pillars. The objective is to reduce fatalities and injuries by 50% from the 2010 base by 2030. The National Road Safety Strategy was approved by the National Assembly. It places emphasis on the following priority areas:

- road safety in schools
- drink driving
- safety of young people

A strategic plan for the period 2015-20 has been developed. The main measures are summarised in the table below.

Table 35.4. **Measures and objectives of the 2015-20 strategic road safety plan**

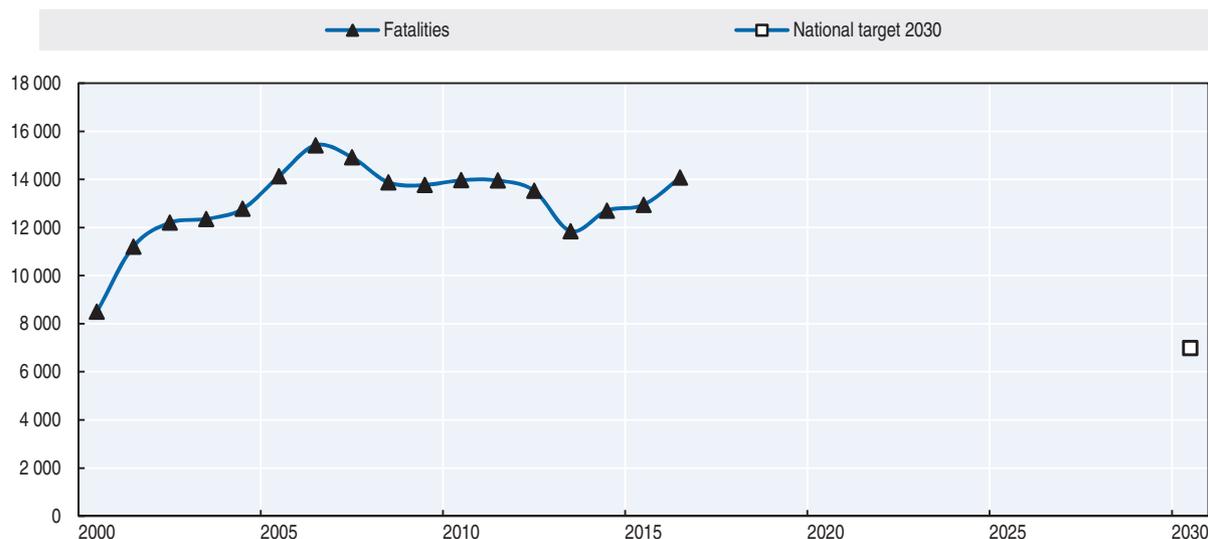
Key measures of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan	Main objective
Development of the National Road Safety Strategy	Provide a uniform approach in achieving the UN goal to halve fatalities and injuries by 2020
Implement measures targeting young people	Curb the impact of road fatalities on the youth. introduce best road user behaviour at a young age
Development of the national road traffic information database	Establish and maintain road traffic information for all stakeholders under a single entity. Increase the accuracy, reliability and availability of information for all stakeholders
Publication of road safety status reports	Provide all stakeholders with an objective report on the road safety performance of the country.
Monitoring of drink driving and speeding offences	Monitor the impact of speeding and drink driving and identify measures to combat these behaviours.
Anti-engaud and corruption awareness programmes	Increase compliance with traffic rules
Investment in road safety research and development	Increase understanding of road safety challenges

Road safety targets

The main target of the 2016-30 strategy is to reduce the number of fatalities by 50% by 2030 from 2010 level.

Quarterly monitoring reports, including transversal indicators implemented by provinces, are sent to provincial representatives (Members of the Executive Council [MECs]).

Figure 35.2. Trends in road fatalities towards national target



Recent safety measures (2014-17)

Road safety management

- Development of the national crash database (ongoing)
- Establishment of an improved single centralised national data management system (ongoing).

Road users

- The RTMC has been engaging with the Department of Education on integrating road safety education into the lower grade curriculum.
- In April 2015, the Minister of Transport approved the amendments to the Act and its Regulations which made it compulsory for children three years of age (or less) to be seated in a child seat when travelling in passenger cars.
- The amendment to the regulations of the National Land Transport Act, 2009 prohibit the transportation of school children for reward in the goods compartment of a vehicle.

Recent and ongoing research

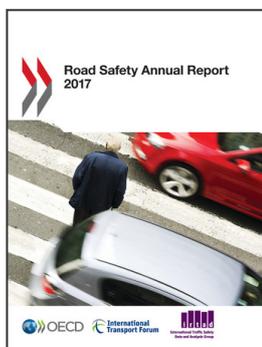
- South African Road Assessment Programme (SARAP)
- Reclassification of serious road traffic offences on the Criminal Procedure Act (CPA)
- Impact of alcohol consumption on road crashes
- Review of the South African Road Safety Audit Manual (SARSAM)

References

World Bank (2017), "GDP (constant US\$)", World Development Indicators, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (accessed 23 February 2017).

Websites

- Road Traffic Management Corporation: www.rtmc.co.za (accessed 10 July 2017).
- Department of Transport: www.transport.gov.za/ (accessed 10 July 2017).



From:
Road Safety Annual Report 2017

Access the complete publication at:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/irtad-2017-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

ITF (2017), “South Africa”, in *Road Safety Annual Report 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/irtad-2017-38-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.