



TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF
TRANSPORT, MR FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE RELEASE OF THE 2022 FESTIVE
SEASON PRELIMINARY STATISTICS HELD ON 17
JANUARY 2023 AT THE GRASMERE TOLL PLAZA AT
10H00**

Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga

Gauteng MEC for Transport and Logistics, Ms Kedibone
Diale-Tlabela

Gauteng MEC for Community Safety Ms Faith Mazibuko

Director-General of the Department, Adv James Mlawu

Chairperson of the RTMC Board, Ms Nomsa Mufumadi

Members of the RTMC Board present

CEO of the RTMC, Adv Makhosini Msibi

Ladies and Gentlemen

We release the 2022 Festive Season fatality statistics on the backdrop of a tragic incident of a gas tanker that exploded after getting stuck on a low-lying railway bridge in

Boksburg, claiming 40 lives to date, with many others having sustained serious injuries. Twelve (12) of those who lost their lives were health workers, men and women who place their lives in harm's way in the service of helping others. This is a heart-wrenching tragedy that should have never happened.

We therefore pay our respects to all those who have lost their lives on our roads this festive period, irrespective of the circumstances of their passing. We equally keep in our prayers and wish speedy recovery to those who sustained injuries and continue to recuperate either in healthcare facilities or at home.

The tragic Boksburg incident was followed by another concerning crash in Ekurhuleni, where another tanker overturned, spilling significant amounts of diesel on the road.

This year's Festive Season was characterized by a sequence of long weekends which contributed to increased traffic on the roads.

Human factors remain a principal driver of fatalities on our roads, accounting for 87% of all crashes. These are followed by road and environmental factors at 8%, with vehicle factors at 5%.

We have no doubt that road safety education and awareness remains critical in our efforts to arrest the carnage on our roads and prevent road crashes. This is the case because when crashes occur, there is often more than one factor at play. Ensuring that a vehicle has headlights, wipers, brakes and tyres in good condition, is important because of unpredictable weather patterns.

I would like to express an appreciation to Road Safety and Law Enforcement personnel and organizations for their role in educational and awareness activations in the build-up and during the Festive Season.

We thank all roads authorities, Provincial and local government personnel, who continue to drive road safety awareness interventions aim at cultivating better conduct on our roads.

We equally extend our gratitude to the private sector organizations, which include Santam, Sanlam, MasterDrive, Fleetwatch, Distell and Diageo and Metropolitan for their commitment to road safety public awareness. We urge more companies to join us in creating a multiplier effect in our road safety messaging. Your contributions through corporate social investments in road safety will go a long way in inculcating the culture of responsible behaviour on our roads.

Our Festive Season period begun on 1 December 2022 and ended on 11 January 2023. This is to ensure consistency in the way we measure progress and to find ways to improve our efforts in arresting road carnage.

Most fatalities were recorded during the weeks of the 15 to 21 December and 22 to 28 December 2022. Fatalities recorded over this period were 327 and 316 respectively.

Pedestrian fatalities remain a major source of concern. Pedestrian fatalities significantly increased by 10% year-on-year, from 31% in the previous period to 41% in the current festive season. Simply put out of every 100 road crash fatalities, 41 are pedestrians. In Gauteng and Western Cape pedestrian fatalities constitute 54% of all fatalities, implying that, or every 100 people that died from a road crash, 54 were pedestrians.

For this Festive Season, passenger fatalities recorded a 7% decline, with 31% recorded in the current period, compared to 38% in the previous festive season. Our message to buckle up must continue to resonate with motorists as a life-saving mechanism. We have seen unbuckled children and adults alike being flown out of cars resulting in serious injuries and deaths that could have been prevented.

Driver fatalities declined from 28% in the previous period to 27% in this festive season. Cyclist fatalities also declined from 3% in the previous period to 2% in the current festive season. Road users must at all times appreciate that the road is a shared space and drivers have the responsibility to look out for pedestrians and cyclists, while these road users must also behave in a safe manner.

In the 2022 festive period, most crashes occurred between 17h00 and 22h00 particularly on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Furthermore, most fatal crashes involved light motor vehicles, followed by light delivery vehicles, minibuses, and trucks. Light motor vehicles contributed 39% to the total fatal crashes, followed by light delivery vehicles at 16%. Minibus vehicles contributed 7% and trucks accounted for 4%.

Law enforcement interventions have been critical during this festive season and my gratitude goes to each officer, for their tireless efforts to curb road carnage on our roads.

Over 370 joint operations were executed during the period under review, in line with the focus areas that were presented on 8 December 2022, which focused on pedestrian enforcement, vehicle road worthiness, public passenger transport, drunken driving, execution of warrants of arrest and speed law enforcement.

On this note, we welcome the re-introduction and implementation of static and mobile speed camera operations within the Metros in the promotion of Road Safety.

Four hundred and seventy-four (474) K78 road blocks were effected during this period, with over 1.3 million vehicles stopped and checked. Over two hundred and fifty-five thousand (255 000) notices were issued during this period.

Orison Swett Marden, once wrote, "There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something better tomorrow".

We may despair at the magnitude of the road safety challenge, but we are making significant inroads that usher in hope that tomorrow will be better than today and today is undoubtedly better than yesterday. We are on track towards the realisation of the 2030 United Nations road safety target. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the Road Accident Fund is more viable, by ensuring significant reduction of crashes and fatalities on our roads.

The 2022/23 festive season recorded significant gains in our efforts to arrest road fatalities. The period under review saw total of one thousand four hundred and fifty-one (1 451) people losing their lives on our roads. This is a 13.9% reduction compared to one thousand six hundred and eighty-five (1 685) fatalities in the previous period.

We also recorded a 6,5% reduction of fatal crashes compared to the previous year when we recorded one thousand two hundred and ninety five (1 295) fatal crashes compared to one thousand two hundred and eleven (1 211) this year.

Performance in respect of each Province is as follows:

- Western Cape fatalities dropped from 207 to 131, resulting in a 36.7% reduction
- Mpumalanga fatalities dropped from 189 to 144, resulting in a 23.8% reduction
- Northern Cape fatalities dropped from 65 to 51, resulting in a 21.5% reduction
- North-West fatalities dropped from 119 to 94, resulting in a 21% reduction
- Limpopo fatalities dropped from 226 to 179, resulting in a 20.8% reduction
- KwaZulu-Natal fatalities dropped from 275 to 240, resulting in a 12.7% reduction
- Eastern Cape fatalities dropped from 210 to 205, resulting in a 2.4% reduction
- Free State fatalities dropped from 119 to 117, resulting in a 1.7% reduction
- Gauteng fatalities increased from 275 to 290, resulting in a 5.5% increase

We must commend the Provinces for their sterling work and unsurpassed commitment towards the realization of our target to reduce fatalities on our roads by 25% by March 2024.

We must draw lessons from Provinces that achieved a reduction of more than 20% and ensure that the best practice model is replicated in all Provinces. We are concerned about the increase in fatalities in Gauteng and we need to trigger extra-ordinary interventions to reverse this pattern.

Heavy vehicles and trucks remain a stubborn phenomenon on our roads, particularly the N2 from Mpumalanga and Richards Bay as well as the N3. We cannot shy away from the fact that the Pongola tragedy remains a grim reminder of the magnitude of the task at hand to ensure safety on our roads. The realization that a large number of heavy vehicles on our roads are unroadworthy and drivers have become a law unto themselves, must spur us into decisive action

We must redouble our efforts to find a long-term solution and decisive interventions, which must include deploying Mobile Vehicle Testing Centres (MVTCs) in KwaZulu-Natal, on the N2 and N3. During that month of December 2022, over one thousand two hundred (1 200) vehicles and trucks were stopped and checked, with this number increasing to one thousand two hundred and four (1 204) vehicles stopped in the month of January 2023.

We have to decisively deal with the rampant corruption prevalent in our Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs), as a significant number of vehicles on our roads are unlicensed with others driving with fraudulent license discs. Unlicensed vehicle offences stood at twenty five thousand two hundred and forty-four (25 244). This corruption translated to a revenue loss for the Gauteng government of R1.2 billion in the last financial year.

The RTMC, the Hawks and the Gauteng province must urgently attend to this matter and bring the perpetrators to book.

We have to utilize every resource at our disposal to recover the money we lost due to corruption, and no mercy should be shown to these criminals.

Enforcement continues to be a critical part of Road Safety, of which others include Education and Engineering. Speeding infringements remain high on the offence list at thirty two thousand one hundred and ten (32 110).

The majority of arrests over the 2022 festive season have been for warrants executed at one thousand six hundred (1 600), operating licences at one thousand and ninety-four (1 094) and nine hundred and forty-seven (947) drunken driving cases were opened.

On 22 December 2022, a VW Golf 7 driver was arrested travelling at 238km/h on the N1 in Wierdabrug and sadly, they were granted a R1 000 bail. On 3 January 2023, a Subaru driver was arrested driving at 233km/h on the N4 in Bronkhorstspuit and similarly they were granted a R1 200 bail.

On 3 January 2023, a male driver was arrested with breath alcohol levels of 3.99 milligram per thousand millilitres (3.99mg/1000ml). This is 16.6 times above the limit and cannot be unacceptable by any measure.

Road crash fatalities in 2021 led to a R188 billion economic loss and posed a huge burden to our economy. The loss to the country, the community and the immediate families is immeasurable. It is common knowledge that road crashes do not just happen, they happen because of certain contributory factors. These contributory factors are real circumstantial elements that are present at the time of the crash. The most important of these relate to driver behaviour, driver attitude, self-discipline, and compliance with regulations.

We are gathered here today to recommit ourselves to our Arrive Alive Campaign under the theme “It Starts with You”. This is to emphasise that road safety is everyone’s responsibility.

Road users must change their behaviour and attitude, law enforcers must do their work without fear or favour and authorities must create a conducive environment to improve safety on the roads. This must happen every day throughout the year.

A 14% decline year-on-year is perhaps the start for us. We have gone past the “silly season”. However, we have our work cut out. As learners go back to school, parents and scholar transporters are encouraged to be vigilant and be cautious when transporting our children. They should adhere to the rules of the road at all times. We have lived beyond December, but road safety always starts with you and me.

In conclusion, we are determined to up the game in ensuring that the law bites and those who continue to undermine the law will face the full might of the law. We have committed to deploying technology as an additional intervention to strengthen law enforcement and make our roads safer.

Efforts to have visible policing at hazardous locations will continue to be a priority, especially at accident-prone times. Eradicating corruption through the RTMC's national anti-corruption unit remains our key priority.

I must commend our traffic officers, police officers and all members of the emergency and rescue services who sacrificed their time away from their loved ones to ensure that you and I reach our destinations safely.

To motorists out there, exercise care and patience on the road. Be patient at the various enforcement interventions and remember that these officers are out there doing a thankless task, exposed to the elements, just to ensure our safety.

The success of our festive season campaign was dependent on the co-operation of every road user because road safety is everyone's responsibility. It starts with you and me.

I thank you.