



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Address by Transport Minister Ms Barbara Creecy at the
Announcement of the Preliminary 2024/2025 Festive Season
Statistics, GCIS, Pretoria
Monday, 20 January 2025**

The Deputy Minister of Transport – Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa

The MEC for Roads and Transport in Gauteng – Ms Kedibone Diale-Tlabela.

The Chairperson of the Transport Portfolio Committee - Mr Donald Selamolela

The Chairperson of the RTMC Board - Ms Nomsa Mufumadi & Board Members

The Director-General of the national Department of Transport – Advocate James Mlawu

CEO of the Road Traffic Management Corporation – Adv Makhosini Msibi

Deputy Director-General of the Roads Branch - Mr Chris Hlabisa & Senior Officials

Senior Management of the Road Entities

Senior officers from various provincial traffic departments and Metros

Members of the Committee for Active Road Safety

Members of the media,

As we report back to the nation on the 2024/25 festive season road safety campaign and share preliminary data, it is important to stress – right at the outset – that our country has a long way to go to reduce the carnage on our roads.

As if the news reports of terrible crashes and the resultant deaths and injuries day-in and day-out over the festive season were not enough, the statistics which we are releasing today tell all of us that South African road users continue to disobey the traffic laws with no regard for human life – that has had and continues to have tragic consequences.

At the launch of the festive season road safety campaign on the 1st of December 2024, just more than a month-and-a-half ago, we said we were aiming to change road user behaviour, enhance our law enforcement actions and work together with everyone involved to reduce crashes and fatalities.

The campaign was based on four pillars:

- Responsible Driving
- Pedestrian Safety
- Enforcement and Education
- Collaboration

Stringent monitoring was in place on the 20 priority routes and, alongside our patrolling and law enforcement interventions, the Department of Transport

and the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) launched a communications campaign with targeted messaging on radio, television and social media during this period.

We partnered with civil society groups and faith-based organizations who helped to spread road safety messages in their communities, to ensure that all road users are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and the impact of their actions.

Ladies and gentlemen, our traffic law enforcement officers conducted more than 997 roadblocks throughout the country during the festive season. These roadblocks were joint operations between local, provincial and national traffic authorities, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and often included other law enforcement agencies such as the Border Management Authority (BMA).

To give you a sense of the appalling lack of respect for the traffic laws, I want to share a few important numbers which will help all of us to better understand the very serious problem we are dealing with.

Our law enforcement officers issued 711,184 fines for various traffic offences across the country. Some 23,607 fines were issued to drivers who failed to wear seatbelts, while another 16,925 motorists were fined for using cell phones while driving. Then, 16,527 vehicles were found to be unroadworthy and issued with traffic fines as well as their motor vehicle licence discs removed particularly in areas where vehicles could not be impounded due to lack of impoundment facilities. It must however be emphasized that, in total,

8,917 motor vehicles were impounded in areas where facilities were available.

The joint operations carried out during the festive season were in line with the focus areas: vehicle road worthiness, public passenger transport, drunken driving, execution of warrants of arrest and speed law enforcement.

To clamp down on drunken driving, speeding and other moving violations, our officers arrested more than 9,550 motorists, with 3,840 individuals arrested for drunken driving.

- A total of 414 drivers were arrested for driving at high speed and 5 amongst them were driving at excessive speeds of between 200km/h to well above 240km/h. The highest speedster was arrested in Gauteng driving at 245km/h in a BMW Sedan on N1 near Honeydew, on the 18th of December 2024.

On behalf of the national Department of Transport, provincial MECs and their departments, and all law enforcement agencies, I call on the courts to treat these cases with the seriousness they deserve.

There must be consequences for drivers who break the law with wanton disregard for the lives of other road users, whether it is for speeding or drunk driving or any other offence which warrants arrest and prosecution.

With regard to fatalities and crashes:

Tragically, South Africa witnessed 1,502 deaths resulting from 1,234 fatal crashes during the 2024/25 festive season. I want to convey our heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones during this period and our well wishes to all those who are still recuperating in hospitals as well as at home.

The number of fatalities represents a year-on-year increase of 5.3% (70) compared to the 2023/24 festive season, with a 4.2% (50) increase in the number of crashes. This is most regrettable, more so because it reverses the incremental strides made in recent years.

Six provinces recorded increases in the number of fatalities in the 2024/25 festive season compared to 2023/24, namely KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo, Northern Cape and North West.

The Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State recorded *increases* of 70, 54 and 21 fatalities as compared to 2023/24 while Gauteng, Western Cape and Mpumalanga recorded *decreases* of 76, 23 and 15 fatalities respectively.

I would like to commend the provincial MECs and traffic authorities in these three provinces for the fact that their efforts have yielded positive results, but I also want to commend all MECs and indeed all national and provincial law enforcement agencies and officers, road safety personnel, emergency services and health professionals who worked long hours, sacrificing family time and did their utmost to save lives on South Africa's roads.

The MECs met every three days over the festive season to assess the campaign, to identify areas for improvement and to move resources to where it was most needed. One of our successes was that many of the specific routes identified for increased policing had less fatalities compared to the previous year.

It is notable that there were 18 major crashes resulting in 134 fatalities, while minibuses were involved in 53% of major crashes.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Pedestrian fatalities remain a huge concern, with 41% of all road fatalities being pedestrians. The highest percentage of pedestrian fatalities were recorded in Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal which are the most populous provinces in the country in terms of vehicles and people. Gauteng had the highest pedestrian fatalities at 63.84% followed by Western Cape with 53.9% and KwaZulu-Natal with 44.33%.

Our message to pedestrians is clear - if you want to stay alive while using the roads, you must make sure that you:

- Do not consume alcohol and then walk on the roads;
- Ensure that you are visible at night and walk in areas that are well lit;
- Avoid jaywalking; and,
- Cross the road at a pedestrian crossing or where it is safe to do so.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The preliminary statistics are deeply disturbing but these numbers on paper don't tell us anything about the human story, about the tragedies which struck so many families across the country, about the pain of losing a loved one to a road crash.

All the more disturbing, then, is the fact that most crashes and deaths are a result of human factors. To be precise, 87% of crashes happened because of human behaviour, including hit-and-runs, jay-walking, fatigue, loss of control over vehicles, speed, drunken driving, reckless overtaking.

I want to say this very clearly, loud and clear for all of us to hear: We, South Africans, must change our behaviour on the roads.

The number of people who died on our roads this festive season has increased because people continued to behave badly. In spite of our pleas and warnings, and notwithstanding our efforts to clamp down on irresponsible and reckless behaviour, it is clear that many road users – both drivers and pedestrians – continue to act without regard for the lives of others.

As we said at the beginning of the festive season, government and our law enforcement agencies cannot do it on our own.

The statistics clearly send all of us, as South Africans, one message: Drivers and pedestrians must change their behaviour. We must obey the law, we must obey the basic rules of the road.

I have asked the provinces to conduct a detailed analysis of their respective statistics and come with a clear plan for the way forward, when we reconvene at the end of January. This will include a look at severe consequences for those who continue to show a disregard for road safety.

We will continue to direct our efforts at changing the behaviour of road users, invest in designing and engineering safer roads, enforcing safe speeds in high congestion areas, and enhancing emergency response systems and access to quality trauma care which is essential to saving lives.

By reducing response times and improving the availability of critical care, we can increase survival rates and reduce the long-term impacts of road traffic injuries. This initiative will require collaboration with the Department of Health and other industry role-players.

Indications are that the implementation of 24/7 traffic policing shifts is more critical than ever. During the festive season we agreed to release National Traffic Police resources to provinces, to intensify road safety communication and education campaigns and strengthen monitoring of our law enforcement operations especially at night.

This approach will serve as a blueprint for our road safety activities but will only succeed if it is consistent all year round, especially on weekends and in every province across the country.

I want to extend our appreciation to the public transport leadership, particularly SANTACO, the leaders of numerous religious organizations and

the private sector who greatly assisted us in educating public transport operators and the public at large about how we can all improve road safety. Education and awareness remains critical in the reduction of road crashes.

I also want to thank the Deputy Minister and MECs for taking charge and assisting in ensuring that the road safety campaign was coordinated across the different **No**evels of government, enabling us to share data and resources.

In conclusion, we remain steadfast in our commitment to confront lawlessness and dangerous driving. I want to appeal to motorists to exercise care and patience on our roads but, at the same time, those who break the law must know that our traffic officers across the country will continue to crack down on those who don't care about the lives of others.

Let's work together to make our roads safer; let's change our behaviour and save lives.

I thank you.

Notes to Editors

The provincial statistics are as follows:

KwaZulu-Natal	304	fatalities from 247 fatal crashes
Gauteng	235	fatalities from 224 fatal crashes
Eastern Cape	231	fatalities from 168 fatal crashes
Limpopo	180	fatalities from 140 fatal crashes

Mpumalanga	143	fatalities from 118 fatal crashes
Western Cape	140	fatalities from 124 fatal crashes
Free State	106	fatalities from 81 fatal crashes
Northwest	100	fatalities from 87 fatal crashes
Northern Cape	63	fatalities from 45 fatal crashes