

# PREAMBLE

Road crashes are a growing economic, public health, and social issue, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups of road users (VRUs), especially the poor. The World Health Organization has identified road traffic crashes as an "epidemic", causing more than 1.3 million deaths and fifty million non-fatal injuries each year on the roads around the world. This is equivalent to more than ten fully loaded airplanes crashing every day or someone dying every six seconds.

Furthermore road crashes are now the leading cause of death for children and young people aged between 15 and 29. The burden of road crashes is comparable with tuberculosis and malaria and costs between 1% and 3% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - more than the total development aid received by the lower and middle income countries.

The World Health Organization has demanded a call for action to correct this situation to prevent the carnage from increasing by more than sixty five percent over the next twenty years. In particular, South Africa and the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), an Entity of the Department of Transport, in line with the National Development Plan has responded to this clarion call. The country has committed itself to the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety and Millennium Development Goals for the Transport Sector in Africa with the intention of halting and then reducing the fatalities and injuries.

# PREAMBLE

The advocacy and promotion of road safety is an important cog in the wheel of traffic management in South Africa and the RTMC as part of its legislative obligation is required to provide strategic direction and also lead the country in the effective implementation of road safety programmes and interventions.

It is on this premise that the RTMC has adopted a Safe Systems approach to Road Safety with the overall goal of ensuring safe travel. This system approach focuses on the value chain of road safety, starting with road user behaviour.

Road user behaviour is fundamental to the safety of the road transport system and it is the responsibility of road safety authorities to adopt measures to reduce the frequency of 'unsafe' and unacceptable behaviour by the road user.

The RTMC's commitment is demonstrated in this handy road safety booklet with the intent of ensuring that road safety messaging is communicated to its citizenry, thereby encouraging and bringing about longer-lasting behaviour changes.

Finally road safety advocacy is not a singular effort so let's all contribute to "making our roads safe".



# WHAT WE KNOW!

Road users are an important factor in the road safety management plan and the passengers, pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists are the most vulnerable road users. According to the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System's (NIMMS) Annual report road crashes are the top South African public health priority next to violence.

Furthermore the leading manner of death for females is road crashes, especially due to pedestrian related injuries. Pedestrians of the age group 5 - 14 are the most affected when relating to the most prominent causes of death.

Vulnerable road users are forced to share the road with vehicles and inadequate provision has been made for them to cope with the environment.

Those dying on our roads are constituted mainly by pedestrians, followed by passengers and drivers. Among the many risk factors involved in causing road crashes or increasing injury severity is the failure to wear seat belts, driving at excessive or unsuitable speeds, driving under the influence of alcohol and failure to cross the road safely.

Governments are required to contribute leadership and resources to improve road safety, including developing and enforcing laws, providing safer roads, informing the public about road safety issues and fostering improvements in vehicle safety.

Ultimately road safety is a shared responsibility. Every person who uses the roads has an obligation to act safely and internalise sound road safety norms and values.

Make it your responsibility to be safe on the roads and be capacitated on safe road usage.



# PEDESTRIAN SAFETY



**Pedestrians are vulnerable road users and approximately 40% of all road users killed on our roads are pedestrians.**

## Safety Tips:-

- Pedestrians must be alert and be able to judge the speed and distance of approaching vehicles.
- Wear visible and bright clothing especially at night and during inclement weather.
- Where there are no pavements, pedestrians must walk on the right side of the road facing oncoming traffic.
- Pedestrians must cross at designated pedestrian crossings e.g. pedestrian traffic lights, zebra crossings, stop signs, pedestrian bridges, school patrols.

- Pedestrian must NEVER walk on freeways and must use pedestrian bridges to cross.
- When crossing at a traffic light with a pedestrian light, wait until the little green man appears, then look right, left and right again before crossing.
- When crossing at a traffic light without a pedestrian light, wait until the light is green. Remember to keep looking for traffic as you cross.
- Pedestrians must not text or talk on their phones whilst crossing.
- Pedestrians must not use ear phones or headset whilst crossing the road as they will be distracted.
- Pedestrian must not jaywalk but use controlled pedestrian crossings.
- Pedestrians must not drink before using the road.



# THE CROSSING RULE



- Think first. Find the safest place to cross.
- Stop. Stand on the pavement away from the kerb.
- Look and listen by using your eyes and ears.
- **Look right, left and then right again.**
- Wait until it is safe to cross.
- When it is safe, walk straight across the road - no running.
- Keep looking and listening while crossing.



# COMMUTER RIGHTS

Rights of commuters or public transport passengers are:

- Travel in safe and roadworthy vehicles;
- Travel with drivers with valid license and professional driving permits;
- Travel in vehicles that are not overloaded or overcrowded;
- Travel in a public transport service without experiencing any form of harassment or prejudice;
- Use transport services that provide value for money (reliable , affordable and efficient).

What should be expected from public transport operators, drivers and their passengers?

- Transport operators at all levels should maximise efforts to improve safety.
- Operators must ensure that their vehicles are driven by drivers who are medically fit to drive public passengers.
- Taxi operators and bus operators must respect the rights of the passengers they transport and commuters should be treated as contributors to socio-economic development of the country.



- Transport drivers should obey the rules of the road. They must stop at traffic signs, drive at a safe speed within a safe following distance and not drive under the influence of alcohol.
- Drivers must be committed to passenger safety, rights and respect passengers.
- It is the responsibility of operators to prohibit drivers from harassing, intimidating or molesting passengers and to take action against drivers who do so.
- Commuters have the right to ask the driver not to exceed the number of passengers permitted to be carried in the vehicle or board a vehicle, which is overloaded.
- Commuters have a right to refuse to travel with a driver who drives unsafely and may report bad road behaviour to 0861 400 800.



# SEATBELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS



Seatbelts are lifesavers. Research indicates that your chances of survival in a collision are higher if you wear a seatbelt.

During a crash, seatbelts keep you in place so your head and chest are less likely to hit the windshield, dashboard, vehicle interior or other passengers.

Seatbelts help belted drivers to maintain control of the vehicle by keeping them in the driver seat. This gives them the opportunity to prevent a second crash.

It is a common misconception that a seatbelt can trap you in a vehicle if it catches fire or becomes sub-merged.



In fact, a seatbelt helps prevent serious injuries - resulting in you being conscious and able to free yourself from a vehicle which is in danger of sinking in water or catching alight.

Seatbelts are designed to be released with just one hand and it takes just one second to un-buckle your seatbelt.

Many road fatalities occur close to the victim's home. Collisions can happen anywhere and anytime. You should never travel unless the driver and all passengers are buckled-up.

It is law that all vehicle occupants (rear and front) are to be buckled up at all times.

Children are at greater risk in a collision. Their bodies are not yet fully developed and therefore less able to absorb the sudden impact of a collision.



Infants and children need a child restraint system that accommodates their size and weight, and can adapt to cope with the different stages of their development. Use a SABS approved child restraint and make sure you install it according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Regardless of how much your children beg and plead to be allowed to ride in the front passenger seat, it's important that you stand your ground and refuse to negotiate with them on the subject, your child's safety is non-negotiable.

Remember that using seatbelts and child restraints will protect you and keep you safe in your seat.



# PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy and registered.

Make sure that you check the condition of the spare tyre and also if the jack and spanner are in place. A basic tool kit, first aid kit and fire extinguisher are sound investments.

If you are towing a caravan or trailer, please ensure that it is in a roadworthy condition.

Ensure that you conduct a thorough multi-point safety check which includes all electrical components, brakes, tyres, steering mechanism and the shock absorbers before embarking on your journey- :

- Check oil, water, brake fluid level and fan belt.
- Check that all windows are clean.
- Check all mirrors are clean and set correctly.
- Check that the braking system is in order.
- Check that the windscreen wipers are working.
- Check that all lights and indicators are working and clean.
- Make sure that the safety belts are working properly
- Check tyre pressure

Ensure that your vehicle is not overloaded. Check that your load is secured and the cargo doors are locked.

Keep your vehicle in a safe working condition with regular maintenance.

All motorised vehicle users must have a valid driver's licence for their specific make of transport and must carry this with them at all times.



# SPEED



The limit shown on the signs is the maximum speed at which you are allowed, and at which it is safe to travel. You must never exceed the sign posted speed limit and in certain circumstances, you should reduce your speed to well below the official limit.

The higher the speed, the longer the braking distance and the more difficult it is to control the vehicle in the process of stopping. The stopping distance on an excellent road surface with good brakes, the reaction time = 0,75 to 1 second

The stopping distance is mainly determined by the following factors:

- **Reaction time:** the lapse between the time you notice the danger and the moment you brake (normally more than one second)
- **Condition of the vehicle:** the roadworthiness (e.g. brake linings, tyres or shock absorbers).
- **Condition of the road:** (e.g. Potholes, gravel, wet or slippery roads).
- **Wet weather:** a wet road surface increases your stopping distance and chances of skidding when applying brakes.
- **Mist and night conditions:** these decreases visibility and your chances of identifying other road users/hazards in time to avoid a collision.
- **Pedestrians:** Their behaviour on the road especially in towns and rural areas can be unpredictable, demanding even more caution from the driver.

**Peak Traffic Periods:** As human error is the main cause of collisions, you can expect that more mistakes will occur during peak traffic periods



A safe driver is mindful of pedestrians; cyclists and environmental conditions. Furthermore, one must be aware that there might be unexpected hazards, such as blind bends, vehicles coming out of junctions and animals on the road. One must therefore adjust your speed according to prevailing conditions.



# DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE

Every single injury and death caused by drunk driving is totally preventable. Alcohol-impaired driving remains a serious national problem that tragically affects many victims annually.

In South Africa, the legal limit for alcohol in a driver's bloodstream is 0.05g/100ml; and for professional drivers 0.02g/100ml. Being below the limit does not automatically lower your risk of being involved in a crash, rather not drink and drive at all.

**don't  
drink &  
drive**



**Road Traffic  
Management Corporation**

## Alcohol affects your Driving:

- Slows down your brain functions. This means you're slower to react and make decisions. It becomes a lot harder to concentrate on steering the wheel, controlling your speed and taking in your surroundings
- Reduces your ability to judge your speed and distance, so you don't notice how close other vehicles and objects are to you.
- Makes you more confident than you would be normally, leading to dangerous and reckless driving.



The effects of alcohol are far worse when taken simultaneously with certain medication or drugs. Although alcohol provides temporary courage and a pleasant "top of the world" feeling; you are really a risk to yourself, your passengers and all other road users.

# IF YOU DRINK - DON'T DRIVE.

- Take turns with your friends or family to be sober designated drivers.
- Arrange lifts with sober party goers.
- Do not allow your drunken friends to walk home - a drunk pedestrian is just as dangerous as a drunk driver.
- Do not pressurize your guests to drink - you don't want to be responsible for a collision involving a driver under the influence of alcohol.

## Be Smart! Don't Drink and Drive!



# DRIVER FATIGUE

Many people think fatigue is only a problem for long-distance drivers; however it is just as relevant for short-distance drivers. People generally don't become fatigued from driving; usually they are already tired when they get behind the wheel from long hours, shift work, lack of sleep, sleep apnea or physically demanding roles.



# CAUSES OF FATIGUE

- a lack of quality sleep;
- driving when you would normally be sleeping;
- sleep disorders such as sleep apnea (a sleeping condition that causes tiredness throughout the day).

## Symptoms of fatigue

Fatigue is easy to detect, with symptoms including:

- yawning;
- sore or heavy eyes;
- slower reaction times;
- driving speed creeps up or down;
- impatience;
- impaired driving performance such as poor gear changes;
- stiffness and cramps;
- loss of motivation.



## Driving while tired or fatigued can result in:

- Lower reaction times;
- Lack of concentration - errors in calculating speed and distance are common;
- Reduced vigilance and poor judgement;
- Nodding off - even for a few seconds can result in dire consequences.

## How to beat driver fatigue!

Make a choice not to drive when tired or follow these guidelines to prevent fatigue:

- Get a good night's sleep before heading-off on a long trip;
- Share the driving wherever possible;
- Don't drink alcohol before your trip, even a small amount can significantly contribute to driver fatigue;
- Take a 15 minute power nap if you feel yourself becoming drowsy;
- Stop at least once every two hours or after every 200 km - it will help to combat fatigue and will give you a chance to restore your ability to concentrate.

Tips on how to reduce driver fatigue before your trip:

- Plan your journey well in advance, making provision for safety breaks.
- A heavy meal before you embark on a trip can increase fatigue and weaken your concentration.
- Before embarking on a long journey makes sure your exhaust system is in good order. Leaking exhaust fumes may cause drowsiness and even death if the vehicle is not properly ventilated.



# DRIVING AT NIGHT

Special precautions when driving at night:

- If you drive at night, decrease speed to counter poor vision of the road ahead.
- A clean windscreen is important. Lights will reflect on a dirty windscreen and could blind you completely.
- If you find yourself in a dangerous situation while driving at night switch on your hazard lights immediately. This will warn other motorists.
- If possible, travel only during the day; your chances of being involved in a fatal crash increases significantly at night.
- Every time you feel tired pull-off the road where it is safe to do so and sleep or just rest until you feel fit to drive again.
- Do not drink tablets to keep awake. They have serious side effects and will slow down your eye reflexes.
- Beware of the heater in the vehicle or ensure that the air conditioning is not set too high as heat can make you sleepy. Make sure that there is enough fresh air in the vehicle even if it means feeling a little cold.
- It is more difficult to drive in bad weather conditions and it is therefore more tiring. It is more difficult for instance to control a vehicle when the wind is strong. Keep this in mind and get enough rest even if your journey takes an hour longer.

- And, while many drivers believe they can combat fatigue by listening to the radio or talking to passengers, it has been found that these techniques offer some relief, but it is not lasting. Therefore, the only solution to driving when feeling tired is to leave the road, stop driving, and sleep or rest.



# GENERAL ROAD SAFETY HINTS



Do not use your cell phone while driving, it is dangerous! It slows your reaction times, interferes with a driver's concentration and perception skills together with increasing the chance of being involved in a crash.

Drive as if you are driving for others - be constantly aware of your surroundings and drive defensively. Distracted driving is a killer-do not text whilst driving.

If you experience a break-down, park as far left of the roadway as possible and keep watch for little children who may wander onto the road.

Adjust your speed according to the prevailing conditions. (An advanced driver is mindful of pedestrians, stray animals, potholes, weather conditions, environmental issues and the like...)

Drugged driving is prohibited, it impairs your motor skills, reaction time, judgement and negatively affects your driving skills.

Take special care when driving in areas where there is prevalence of stray animals.

During wet or inclement weather increase your following distance, keep headlights on to increase visibility, check wiper blades and tyres to cope with slippery roads. Ensure your demister is working.

Road rage is a reality- do not be the cause there-of and do not be a perpetrator. Avoid driving aggressively.

Only overtake when it is safe to do so. Always be mindful of your braking distance and blind spots.

Using seatbelts reduces the risk of fatal or serious injury in a crash considerably. It is the driver's responsibility and legal obligation to ensure that passengers especially children are buckled up and are safe and secure. A seatbelt can save your life.

Unsafe overtaking could result in a head on collision, one of the most serious types of crashes on our roads. Make sure you can see that the road ahead is clear before overtaking. Always keep in the left and overtake on the right.

Keep both hands on the steering wheel at all times to ensure maximum control in case of a possible incident.

At night, drive with your headlights on and ensure that your brake lights and indicators are in a working condition.

Keep a safe following distance when travelling - observe the 3 seconds rule.

Do not slow down at a crash scene as this can cause an obstruction for other road users and result in further incidents.

Be responsible, considerate and patient at all times.

