



Statement by Transport Minister Dipuo Peters on the occasion to release the preliminary festive season report for December 2015 and January 2016

12 January 2016

Deputy Minister Sindisiwe Lydia Chikunga

MEC Sizakele Nkosi Malobane

MEC Donald Grant

RTMC Chairman Mr Zola Majavu

Members of RTMC Board present herein

Director General Mr Pule Selepe

Deputy Director General Mr Chris Hlabisa

RTMC CEO advocate Makhosini Msibi

CEO's of other Transport Agencies

Head of Departments

Officials from the Department and RTMC

Members of all media houses

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is befitting and appropriate on an occasion like this, confronted with similar circumstances, to retort as the former President Thabo Mbeki once remarked on his inauguration and said:

“I am my brother’s keeper, I am my sister’s keeper.

And because we are one another’s keepers, we surely must be haunted by the humiliating suffering which continues to afflict millions of our people.

Our nights cannot but be nights of nightmares while millions of people live in conditions of degrading poverty.

Sleep cannot come easily when children get permanently disabled both physically and mentally.

Nor can there be peace of mind when the citizens of our country feel they have neither safety nor security because of the terrible deeds of criminals.”

Surely as a Department and the Road Traffic Management Corporation tasked with the responsibility of road safety, cannot sleep peacefully when thousands of our road users are mowed down on our roads by irresponsible road users. We cannot have peace of mind when innocent children are left in a state of agony, permanent emotional and psychological torture while awaiting the arrival of their parents who will never make it home alive.

Allow me to sketch our long journey towards the attainment of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety targets.

In the past five years we have seen a steady growth in the vehicle population at an average of 3.3% as well as the number of people who acquired driver’s licences at an average of 4.7% per annum respectively, thus opening opportunities and possibilities for participation in the economic mainstream.

Our days and nights will forever not be peaceful as corruption continues to rear its ugly head mostly in our driver learner testing centres as well as an unacceptably high number of un-roadworthy vehicles found on our roads causing more fatalities and crashes. This unacceptable state of affairs will soon come to pass.

As the sun continues to rise to banish the darkness of unwarranted carnages and fatalities on our roads, we find solace and inspiration in the words our President Jacob Zuma during his inaugural speech when he said:

“The road ahead is long and demanding.

The challenges ahead may seem insurmountable,

But we are determined to succeed,

As we have always succeeded in our efforts to overcome challenges.”

In the period between 2005 and 2009 the country experienced a small 0.52% cumulative annual drop in the number of road fatalities. This has accelerated to 1.88% annual decrease in the

period 2010 to 2014. Despite this reduction we remain steadfastly concerned as one death is one too many. Allow me to also extend my gratitude to the traffic officers who tirelessly and unflinchingly worked throughout the festive period to ensure compliance with the rules of the road.

We are equally indebted to all our stakeholders for their collective effort and responsibility. We unequivocally commend the role played by police officers, the South African National Defence Force, national, provincial and local departments of transport, road safety activists and practitioners, emergency medical services and health practitioners, faith-based organisations, freight industry, SANTACO and taxi associations, NGOs, CBOs, youth formations and all transport stakeholders

The preliminary statistics we are releasing today, tell only part of the story about road safety in our country. A situational analysis conducted at the start of this year's festive season indicated that the number of registered vehicles had increased

by a further 340 000 at the start of December last year with 508 054 new driver's licences issued.

A closer look at the road crashes and fatalities over the 2015/16 festive season depicted the following trends.

- Small motor vehicles accounted for 47.9% of total crashes during this season, followed by light delivery vehicles at 22.7%, minibuses or combis at 10.1% and trucks contributed 4.8%.
- The majority of people who died were passengers at 38.3%, followed by pedestrians at 34.9%. Drivers contributed 23.9% of the fatalities and cyclists 2.8%.
- The age group most affected for drivers as well as passengers and pedestrians between 25 to 39 years accounting for about 47,9% for drivers, passengers 38.5% and pedestrians 34,3% of the fatalities respectively. Children aged from 0 – 4 contributed 10.4% of pedestrian deaths.

- The gender mostly affected was males with a contribution of 74.4% to total fatalities. Females contributed 25.2% of the fatalities. Very disturbingly, of this number 81.4% is apportioned to Blacks while the remainder varies between Coloured, Whites, Asians and Foreigners.
- The gender of a 0.4% of the people was undetermined because they were burned beyond recognition.

Weekends continue unabated to pose a major challenge as ably demonstrated by the recent festive season reality. Most crashes occurred on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The highest fatal crashes were recorded on Saturday at a percentage contribution of 22.2% of the total fatal crashes, followed by Friday and Sunday with 18.8% and 16.9% respectively.

A new phenomenon has come to the fore this year with most crashes occurring between 14H00 and 23H00 at 51.4%. This stark contrast to the norm might be

confidently attributed to our relentless and resilient implementation of the 24/7 law enforcement.

Human factors contributed the most to the crashes with many collisions occurring as a result of jay-walking, speed that was too high for circumstances, overtaking in the face of oncoming traffic, hit and run and driving under the influence of alcohol. The analysis further brought to the fore a very painful reality of the role played by un-roadworthy vehicles. Key to the vehicle factors that contributed to the crashes were tyre bursts, faulty brakes and smooth tyres while environmental factors included sharp bends, wet surfaces and poor visibility.

I would like to extend sincere condolences to the families and friends who lost loved ones during this festive season. I also wish speedy recovery to all those who are recuperating in hospitals.

Let me reiterate once more that we do not take the confidence and the responsibility bestowed upon us lightly and we need to

do all in our power to instil a sense of belonging and hope for a brighter future for all our citizens.

We are more inspired by the fact that our statistics are actual figures and not estimates as other countries do and we account for each and every crash inclusive of Municipal roads. Our collaboration with the STATSA to validate and verify the accuracy of our figures gives us more comfort and confidence that we are in the right direction towards the attainment of our UN Decade of Action targets.

Ladies and gentlemen in the period between 1 December and January 11 the 1387 fatal crashes experienced on the roads represents an 11% increase in the number of crashes compared to the 2014 festive season where 1 253 crashes were recorded. The situation could have been more bleak had we not intensified our interventions and heightened our visibility. In the period under review we have stopped and checked 1,7 million vehicles, arrested over 6 000 motorists for drunken driving, 808 for excessive speeding and discontinued

5 710 vehicles for being un-roadworthy and 419 for various traffic violations.

Invariably the fatalities increased by 220 (14%) from 1,535 over the same period in the previous year to 1,755. KwaZulu Natal is the only province that recorded a decline in the percentage of fatalities by 2%.

The Western Cape recorded the highest percentage of 33% with the number of fatalities increasing from 122 to 162, followed by North West which increased by 26% from 108 to 136 fatalities. The Eastern Cape increased by 22% from 227 to 278 fatalities.

I have been disappointed by a few traffic officers who were caught on the wrong side of the law. The officers, two from the North West, one from Tshwane Metro, and one from Gauteng were caught soliciting bribes. We cannot afford to have people who behave in such an unethical manner within the traffic fraternity. I call on the National Traffic Anti-Corruption Unit to intensify their work to get rid of such rotten and unwanted

elements from the service. We are also determined to deliver severe blow for those in possession of fraudulent driver's licences and roadworthy certificates.

I also wish to commend the majority of motorists who behaved themselves during the festive period. An analysis of traffic volumes indicates that many motorists planned to undertake their trips during the day. Unlike in previous years, traffic volumes leaving Gauteng peaked in the mornings and decreased significantly in the afternoons. The same pattern was observed when motorists returned from their holidays.

I have been particularly and seriously concerned by those who were caught speeding and the seeming ease that these speedsters were granted bail. This sends a completely wrong message to the public and it demoralises our traffic officers. I will be engaging with the South African Police Services and the Justice Department on this matter.

We urge the RTMC to intensify and fast-track their engagement with the Department of Public Service Administration to finalise

and amend conditions of service in order to implement the 24/7 law enforcement without any limitations.

The re-classification of all road traffic offences to Schedule 5 of the Criminal Procedure Act will receive high priority in our endeavour and quest for a mandatory minimum sentence for drunken driving, inconsiderate, reckless and negligent driving. Enough is enough. We will spare no effort and leave no stone unturned in decisively eradicating lawlessness on our roads.

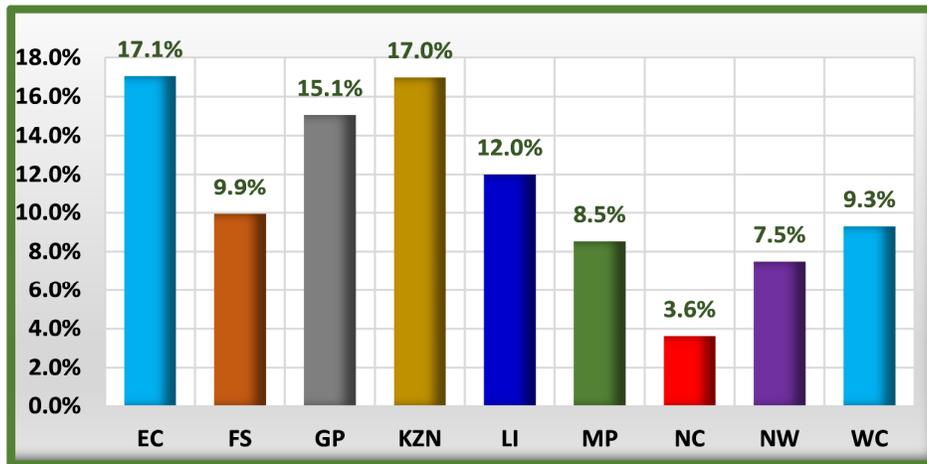
I thank you.

Attachments

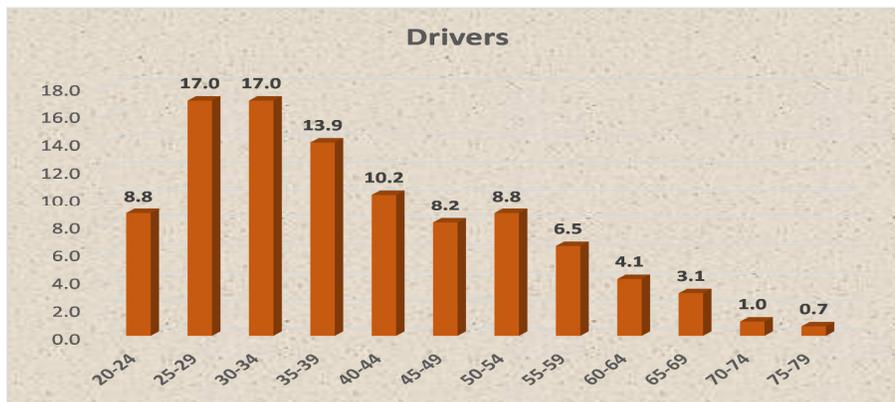
Number of Fatalities per Province : 1 Dec 2015 to 11 Jan 2016

Year	GA	KZ	WC	EC	FS	MP	NW	LI	NC	RSA
2014/15	246	308	122	227	131	159	108	186	48	1 535
2015/16	271	302	162	278	157	184	136	208	57	1 755
change	25	-6	40	51	26	25	28	22	9	220
% change	10	-2	33	22	20	16	26	12	19	14

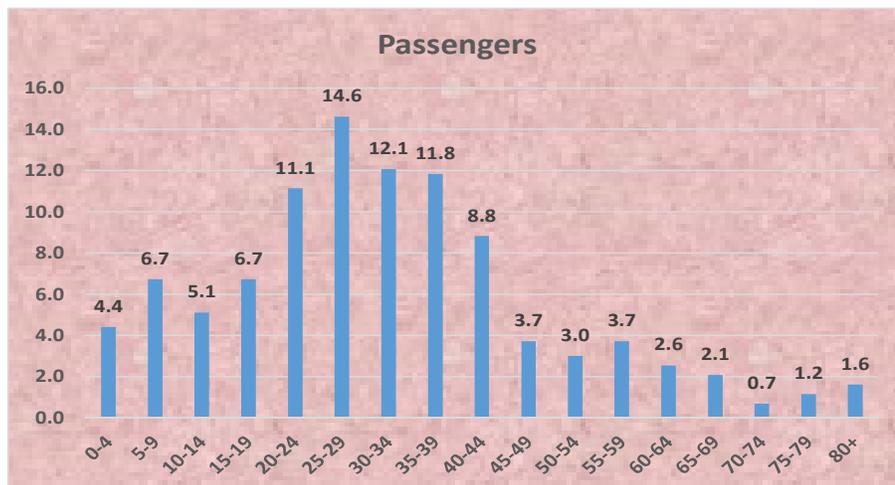
**Percentage contribution of Fatalities per Province:
1 Dec 2015 to 11 Jan 2016**



Percentage contribution of fatalities per age for drivers



Percentage contribution of fatalities per age for passengers



Percentage contribution of fatalities per age for pedestrian

