

Traffic officials to be out in full force this Easter

Traffic officials will be out in full force across the country to ensure that the high accident rate normally associated with the Easter long Weekend is minimised.



(Image: GCIS)

"As a build up towards Easter, the Law Enforcement Technical Committee (LETCOM) has undertaken to conduct as many high visibility, high impact enforcement roadblocks with a view to cleanse our roads of bad elements before the critical Easter weekend," said Transport Minister, Sibusiso Ndebele.

Speaking at the launch of the 2012 Easter Arrive Alive Road Safety Campaign in Springs, Ndebele said visits to taxi ranks, bus depots, weighbridges and truck stops will be undertaken, while enforcement officers will focus on vehicle and driver fitness and road safety officers will interact with and inform and educate road users.

"This Easter period we have mapped the routes, sharpened our strategies and oiled our battle plan. I have issued an instruction that a special country-wide alcohol blitz be conducted before the Easter weekend, where every driver stopped must be tested for alcohol.

Stops for rests to be compulsory

"Special, compulsory "rest stops" will be in place along major arterial routes, to ensure that drivers undertaking long distances are sufficiently rested. We also call on motorists to drive with their head-lamps on at all times to increase visibility," he said.

According to Ndebele, more than 1000 lives are lost every month due to road accidents throughout the country. He urged motorists to always ensure that their vehicles are roadworthy at all the times.

"South African road users must be warned; if you are found to have been deliberately negligent and your actions lead to the loss of lives, the state shall pursue you legally and take you away from society because you pose a great danger," said Ndebele.

He said people must draw a clear, distinct line between culpable homicide and murder, warning that harsher sentences will be imposed on all those found guilty of committing murder through accidents.

Caught DUI

Prior to the launch, Minister Ndebele visited a road block site where four drivers were arrested for drunken driving.

Other motorists were fined for offences ranging from driving without valid driver's license, unroadworthy vehicles and speeding. Other drivers were fined for not using safety belts.

At the launch, Minister Ndebele was accompanied by Transport MECs from other provinces. To ensure safety on the country's roads during the Easter holidays, a prayer service conducted by various churches was also conducted.

Meanwhile, Ndebele said the department will soon officially launch a new road safety strategy titled Towards Safe Roads in South Africa - 2015.

"We are currently implementing several measures to help us deal with the challenge of road carnage, including Road Safe Education at Schools, the establishment of more Community Road Safety Councils (CRSCs), Friends of the Decade forum, Zenani Mandela Road Safety Scholarship and Voluntary Traffic Observers."

He added that road safety will now form part of the life skills curriculum at schools.

"We are going back to the basics where at primary school, learners will be taught about basic rules of the road. The focus is also to empower Grade 11 and 12 learners as well as tertiary students with learners' and drivers' licences to curb the rush to obtain licences at the age of 18."

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