

December road death toll 'highest in history'

The daily death toll from 1 December to 30 December is "the highest in history", claims driving skills specialist, Rob Handfield-Jones.



More than 1,700 people are expected to have died on SA's roads by the end of the festive season.

Image: [E24](#)

"1,184 deaths took place over this period, in other words 39.5 deaths a day. This is more than the record figure of 38 a day for the 2012 festive season," Handfield-Jones says.

"The Christmas period for 2013/14 will end on 13 January, by which time I expect the death toll to be at least 1,736 deaths based on past and current trends," he says.

This figure, Handfield-Jones says, would rise by 15% to 20% by the time the 30-day waiting period for traffic fatalities had elapsed, meaning that Christmas 2013/14 could become the first festive season in which more than 2,000 fatalities occurred on SA's roads.

Handfield-Jones says the main reason for the increasing festive death toll is the failure of government to provide road safety leadership. "People only drive as badly as their governments allow them to," he says.

"In countries like the USA and the UK, it is socially unacceptable to be a bad driver. Government road safety systems in those countries are aimed at improving competence," he says.

He says the South African picture is the opposite.

"The RTMC (Road Traffic Management Corporation) showed a brief flash of intent while Gilberto Martins was Acting chief executive, but has since gone silent. Licensing is a corrupt mess with probably half of all licences being issued fraudulently.

"This creates a culture of bribery among drivers who forget that when it comes to driving, a fake licence acquired by bribery can be deadly," he says.

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