

Engen celebrates their female truck drivers

A surprising number of women truck drivers work for Engen. Their driver programme has, since 2006, seen females compete successfully with males in this environment.



Engen women drivers at Langlaagte Depot: Palesa Modiselle, Tebogo Sekowe and Nomagugu Dlamini

Engen's National Transport Manager, Llewelyn Snyman explains that there's nothing stopping women in an environment previously dominated by men. "We recruit drivers from around the country and they arrive with an EC Code Licence: if they are selected, we put them through our Professional Driver Learnership Programme to equip them with the necessary skills and mindsets to transport Diesel, Petrol or Paraffin. Thanks to our Bulk Truck Operator (BTO) Instructors who provide the dangerous goods training as well as mentoring and coaching, they emerge with a Professional Drivers Permit and are ready to join our team."

Palesa Modiselle

Working out of Engen's Langlaagte Depot, Palesa Modiselle began driving large rigs for Fast and Fresh before joining Engen in 2006. With Engen, she has been given the opportunity to study Business and Transport Management. Now 37-years-old, Palesa, describes herself as 'very single' and finds driving fun. "like the fact that the job is challenging: while it is a big responsibility, it's great for someone who likes her company and being in control," she says. Palesa would not miss night shifts, though, and has ambitions of becoming a transport analyst in the future.

Tebogo Sekowe

Also from Langlaagte is Tebogo Sekowe who completed her learnership in 2009. She was employed on a permanent basis in 2010. The 38-year-old is married without children. "I enjoy competing within a predominantly male team, whilst also enjoying the solitude of life on the road," says Tebogo.

Nomagugu Dlamini

Her colleague Nomagugu Dlamini, who joined Engen in 2009, comments, "the amazing quality of Engen Professional Driver Learnership meant I quickly got a Code 14 and opportunity to drive dangerous goods, which is very challenging and rewarding," says Nomagugu.

Now 42-years-old, Nomagugu recognises that this kind of tough work takes a lot out of a driver. She says she would welcome moving into an office position, once she gets to the end of her road. “Ultimately, work in Dispatch would be my first choice and Engen would really benefit from the fact my trucking experience means that I know every customer, every driver, and every route.” she says.

Committed women

Engen’s Pretoria terminal manager, Kebone Dlamini appreciates the commitment she sees in Engen’s women drivers. “You get a sense that they are working for their families and that they are proud of what they do. These women are certainly on the same level, professionally, as their male counterparts.”

Professionalism and excellence go hand-in-hand in an environment that has zero tolerance for error. Twice annually, all drivers undergo assessments. Continuous improvement is fostered through on-going training. Excellence is tested and recognised through Engen’s Driver of the Year Programme, where the top driver are selected and put through their paces.

Rebecca Mangwane

Highly experienced and skilled, Rebecca Mangwane began driving trucks in 1981 and has been selected twice for Engen’s Driver of the Year Competition, winning the ‘best firefighter’ section in 2010. With four children and six grandchildren, Rebecca remains passionate about her job.

“I love my job and being on the road,” she explains. “I also appreciate that Engen gives us enough time of to rest and charge our batteries. I always have peace of mind as a result of the company’s constant focus safety. There is no margin for error in our game.”

Looking ahead, Llewelyn Snyman believes that as traditional family roles become redefined, many more women will take up the challenge of transporting dangerous goods. “Soon we will see more female faces behind the wheels as they drive day and night between depots and service stations. After all, our women drivers have proven themselves and shown that they can compete well with the guys. They embrace our company values and are dedicated to Engen.”

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