

**MEDIA STATEMENT (for immediate release)**

09 December, 2009

**MEC WANTS TO REVOKE DRIVER LICENSES TO DETER DRUNK DRIVING & SPEEDING ON KZN ROADS**

In only two days – 01<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> December - the KwaZulu-Natal Road Traffic Inspectorate has stopped 7144 vehicles on our provincial roads.

They have charged a total of 1238 drivers with various offences excluding speed camera enforcements. The total number of speed enforcements, including camera enforcements, netted 155 vehicles. At least 30 vehicles were found to be unroadworthy and removed from the road. Sadly, 18 drivers were found to driving under the influence of alcohol. Some 89 persons were driving without a valid driver's license. At least 72 vehicles were on the road without valid licenses. Fifth eight drivers were bust for not using seat belts. Four were charged for inconsiderate driving. (RTI ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS: 1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2009 TO 2<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 2009)

**DRUNKS KILL ON THE ROADS**

Automobile Association research, indicates that an estimated 50% of people who die on South African roads have a blood alcohol concentration level above 0.05g per 100 milliliters, which is the maximum legal blood alcohol limit. This is rather a staggering figure, if you consider that some 900 000 road accidents were reported to the South African Police Service in 2008 alone. Of this, at least 150 000 people were injured – and about 60 000 required hospitalization. Sadly, 14 500 of these accident victims died.

## **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO TACKLE THE “EXTRAORDINARY CRISIS ON OUR ROADS”**

“Statistics show that we have an extraordinary crisis on our roads. The major contributors to this crisis are speeding and drunk driving. To deal firmly with these twin evils, I have formed a Technical Committee to look into various pieces of legislation with a view to allowing the MEC for Transport to revoke the drivers’ licenses of the serial law breakers who are responsible for wantonly maiming and murdering our people,” said the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Willies Mchunu.

### **OUR AIM – ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION BEFORE CONVICTION**

Said Mchunu: “Our aim is to ensure public safety through administrative action that revokes one’s driver’s license immediately. The revocation process shall run parallel to the judicial one of prosecuting the driver for breaking the traffic rules. This revocation process will help to temporarily, if not permanently, remove the erratic drivers from our roads quickly while the wheel of justice grinds towards a conviction. We do not want to wait for the judicial process while the offender continues with his wayward behaviour on the road”.

### **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF LAW EXPERTS, PROSECUTION, RTI, POLICE**

The Technical Committee, according to the MEC, is a subcommittee of the KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet Cluster on Justice, Crime Prevention & Security. The team is expected to report-back to the MEC within days.

“Depending on the team’s findings, we may begin to revoke the drivers’ licenses of erratic motorists immediately, or begin a legislative process that will lead to this eventuality,” he added.

## **SUSPENDING A DRUNK DRIVER'S LICENSE IMMEDIATELY AT THE TIME OF ARREST REDUCES ALCOHOL-RELATED FATAL CRASHES**

Mchunu cited the study, published in the August 2007 in the issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research* that looked at data from 46 US states. This study is considered the most comprehensive studies on the impact of drunk-driving laws in the U.S. The study found that the revocation process reduces drunken driving fatalities by 5%, which translates to at least 800 lives being spared in the U.S. per year.

Alexander Wagenaar, a professor of epidemiology at the University of Florida's College of Medicine and the lead author of the study, says that revoking a drunk driver's license right away works better than waiting until after a conviction, which can take up to a year in some States. It is simple timing: if you do something wrong, you should suffer the consequences immediately. It's a basic behavior-curbing tenet called negative reinforcement that works on rats in the lab and just as well humans.

**Issued on behalf of the MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Hon. Willies Mchunu.**

For enquiries contact MEC's spokesperson, Bhekisisa Mncube