



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DIRECTORATE:

Private Bag X9043, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200

Communication

Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House, 172 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201

Tel: 033 355 8624 Fax: 033 355 8632

MEDIA RELEASE

18 November 2020

MEC NTULI MEETS THE TAXI INDUSTRY TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE AHEAD OF FESTIVE SEASON

As part of a series of build-up activities aimed at ensuring road safety ahead of the festive season, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Bheki Ntuli today met with members of the taxi industry to develop proactive prevention measures to curb the scourge of crashes and fatalities on provincial roads.

MEC Ntuli addressed the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) at the Coastlands Hotel in Durban on the collaborative partnership by government and Operation Hlokomela, which is the industry's initiative to promote safety in the public transport sector.

"This workshop comes at a crucial time when we have just emerged from the National Taxi Lekgotla, which paved the way for a professional and stable taxi industry of the future. This National Taxi Lekgotla was a defining moment and was indeed an important milestone for the public transport industry in the country. Our engagements today must also seek to take forward the work and the foundation we have laid during the Lekgotla. Transforming the taxi industry and building the industry we envisage cannot happen overnight, therefore, we must all be mindful of the fact that the journey we have started might be long but where there is unity of common purpose, we will succeed," said MEC Ntuli.

MEC Ntuli said the taxi industry is very important as it transports about 20 million South Africans every day, mostly the working class.

"The strategic role occupied by the taxi industry is such that the industry itself creates job opportunities to many unemployed youths, including those who do not have a formal education and qualifications. However, the painful reality must be told that some families have a painful experience of this industry because their father, mother or relative died in a horrific taxi crash involving a reckless taxi driver, who did not have proper documentation to transport commuters. Some are permanently disabled because a taxi that was not roadworthy lost control, leaving them with permanent scars that changed their lives. We are highlighting these experiences not because we want to exaggerate and sensationalize the impact the industry has caused to the destruction of human

life, but rather because we want to ensure safety on our roads and see drastic changes after this workshop,” said MEC Ntuli.

MEC Ntuli said from January to November in 2018, about 2197 people died on the roads in our province.

“There has been a slight decrease in road fatalities since 2018, however this year alone we have lost 1 492 people due to road accidents compared to 2032 people who died on our roads between January to November last year. We must therefore use this Operation Hlokomela Workshop to demonstrate what can we do differently to curb the scourge of people dying on our roads. Importantly, for this upcoming festive season, we must ensure that no taxi is driven by a driver without a Professional Driving Permit (PRDP), no taxi is driven by a drunk driver and no taxi must enter nor leave a taxi rank with an overload. Lastly, no unroadworthy taxi must embark on a trip irrespective of the distance it needs to travel, because an accident can occur within 2 kilometres after leaving the taxi rank,” said MEC Ntuli.

MEC Ntuli added that as part of the Department’s Festive Season Safety Plan the following activities have been planned:

- Emergency internal meeting of Department of Transport for RTI and Shanela supervisors.
- Engagement with Integrated Traffic Law Enforcement Committee to engage with municipalities.
- Meeting with the freight industry to discuss their role in halving accidents during the festive season and beyond.
- Engagement with SANTACO (Hlokomela Workshop taking place today) aimed at reducing road fatalities.
- Request permanent deployment of the National Traffic Police during the festive season and beyond.
- Engagement with all enforcement heads for clear directives and deliverables during the festive season and beyond.
- Table the Integrated Festive Season Plan to the JCPS Cluster and Provincial Executive Council.
- Launch of the Integrated Festive Season Safety Plan and the roll – out plan to ensure road safety.
- But over and above these interventions that we are implementing as government, there needs to be a mindset change among all road users because ‘Road Safety is Our Collective Responsibility’.

