

2745 officers will be deployed to monitor roads and enforce traffic rules and will be supported by 808 vehicles

Media and Public Statement by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma on the KZN Road Safety Plan for the Festive Season.

05 December 2024

Van Reenen Pass N3, Harrismith: Today we are launching the Festive Season Road Safety campaign as part of the preparation for the influx of holidaymakers to our province.

We are also welcoming back many people who are working outside this province but will be returning home to spend time with their loved ones.

The launch today highlights the province's commitments to reducing road crashes and fatalities by at least five per cent during 2024/25.

In addition to launching our festive season plan, we officially opened our new satellite station here in Van Reenen's Pass to ensure comprehensive coverage and visibility of law enforcement on our roads this festive season.

Right up from Van Reenen's, as you enter KZN, we will signal "alufakwa lubuya nesaphulamthetho".

The people of this country will recall that earlier this year, our province was affected by heavy snow in these parts of the province, which saw people stuck on the roads for over two days.

This pointed to a need to ensure that the Department and traffic officers have visible footprints in these parts of the province.

In addition, Van Reenen's Pass is known for having heavy traffic and a high number of accidents, particularly during seasons such as the festive season.

During last year's festive season, 14 lives were lost in the vicinity of Van Reenen's pass due to road crashes.

Therefore, it was important for us to open this Satellite Station so that we could have a 24-hour monitoring system in this area. In the event of crashes and incidents occurring on Van Reenen's Pass, it is difficult for enforcement to reach the scene, and it will be easier for enforcement to respond from the Van Reenen Station.

Eight Provincial Inspectors will be moved from RTI Ladysmith (6) and Midway RTI (2) to oversee operations at Van Reenen's Pass.

The officers will be paired with eight traffic trainees.

Over ten vehicles will be pooled from various stations to conduct operations.

All officers deployed will have the day-to-day resources needed to carry out their work in this station.

This team, complimented by RTI Ladysmith, will have 24-hour coverage, meaning an additional shift of 22h00-06h30 daily will be implemented for Van Reenen in addition to the two-shift operating system.

Looking back to the two previous years, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, this province recorded 201 crashes with 240 fatalities and 206 crashes with 250 fatalities respectively. This saw a 2,49 and 4,17 percentage increase in the two periods.

According to our analysis, most of these fatal crashes occur between 06h00 to 10h00 and 17h00 to 01h00, and the leading causes of accidents are speeding, drunken driving, fatigue and roadworthiness of vehicles.

As part of our festive season plan to intervene in these leading causes, we will mitigate speeding by conducting blitz operations (mini roadblocks) with dedicated speed operations. In addition, Road Safety Officers will be deployed to these blitz operations to engage and educate motorists on the dangers of driving.

Taverns and busy places of entertainment will also be visited by our Road Safety Officers to educate patrons on the dangers of drinking and driving.

We urge motorists to not drink and drive as the consequences are very serious and could lead to death or jail. Plan ahead. If you are going to drink alcohol, use public transport or designate a driver.

Fatigue related crashes are increasing on the N2 and N3 with the highest of these contributors being trucks on the N3 Van Reenen's Pass, Balgowan, Peter Brown and Cato Ridge sections are mostly affected road stretches and R617 as it involves long distance minibus and buses from Gauteng to the Eastern Cape.

We will intensify our blue light operations, stop and check and road patrols from right here at the Satellite station in Van Reenen's Pass to the right down to the Pinetown Spaghetti interchange.

Road Safety Officers will also visit drivers in various truck stops to create awareness on importance of resting.

To motorists we say that fatigue is a silent killer. If you on the long drive, take a break every two hours or every 20 kilometres.

We will also conduct routine inspections to check that motorists are driving roadworthy vehicles with a high focus on public transport vehicles during busy periods and weekends.

So we call upon motorists to check their vehicles before embarking on their respective trips.

In order to conduct all this work, a total of 2745 officers will be deployed to monitor roads and enforce the above measures, supported by 808 vehicles.

Every day, we will be on the road in every corner of the province conducting operations.

I'm proud to say that amongst these traffic officers will be 194 traffic trainees who will for the first time be deployed on our roads.

This will be the first major operations that these trainees who have been based at our Traffic Training College will be partaking in.

To our trainees I want to wish them all best on their first major operations and we call upon them to execute their tasks to best of their abilities and ensure that motorists remain safe on our roads.

To all our officers, we call upon you to have zero tolerance for reckless driving on our roads. We want to wish all our stakeholders and the people of KwaZulu-Natal a happy and safe festive season.

We are grateful for your support and cooperation in our road safety initiatives. Let's stay safe on our roads and remember that road safety is our collective responsibility.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements

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