



Media Statement

02 September 2018

Twenty-four hour traffic officers' presence might reduce crashes

The MEC for the Mpumalanga Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr Pat Ngomane believes that the introduction of a third shift system within the traffic law enforcement fraternity might be the solution to drastically reduce crashes in the province.

Traffic officers started to operate on this system yesterday (01 September 2018) and this means that provincial traffic officers will be deployed on a shift basis to ensure that there is law enforcement visibility after hours and on weekends.

The much awaited third shift is being implemented in order to address the challenge posed by most deadly crashes that occur on weekends and at night. It is envisaged that the move will assist to drastically reduce the level of lawlessness experienced on weekends and at night in particular drinking and driving, recklessness and general disregard of traffic regulations by most motorists.

Over the past four days, the province lost twelve people in three major crashes. The first crash occurred on Thursday on the N4 Road Van Dyksdrift off ramp in Middleburg where a truck ran over a bakkie and three people were killed including the driver of the truck. Five people including four school children were killed on Thursday morning when the taxi they were travelling in collided with a bus in KaMdladla in the Nkomazi area. The latest horrific crash occurred this morning at 02:00 on the R536 Road (between Hazyview and Kruger Gate) where four people died in a multi-vehicle collision.

“We cannot fold our arms while people are dying due to negligent driving. It is our intention to deploy all our resources to assist road users however it is a two way process where government also needs cooperation from community members, in particular road users”, says Ngomane.

According to Ngomane, the arrest of a 51-year-old man who was driving at 251km/h on a 120 km/h zone by provincial traffic officers yesterday (01 September 2018) on the N3 Road relates to negligence on the part of drivers, which should be stopped by alert officers who will be working around the clock.

The third shift arrangement was announced yesterday by the head of the department Mr William Mthomboti who was speaking during the Participatory Education Techniques (PET) finals that were conducted at Mpumalanga Traffic Training College in Mkhuhlu.

During the competition, Mthombothi called for an attitudinal change on the part of road users saying it is the only way in which the war against road crashes can be stopped. He added that young people are crucial in road safety and that initiatives such as the PET and road safety debates are implemented by government to inculcate road safety among young people.

He explained that PET gives young people an opportunity to show how best they can solve road safety challenges that they themselves have identified in their own communities. The HOD also urged learners to assist by reporting irresponsible drivers and not allowing themselves to be passengers in overloaded vehicles.

The competition gave four secondary schools' learners from Ehlanzeni, Nkangala, Gert Sibande and Bohlabela regions to compete in an effort to obtain the top spot that will enable them to represent the province at the national competition to be held during the first week of October 2018 in Mthatha, Eastern Cape Province.

Five learners from Ikhethelo Secondary School in Gert Sibande Region came out tops in the Rural Category, meanwhile Sibusisiwe Secondary School from Ehlanzeni Region became victorious in the urban category of the competition and both schools will represent the province at the national finals.

This selection comes after well-researched presentations and models provided by the learners. Their presentations among others indicated that road carnages are mostly caused by stray animals in their communities, saying that they come across such animals moving around public roads unattended.

They also complained about the lack of harsher penalties for drunken drivers and non-visibility of traffic officials where they stay, so people drive as they please and even without driving licences.

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