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The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) is an Agency of The Department of Transport and a Member of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**To : All News Editors**  
**Issued : 11 OCTOBER 2022**  
**Attention : News Reporters / Transport Reporters / Newswires**

### **CAMPAIGN TARGETING TRUCK DRIVERS TO EXERCISE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS ON RSA ROADS**

**GAUTENG:** To mark October Transport Month, the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) in collaboration with Santam, South Africa's largest short-term insurer, will undertake road safety awareness campaigns targeting truck drivers.

Two events will be held at N1 Mantsole Weighbridge in Limpopo on 13<sup>th</sup> October and at Sir Lowry's Pass in the Western Cape on 27<sup>th</sup> of October to promote safe driving and the well-being of truck drivers. This is undertaken as part of efforts to decrease avoidable crashes, injuries, and fatalities on South African roads.

The partnership, now in its fifth year is a collaborative effort with other stakeholders such as the National Bargaining Council for Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI) to raise awareness around truck driver fatigue and safety.

At the event, issues related to health, roadworthiness and the importance of rest will be addressed. Law enforcement officers from the RTMC will inspect trucks to ensure

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*\*Departmental Representative*



they are roadworthy and not overloaded. Truck drivers will also receive free medical examinations from the NBCRFLI.

The recent spate of road crashes involving trucks across the country has beamed the spotlight on the trucking industry and their role in ensuring safety on the roads. The trucking industry is a key role player in stimulating the economy by ensuring efficient movement of goods both locally and internationally.

In dealing with the recent spike in road crashes involving trucks, there are various critical factors that operators must focus on to reduce crashes. Recent data collated by the RTMC reveals the main cause of fatal crashes involving trucks are:

- Dangerous overtaking
- Disregard of Traffic lights/sign and making an illegal U turn
- Brake failure
- Fatigue
- Distracted driving
- Speeding and not keeping a safe following distance
- Burst tyres

Crash information furthermore reveals that from January 2021 to September 2022 over **378** people died in road crashes involving trucks and **343** people sustained injuries. Head on and T-bone collisions remains the most common type of crashes involving trucks and they occur because of dangerous overtaking and disregarding of road signs.

Truck drivers are in most cases required to travel long distances; this exposes them to fatigue as they spend most of their time on the roads. This may also lead to them cutting corners to reduce traveling times which may lead to speeding and dangerous overtaking. It remains the responsibility of operators to ensure that drivers do not compromise their safety and that of other road users.

Drivers themselves are not exempted from taking responsibility, as people who are behind the wheels their behaviour is equally important as it determines the outcome. There are basic principles that drivers should obey for them to minimise and eliminate road cashes and fatalities. Drivers are encouraged to:

- Have sufficient rest before and during the trip
- Consume liquids to avoid dehydration, especially water
- Take regular stops at least every 2 hours or whenever they feel tired
- Refrain from the use of mobile phones while driving
- Use seatbelts consistently
- Adjust speed according to the prevailing conditions
- Avoid road rage as it is distractive and dangerous
- Always keep a safe following distance.

Anton Cornelissen, head of Heavy Haulage at Santam, believes that road safety is everyone's responsibility, not just the government. "Truck drivers work under unique physically demanding conditions, putting them at increased risk of a range of chronic health conditions, including diabetes and hypertension. These conditions, coupled with fatigue, can negatively affect the reaction time and significantly increase the risk of road collisions", said Anton Cornelissen.

"We encourage truck drivers to get plenty of rest and a minimum of six hours of sleep before a long drive. They should also not drive continuously for more than five hours and follow this up with a break of at least 15 minutes."

Cornelissen said as a leader in heavy haulage insurance, Santam encourages fleet operators to prioritise the health and wellness of truck drivers. And through the partnership with RTMC, they endeavour to highlight the importance of driver wellness and believe that a well-rested and healthy driver is a safe driver.

**ENDS**

**ISSUED BY THE: ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (RTMC)**

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