

This festive Season
ROAD SAFETY
IS MY RESPONSIBILITY



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

01 DECEMBER 2015

**NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL OFFICES
WINDHOEK**

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL

MEDIA BRIEFING ON

ROAD SAFETY ISSUES



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IN CASE OF A ROAD CRASH

081 9682

MVA FUND ACCIDENT RESPONSE NUMBER



MVA Fund

The Motor Vehicle Accident Fund of Namibia

Driven to lend a helping hand!

This festive Season
ROAD SAFETY
IS MY RESPONSIBILITY



SPEEDING

WILL DRIVE YOU STRAIGHT TO THE GRAVE

REDUCE THE RISK OF FATAL ACCIDENTS BY TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY
THIS FESTIVE SEASON. ROAD SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.



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1. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this press conference is to share with the nation our intentions and plans in terms of road safety enhancements during the upcoming festive season. It is common knowledge that of late we have seen an upsurge of fatal accidents and serious injuries, especially on the B1 section, that is between Okahandja and Otavi. This to us is worrisome as more people are set to travel on this segment of the arterial as they take their well deserved leave during this period.

2. SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

The African Region continues to have the highest road traffic death rates. Africa records on average 26.6 fatality rate per 100 000 people. Namibia's fatality rate by far exceeds continental average as it records on average 31 fatalities per 100 000 people. The lowest rates are in the European Region, (9.3 per 100 000) people many of which have been very successful at achieving and sustaining reductions in fatality rates despite rising motorization.

It is evident that road traffic fatality rates in low-and middleincome countries are more than double those in high-income counties. The economic cost of dealing with the consequences of road trauma already runs into hundreds of millions of Namibian dollars each year and the social cost is equally high. It is estimated that the cost of road trauma (including fatalities and serious injuries) equates to approximately 3% of GDP per annum.

The costs fall on a range of parties:

- a) The costs are borne by government through the provision of emergency, health and welfare services as well as through the loss of taxation revenue.

- b) The costs are borne by families and communities who have to deal with loss of life and injured.
- c) The costs are borne by employers and insurance companies through lost productivity and premiums for workers' compensation and property-related insurance and by insurers who meet the cost of claims.

3. FESTIVE SEASON CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

As you might be aware by now, the National Road Safety Council (NRSC), in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Namibian Police Force, MVA Fund, Roads Authority, Private Sector Road Safety Forum and Local Authorities, Walvisbay Corridor Group and Civil Society plans to carry out collaborative efforts on B1 (from Windhoek to Ondangwa) and B2 (from Okahandja to Swakopmund). Be informed that this year's festive season campaign is scheduled for launch in Otjiwarongo at the road block site tomorrow at 09:00, the 2nd of December 2015 by the Minister of Works and Transport, Honourable Alpheus !Naruseb.

The Town of Otjiwarongo was chosen as the host and launch pad of this year's festive season campaign mainly because the major accidents take place on the northern and southern front of this town. Yes, most of the gruesome and most violent accidents Namibia witnesses are taking place on the B1 in Otjozondjupa Region (either side of Otjiwarongo). Allow me to use this opportunity to invite all media houses as well as our stakeholders to attend the launch tomorrow at Otjiwarongo.

4. NRSC SUPPORT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

During our on-going consultations particularly with the law enforcement, we came to appreciate the various challenges our stakeholders are faced with. The understanding enabled us as Council, to take a deliberate decision to focus our road safety interventions around three areas.

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These are persuasive targeted educational campaigns, aggressive law enforcement and responsive emergency response. To this end, we have committed about N\$ 3 million to enhance law enforcement visibility. These funds will be for the procurement of state-of-the-art automated speed law enforcement equipment with the view of increasing detection levels and the visibility of law enforcement on arterials known for reckless and inconsiderate driving.

We believe doing so will not only discourage potential violators of traffic rules and regulations but will also instill a sense of security in all law abiding road users. Delivering of these equipment will be subject to signing of Memoranda of Understanding with action plans directing the optimal utilization of these instrumentation and regular reporting of law enforcement outputs to the National Road Safety Council.

The Namibian Police Force Traffic Unit, Windhoek Municipal Police Service Traffic Unit, Swakopmund Municipal Traffic Unit and Otjiwarongo Municipal Traffic Unit are the law enforcement agencies set to receive this assistance.

5. RESERVE TRAFFIC OFFICERS: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The shortage of trained traffic officers is a common phenomenon in all law enforcements units in the country. To this end, you will also recall that in October this year, the NRSC placed in some of the local news papers with wide readership and initiated broadcast on indigenous language stations of the NBC radio, a call for Expression of Interest of those retired but ablebodied traffic officers to be deployed, on an on-and-off basis, as Reserve Traffic Officers. The said call closed on the 13th of November 2015.

We are happy to report that in total 47 expressions of interest were received, out of which 27 are fully compliant with the requirements set, while 20 fall short of fully meeting the requirements as per the advert.

Thorough vetting processes are being undertaken so as to ensure that members who were previously discharged based on disciplinary and/or criminal conduct are not re-invited to serve. Consultations are ongoing and will continue to finalize engagement modalities.

The National Road Safety Council is in the process of negotiating logistical arrangements and conditions of employment with the potential law enforcement agencies with which these members will be placed. Once these processes are finalized, all suitable candidates will be informed as to the way forward. Deployment is planned in the first quarter of next year. Once again, this measure serves to increase law enforcement visibility on our roads and ultimate mitigation of road traffic accidents.

6. GAZETTING OF EVIDENTIAL BREATH TESTING DEVICE

On the basis of the Swakopmund Court ruling of 2003, the State applied for leave to appeal against the decision of the Regional Magistrate of Swakopmund in terms of Section 310 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, as amended.

The appeal was filed against the decision of the Regional Magistrate declaring GN 100 of 2003, published in terms of Section 82 (7) of the Road Traffic and Transport Act, 1999 [Act 22 of 1999] ultra vires the Road Traffic and Transport Act, 1999. In the ruling by Acting Judge Ndou in *State v Heathcote* (CC 24/2013) [2013] NAHCMD 195 (12 JULY 2013)), the usage of the Evidential Alcohol Breath Testing Device (Dragger MK 7110), commonly known as the breathalyzer, as a means of providing breath evidence in court was discontinued, thus prompting authorities to solely rely on blood evidential process in their law enforcement campaigns on driving under the influence of alcohol.

As you may be aware, this process is rather cumbersome and has put law enforcement in a 'reverse gear'.

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Pursuant to our National Road Safety Conference held in October this year, the National Road Safety Council has spearheaded the process of reintroducing the said device. We are proud to announce that on the basis of the assurances received from the Ministry of Justice, the legal framework through which the “Evidential Breathalyser can legally be reintroduced will be published today in the Government Gazette, in compliance with the High Court ruling. The appropriate gazetting as directed by High Court will now enable us to reintroduce the usage of the Evidential Breathalyser.

With this instrument in place, the process of getting drunk drivers to account for their actions will be efficient and shorter. The National Road Safety is spearheading the establishment of dedicated traffic courts country-wide and it is certainly important to inform that the first-ever traffic court will commence adjudication of traffic offenses soon in the City of Windhoek. The necessary support as may be required to have the Windhoek court fully operational will be provided by the NRSC, funds permitting.

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Eliphas !Owos-Oab

Chairman: National Road Safety Council

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