

ROAD SAFETY AS A SOUTH AFRICAN CONCERN

ADVOCACY BRIEF

SUMMARY

The Department of Transport (DoT) is not living up to the promise of the National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2030 (NRSS). This promise is aimed at reducing road-related fatalities by 50% by 2030. Considering that road safety is an imperative, it is important to acknowledge that at the centre of it all are people. The carnage on our roads is caused by human, vehicle, and road factors.

OUTA has made the following observations:

- South Africa needs to face the realities and challenges within the transport sector.
- Transportation is a key catalyst for economic growth in South Africa, as it contributes about 6.5% to South Africa's GDP. The high number of road deaths and injuries is a national crisis.
- Transport has major implications for sustainable development and the National Development Plan (NDP). Transport is critical for ensuring poverty alleviation, improving access to markets and employment opportunities, as well as to education and seek to do so by providing a supportive environment for growth and development.
- The DoT in collaboration with the Road Transport Management Corporation (RTMC), as the lead agency on road safety and supported by all the other road transport agencies and other relevant public and private stakeholders, are responsible for leading this critical process of strategy development.
- South Africa is obliged to prioritise the National Road Safety Strategy goals and targets as promised.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW IN THE LOCAL & GLOBAL CONTEXTS

The National Development Plan 2030

The NDP 2030 outlines the following matters to be monitored and controlled including:

- Roadworthiness of vehicles;
- Vehicle driver behaviour;
- Alcohol and substance abuse; and
- Weaknesses in law enforcement.

It emphasises ambitious yet feasible target-setting and advocates a long-term trajectory with 2030 as the country's target to reduce road fatalities by 50% from the 2010 baseline of 13, 967 fatalities.

The United Nations (UN) Global Plan for the Decade of Action

The plan is based on the five (5) main pillars which reflect the specific road safety needs. These five pillars are:

- 1) Safer roads and mobility;
- 2) Safer vehicles;
- 3) Safer road users;
- 4) Post-crash response; and
- 5) Road-safety management.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW IN THE LOCAL & GLOBAL CONTEXTS

Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals act as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

There are 17 goals, all of which are interconnected.
The aim is that all 17 goals are to be achieved by 2030.



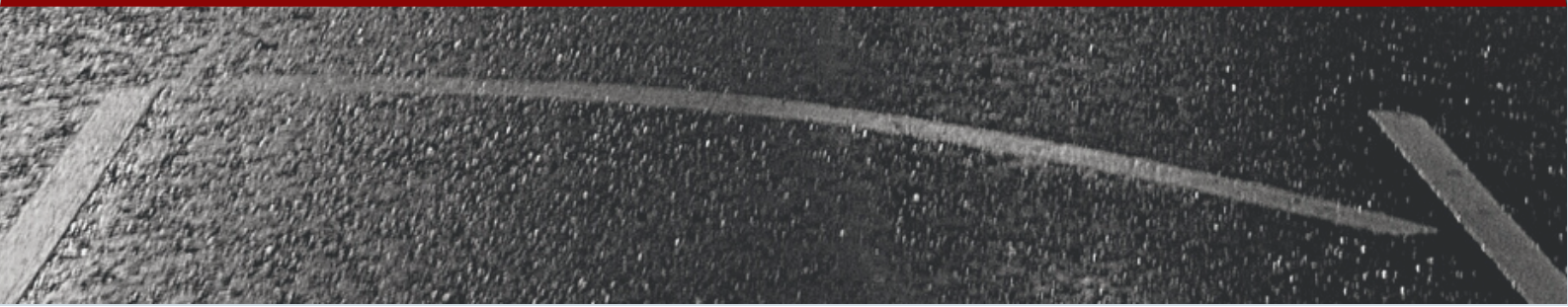
The National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2030

The year 2021 was marked as the start of a new Decade of Action for Road Safety, which aims to reduce road traffic deaths by 50% by 2030.

The National Road Safety

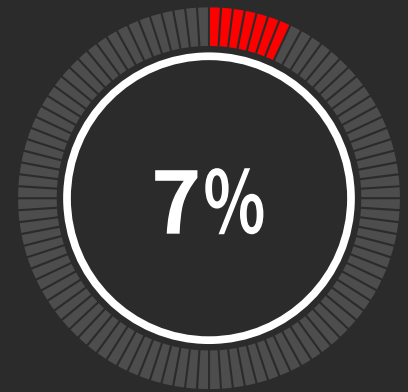
Strategy has been revised and the newly drafted strategy covers the period of 2021-2030.

The strategy's vision is to align with the United Nations Decade of Action pillars.



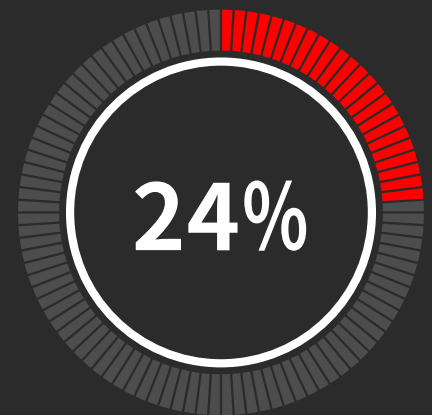
SOUTH AFRICAN FIGURES

The year 2020 and 2021 was an exceptional year. There was a 7% drop in road fatalities over the 2020 festive season compared to the year before and a 10.3% decline in fatal crashes year on year. The main reason for this drop was the lockdown imposed in the country in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The lives of the most vulnerable road users, those walking and cycling, are often most at stake.



OUR ROAD BEHAVIOUR

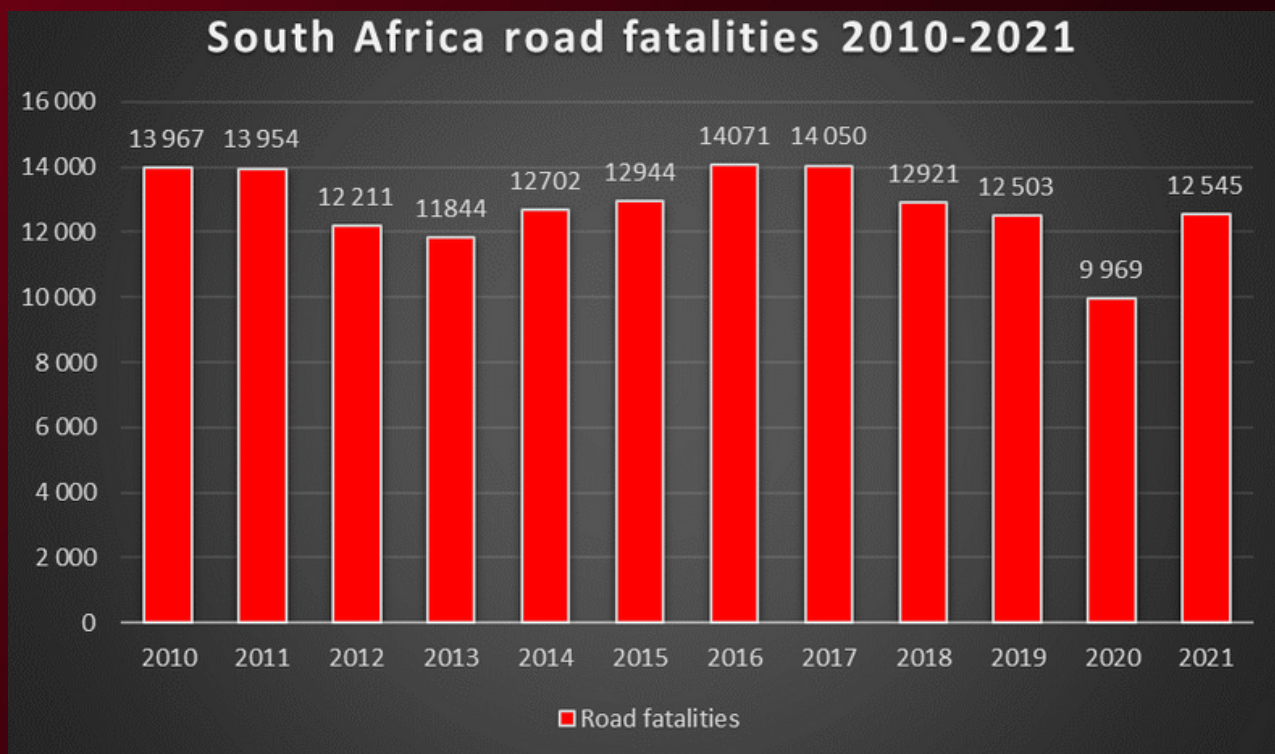
Human factors play a significant role in most crashes. The RTMC notes that female fatalities decreased from 28% in 2022 to 19% in 2023, while male fatalities rose from 67% in 2022 to 70% of the victims known. Pedestrians made up a large portion of the road users who died on our roads, accounting for 44.4% of all deaths, followed by passengers at 27.7%. Drivers fatalities made up 25.6% of the road user population, followed by cyclists at 1.3% and unknown road users at 1%. Human causes, which include careless and negligent driving, were the main cause of all fatalities, accounting for 96% followed by environmental and road factors accounting for 4.5%, and 1.1% accounting for vehicle factors.



THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIGURES

Number of road fatalities 2010 to 2021

South Africa has extremely high crash rates. We are failing to apply road safety best practices. 1 451 persons lost their lives in road accidents in South Africa over the holiday season of 2022–2023, a 13.9% decrease from the same period the previous year (1 685). When compared to the 2019–2020 period, 1 616 people passed away, the year 2018 mortality report of Statistics South Africa reflects that transport accidents are at the very least the third most common cause of non-natural deaths in South Africa, making up 12.5% of all non-natural deaths and 1.4% of all deaths. According to the RTMC, they take note that 24% of the fatal crashes in SA are linked to speeding.



Data from Road Traffic Management Corporation : South Africa Road fatalities 2010-2021: <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/south-africa-road-safety.pdf>

THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIGURES

Number of fatalities per province

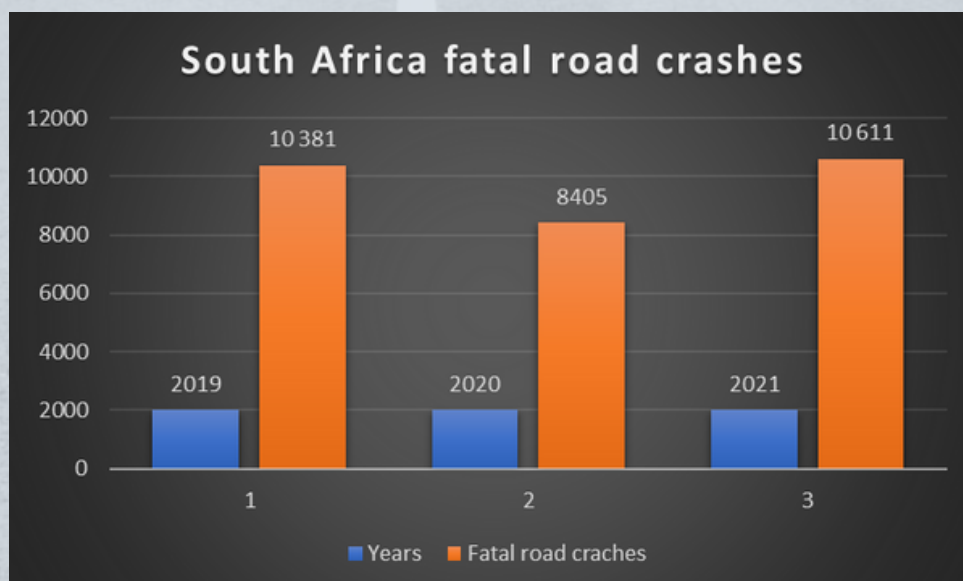
According to the RTMC, the number of fatalities documented increased by 25% throughout the time period under consideration (two festive seasons). In this sense, all provinces have seen an increase. Western Cape has had the biggest increase in terms of absolute figures, with 97 fatal crashes, followed by Gauteng and North West, with 53 and 51, respectively. Northern Cape experienced the biggest percentage rise of 97%, followed by Western Cape with a 76% increase.

Number of Fatalities per Province										
Year	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LI	MP	NC	NW	WC	South Africa
2020-2021	227	111	238	281	194	148	33	91	128	1 451
2021-2022	231	129	291	300	231	194	65	142	225	1 808
Change	4	18	53	19	37	46	32	51	97	357
%Change	2	16	22	7	19	31	97	56	76	25

Data from: https://www.rtmc.co.za/images/rtmc/docs/traffic_reports/festive/2021---2022-Festive-State-of-Road-Safety-Report-FINAL.pdf

Fatal road crashes 2019 to 2021

Fatal road crashes at an increase of 2.2% between year 2019 and 2020 as compared to the 26.2% significant increase between year 2020 and year 2021.



Data from: https://www.rtmc.co.za/images/rtmc/docs/traffic_reports/festive/2021---2022-Festive-State-of-Road-Safety-Report-FINAL.pdf

THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIGURES

Number of fatal crashes per province

The RTMC recorded the number of fatal crashes per province during two holiday seasons (2020/2021 and 2021/22). For the time under consideration, a 15% growth was documented on a national level. with 1 209 fatal crashes in 2020/2021 and an increase of 1 395 in 2021/2022. On a percentage basis, the highest percentage distribution is from Western Cape which increased by 62%, while the Northern Cape increased by 58%. The lowest percentage distribution is from Eastern Cape with -2%, and 0% for KwaZulu-Natal.

Number of Fatal Crashes over the Festive Season per Province								
Year	EC	FS	GP	KZN	NC	NW	WC	RSA
2020-2021	188	75	222	255	31	78	106	1 209
2021-2022	184	54	261	255	49	99	172	1 395
Change	-4	9	39	0	18	21	66	18
%Change	-2	12	18	0	58	27	62	15

Data from: https://www.rtmc.co.za/images/rtmc/docs/traffic_reports/festive/2021---2022-Festive-State-of-Road-Safety-Report-FINAL.pdf

THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIGURES

Festive seasons 2020 to 2023

The data published for the festive season road deaths per province shows that KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng recorded a high number of deaths with 275 deaths in 2021/2022. In 2022/2023 Northern Cape recorded a low in fatalities of 51 deaths and 91 for North West. RTMC data shows that 1 451 people died on South Africa's roads during the 2022/23 festive period – a 13.9% decrease in road fatalities from the previous year (1 685). For the 2022/2023 festive period, the number of fatal crashes also decreased from 1 295 in 2021/22 to 1 211. Most accidents were recorded during the week of 15 to 21 December 2022 and 22 to 28 December 2022, which registered 327 and 316 fatalities. Gauteng recorded the highest number of road deaths, a 5.5% increase of 290 fatalities compared to 275, with the Boksburg tanker explosion also contributing to statistics.

	Festive 2020		Festive 2021		Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23
Province	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Fatalities	Fatalities
Eastern Cape	0	0	5	37	210	205
Free State	4	25	3	26	119	117
Gauteng	1	2	0	0	275	290
KwaZulu-Natal	0	0	4	21	275	240
Limpopo	3	18	6	44	226	179
Mpumalanga	2	9	6	35	189	144
North West	1	5	4	21	65	51
Northern Cape	0	0	1	7	119	94
Western Cape	2	13	5	33	207	131
Total	13	72	34	224	1685	1451

THE SOUTH AFRICAN FIGURES

Easter 2023

This year's Easter road deaths increased by 40%. This shows how the Department of Transport regresses in ability to manage road safety.

OUTA has expressed concern over the dire situation of a 40% increase in road fatalities in South Africa during the Easter period, which has claimed the lives of 225 people. This increase in road fatalities sends a clear signal that the South African government is ineffective and unable to deal with this ongoing problem.

Moreover, despite the claims of increased policing visibility during high traffic volume periods such as Easter or Christmas, no different or impactful initiatives have been introduced by the Department of Transport to tackle road safety in South Africa. In recent court hearings, the Department of Transport appears to be relying on planned amendments to the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences Act (AARTO) as a solution to the problem.

OUTA believes that these amendments will not reduce road fatalities, as they have not done so in the two metros where they have been applied (Joburg and Tshwane) over the past decade.

OUTA firmly believes that a sustainable response to road safety requires an adequately funded lead agency, more visible policing, and a national strategy with measurable targets to tackle road safety issues. Moreover, accountability should be attributed to those in various positions when such targets are not achieved.

OUR YOUTH ON THE ROAD

In 2022 the RTMC reported that a total of 8 547 young people between 21 and 34 years of age died on the roads in the past three years (2019 to 2021), and the worst affected category is among those aged 30 and 34 years, with 3 661 of them dying because of road crashes.



The provinces with the highest number of youth road fatalities are Gauteng with 1 380 deaths, followed by KwaZulu Natal with 1 235 fatalities, Eastern Cape with 1 201 and Limpopo with 1 127. These four provinces account for 57.8% percent of fatalities among the youth. Mpumalanga accounted for 968 fatalities among the youth, followed by Western Cape with 932, Free State 830, North West 640, and Northern Cape 234 deaths.



It has been estimated that fatal crashes cost the economy an amount of R188.31 billion last year (RTMC: 2021) based on the 10 611 fatal crashes recorded by the RTMC in the period with the loss of 12 545 lives.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Accurate road injury data should include information from hospitals, and not only from police records. South Africa needs to adopt the framework as it will assist with accurate reporting and will influence policy change.



The Transport policies, strategies and guidelines should be aimed at providing a safe, reliable, effective and integrated transport operation.



Globally, countries are moving towards a zero-tolerance policy on accidents and transforming urban and road design for safety. Looking at some of the international best practices can be of great use to improve the safety standards of roads in SA.



OUTA suggests that it is high time the Department of Transport engages meaningfully with credible stakeholders in the transport space and civil society organisations such as OUTA to find solutions to these challenges. The organisation looks forward to engaging with Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga on this and other pressing matters regarding South Africa's transport problems.

WHAT WE NEED FROM OUR GOVERNMENT

Our government should define the following areas as action areas to improve on road safety:

- Traffic law enforcement and law compliance;
- Operator, vehicle and driver fitness;
- Infrastructure, management and information systems; and
- Communication, public education and participation.

Government should:

- Design a reliable framework for regular collection and reporting of road traffic crash data;
- Develop a database that includes casualty figures, data on mobility, crashes, behaviours, attitudes, and enforcement to facilitate the interpretation of road safety trends;
- Establish an adequately funded lead agency to tackle road safety issues;
- Increase visibility of policing to address road safety concerns;
- Develop a national strategy with measurable targets to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries;
- Hold accountable those in various positions when such targets are not achieved;
- Engage with credible stakeholders in the transport space and civil society organisations to find solutions to road safety challenges;
- Refrain from relying solely on planned amendments to AARTO as a solution to road safety concerns; and
- Educate the public about the importance of adhering to traffic rules and enforcement.

THE WAY FORWARD

To address these issues, it is crucial to develop, implement and monitor evidence-based road safety policies. Such policies can only be successful when one understands the size of the problem, its characteristics, and the factors that contribute to road crashes. Without such indicators, policymakers and other stakeholders cannot assess the effectiveness of policies and interventions or identify the measures that still need to be taken.

South Africa should adopt a Safe System which is based on the underlying principles that human beings make frequent mistakes that lead to road accidents. It is shared responsibility between stakeholders (road users, road managers, vehicle manufacturers, etc.) to take appropriate actions to ensure that road collisions do not lead to serious or fatal injuries.

It is therefore important that SA develops or adopt the strategy that will bring change in behaviour within the social environment, envisioning that the result thereof will be a marked improvement in road user behaviour, increased awareness of road safety and greater responsibility for road safety by all road users in the South African society. Furthermore, the strategy that will focus on better provision of facilities for all road users (vehicles, vehicle occupants and pedestrians) and an improved and synergised interface between all users and components of the road networks.

Based on the literature review from the previous research in South Africa and the world, it is evident that South Africa needs to intensely improve its road safety management. Road safety is everyone's responsibility, individually and collectively.



PROUDLY SUBMITTED
BY

OUTA

ORGANISATION UNDOING TAX ABUSE