

Buckle-up and Plan Your Journey This Easter Season

The Easter holiday season traffic build up is about to start on all freeways, with thousands of vehicles an hour embarking on road trips to the coast, mountains and bush. The mass exodus will build up and reach a crescendo over the Easter weekend from Thursday afternoon (13 th April) as holiday makers set off and pilgrims embark on their annual journey for the Zion Christian Church Easter service.

Regrettably numbers of fatalities over holiday periods do increase, but are not typically out of line with national averages given the far greater volume of cars on the road. Nonetheless, motorists need to exercise extra caution. Bakwena Platinum Corridor Concessionaire, operator of the N1N4 toll route, experiences the biggest build-up of all in the volume traffic on its N1 route. Bakwena spokesperson Charmaine van Wyk urges motorists to obey the rules of the road, to abide by speed limits and to take extra precautions, especially at traffic hotspots.

South Africa ranks 42nd in terms of road fatalities as a percentage of population (not motorists), according to a 2015 report by the World Resources Institute. Crossing our border provides little relief as African countries occupy 13 of the world's worst 15 countries.

“There will be extra patrolling and high visibility by law enforcement officers,” she says. She especially urges motorists to avoid unsafe overtaking; to not drink and drive; avoid driving distracted; and to not continue driving when tired or fatigued. “The latter can often occur when motorists set off at the end of a day's work, rather than leaving after they have rested. These are the most common causes of accidents and fatalities,” adds Van Wyk.

She offers the following additional tips:

- Peak travel times are expected on N1 northbound on:
 - o Thursday, 13 April between 12h00 and 21h00;
 - o Friday, 14 April between 09h00 and 12h00; and on
 - o N1 southbound Monday, 17 April between 09h00 and 21h00.

- It is advisable for drivers to plan their journeys in advance to avoid travelling in the peak period. Bakwena confirms there will be no construction or lane closures over the Easter period, and all lanes at plazas will be open, including reversible lanes in peak directions. This is to ensure smoother traffic flow on the routes that Bakwena manages.
- Check tyres, lights, brakes, water/oil levels, and windscreen wipers are functional. This should be standard for any long journey to mitigate avoidable road incidents.
- Maintain a safe following distance of at least three seconds or more between vehicles. This should be increased at times of low visibility.
- Do not drink and drive. “Drinking and driving is a major contributor to crashes on South African roads. Visible policing and increased patrols by our own vehicles will be a priority along the N1N4 routes. The police and traffic authorities will deal with those caught driving drunk to the fullest extent of the law,” says Van Wyk.
- On long trips, take breaks every two hours or every 200km, and immediately stop and rest when feeling tired.
- Invest in an etag for a quick, convenient and efficient tolling experience. “Having an e-tag is a fast and convenient means of payment and reduces the need to stop at tolls or keep cash on hand for toll fees and/or use of credit card.”
- Do not stop on the side of the road unless you are faced with an emergency and ensure you are as far as possible to left of yellow line.

Van Wyk concludes: “To ensure motorists have a safe and pleasant trip on the N1N4 routes this Easter, Bakwena has again partnered with Imperial Road Safety and Hyundai SA, to double up on patrol vehicles. These additional vehicles will effectively assist with more visible policing, crash assistance as well as assist road users who find themselves in difficulty along the route.”

In case of an emergency, road users simply have to call our Customer Care centre on 0800-Bakwena(0800-2259362) and use the information displayed on the blue kilometre board markers to provide details of their location when reporting an accident or requesting assistance. Additionally, motorist