
TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 10 DECEMBER 2009
EMBARGO: NONE

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND RESCUE SERVICES (EMRS) WILL BE ALL OUT OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health's Emergency Medical and Rescue Services (EMRS) will be all out to ensure that they provide high quality pre-hospital care to those in need.

Out-of-hospital emergency medical services, also known as pre-hospital Emergency Medical Services, typically refer to the delivery of medical care at the site of the adverse medical incidents. Appropriate services for victims can prevent unnecessary deaths, future fatalities, reduce the amount of short-term and long-term disability, and help those affected to cope with the impact of the incidents on their lives.

The KZN EMRS has identified pick days for traffic as being those around schools closing dates, factory/industries closing dates, Christmas, New Year and opening of schools and factories. Based on those days EMRS develop a plan called *Alpha Operations* plan to cater for the increased demand of emergency medical services. The main objective for the operation is to provide rapid and effective response to all incidents within KZN and its immediate borders and to improve access to EMRS at known accident points.

The operation will start on the 11th December 2009 until the 12th January 2010 for 24 hours. Daily ambulance fleet will be maintained at 100% through out the festive season. There are 52 additional ambulances to normal daily fleet that will be deployed at strategic points on the KZN major routes. Additional support will include; 10 Advanced Life Support Units, 12 Rescue Units, 7 Mass Casualty Buses, 2 Rotor Wing Aircraft, 1 Fixed Wing Aircraft, 1 SA Air Force Air Support, and 23 Management Units (also provide Advanced Life Support).

"Adequate functioning of pre-hospital care system depends on the availability and coordination of different elements. These elements include an informed public capable of recognizing medical emergencies, a network of ambulances and transport units able to provide specialized care to the most seriously ill or injured, an emergency number (10177 in our case), and well-trained pre-hospital and emergency personnel. Our personnel have to be further imbued with integrity, compassion, respect, empathy and accountability. We are satisfied that our services will be able to meet the demands of the festive season. We urge the public to use the emergency number, 10177, in case of emergencies" says the MEC for Health; Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo.

ISSUED BY:
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
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