

13 December 2016

KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo announces readiness of EMS services for 2016 festive season at Marian hill toll plaza

Our coming together in a joint initiative with the Department of Transport, Community Safety and Liaison marks the beginning of the KwaZulu-Natal Road Safety Campaign for 2016 festive season.

It symbolizes KwaZulu-Natal Government commitment to support initiatives that prevent the loss of life and threatening injury for both our visitors as well as our citizens.

In essence, during this time of the year the capability of the Emergency Medical Services, Road Traffic Inspectorate, Fire Emergency Services, South African Police Services, and other Law Enforcement Agencies are put to the test.



Further, the involvement of the Emergency Medical Services and the Department of Health signifies our own contribution to the 2011-2020 United Nations Road Safety Declaration which calls for the reduction of road fatalities by 50%.

As a Department, we have long accepted that our Province attracts a large number of local and international travellers and visitors at this time of the year. These visitors inadvertently end up needing emergency care and hospitalisation when involved in accidents. This as expected puts a big strain to our already overburdened healthcare institution.

For all the crashes that occur, the Department of Health has to bear the brunt and the cost as almost all the victims end up either in our hospitals or in our mortuaries.

It starts with our Paramedics who are routinely the first on the scene of an accident who have to quickly assess the situation and determine the proper course of action for each patient.

At healthcare institutions, we rely on these Paramedics for all the prehospital care as they are trained to resuscitate and/or stabilise patients using sophisticated techniques, equipment and drugs whilst driving the patient to earmarked hospital.

It remains our fervent wish that more and more people can strive to obey the rules of the road as most of those that get involved in accidents end up in our Intensive Care Unit which are very costly to manage.

Even after their spell in the ICU's; most accident victims go on to require after-

hospitalisation care which then puts another strain on family members who have to care for this member who may have lost a limb or is now incapable of taking good care of him/herself.

One other purpose for our today's launch is to announce that our Forensic Pathology Service is on standby and working closely with the South African Police Services in collection of deceased bodies from both the accident and crime scenes. We have as such made available telephone numbers that can be used for rapid response in case of unnatural deaths:

- South Africa Police Service (SAPS) Provincial JOC numbers; 031 325 6044, 031 325 4720, 031 325 4721.
- Durban Central SAPS Radio Control numbers; 031 325 6814, 031 325 6802, 031 325 6816
- Pietermaritzburg SAPS Radio Control numbers; 033 845 6500.
- Department of Health, Provincial Health Operation Centre (PHOC); 080 000 5133.
- South African National Defence Force (SANDF), Military Police numbers; 031 451 1899, 031 451 1001, 031 451 1888, 031 451 1891.



All this is in addition to our deployment of Emergency Care personnel and vehicles for rapid and effective response to all incident prone zones in KZN, especially at the following routes:

- N3 from Durban to Van Reenen
- N2 from Durban to Port Edward,
- N3 Durban to Mtubatuba,
- N2 Mtubatuba to Pongola,
- Ladysmith N11 to Amajuba Pass,
- Port Shepstone to Kokstad,
- Pietermaritzburg R56 to UMzimkhulu,
- Pietermaritzburg R617 to Bulwer,
- Bulwer to Kokstad and Ixopo to Umzinto.

Let us all work together to ensure road safety and also appreciate the work performed by the EMS; Police; Rescue Services and Forensic Pathology teams. For all these personnel, in essence, the holiday season is never a time of joy spend with loved ones but a very strenuous period where they mostly deal with all the blood and broken limbs from mangled crashes.

Lastly let all those eligible go and donate blood; you may never know as whether you yourself may need it.



ENDS
Photos by Themba Mngomezulu