

Festive season driving: Accidents with multiple fatalities increase on SA roads

South Africa has recorded a 142% spike in road crashes with multiple fatalities at the mid-point of the festive season, resulting in 17 crashes this year compared to seven over the same period last year.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

“We are seriously concerned about the high number of major crashes, where five or more people perish in a single incident,” transport minister Fikile Mbalula said on Wednesday.

Addressing a media briefing where he released the 2021 Preliminary Festive Season Road Statistics, Mbalula said the number of fatalities from major crashes also increased from 34 last year to 111 this year.

“Year-on-year, the number of fatalities has marginally declined by 3.1% from 848 in 2020 to 822 this year. Human factor still remains the main causal factor for most of the crashes during this period,” the Minister said.

Statistics revealed that people who died on the roads this year were passengers at 35%, followed by pedestrians at 34%,

drivers at 26%, motorcyclists at 1% and bicycle riders at 1%.

“The vehicle types that had the most contribution to fatal crashes were minibuses, light delivery vehicles and trucks,” the Minister said.

Most fatal crashes happen during the early hours of the morning and early evening. They occur between Friday and Sunday.

Fatalities increase in five provinces

“Our statistics show that fatalities increased in five provinces, with [the] exception of the Free State, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

“The Eastern Cape recorded the highest decline of 30.7% in fatalities, from 127 fatalities in 2021 to 88 so far this year,” Mbalula said.

The Free State recorded an 8.3% decline in fatalities, from 60 in 2020 to 55 over the same period, while Limpopo recorded a 16.8% decrease in fatalities, from 107 in 2020 to 89 over the same period. KwaZulu-Natal recorded a 24.3% decrease in fatalities from 173 in 2020 to 131 over the same period.



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The Northern Cape recorded an increase of 60%, from 20 fatalities in 2020 to 32 over the same period, while the Western Cape recorded an increase of 49.3%, from 71 fatalities in 2020 to 106 over the same period. Mpumalanga recorded an increase of 26.4%, from 87 in 2020 to 110 over the same period.

The North West recorded an increase of 10.9%, from 55 in 2020 to 61 over the same period, and Gauteng recorded an increase of 1.4%, from 148 in 2020 to 150 over the same period.

Obey the rules of the road

“Despite these grim statistics, it is important to note that thousands of road users continue to respect the law and obey the rules of the road. This is a responsibility we must all take seriously in order to make a difference and ensure that our roads are safe to travel on.

“Our traffic law enforcement officers continue to punch above their weight in their planning for a safer festive period. However, the responsibility for safety rests with all of us as road users,” the Minister said.

He called on citizens to exercise this responsibility to make South African roads safe.

“As the holiday season gets into full gear, we anticipate that a high number of vehicles will be crossing our land border posts in the coming few days, as our compatriots from the region will also be making the journey home for Christmas.

“We will therefore strengthen our efforts by adding immigration and cross-border officials in our operations to strengthen our campaign,” Mbalula said.

A total of 710,970 vehicles were stopped and checked during the first half of the festive season campaign, with the intention to remove unroadworthy vehicles from our roads.

A total of 1 561 vehicles were discontinued, 1,820 were impounded and 2,639 drivers were arrested for various offences ranging from drunk driving to excessive speeding and operating vehicles without a driving licence.

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