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More than 5 000 lives lost on roads in three festive periods

Black men make up more than 80% of deaths

By **Isaac Mahlangu** and **Peter Ramothwala**

More than 4 000 black men lost their lives on SA roads in the past three years during the festive season period.

Black men account for more than 80% of all fatalities, Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) figures revealed.

Of all 5 004 lives lost in road fatalities over the past three festive seasons, more than 4 450 were black African males.

KwaZulu-Natal was leading with the highest number of fatal crashes since the 2014 fes-

tive season.

Gauteng, Eastern Cape and Limpopo also recorded a high number of fatal crashes.

Saturdays tend to record more accidents than any other day, consistently recording more than 20% of all accidents in the past three years.

Fatal crashes mainly claimed the lives of pedestrians and passengers, with taxis and trucks among the modes of transport most likely to be involved in road accidents.

More than 40% of 1 714 fatalities in the 2016/2017 festive season were passengers, while around 35% were pedestrians.

RTMC spokesman Simon Zwane said its road safety campaign would focus on driving under the influence of alcohol which was a big problem around this time.

"Most motorists are home

holidaying and tend to drink alcohol and drive while drunk ... they then knock pedestrians who would be walking under the influence of alcohol as well," Zwane said.

He said more than 2 000 arrests had been made since the beginning of the festive season and more than half of them were for driving under the influence of alcohol.

"Taxis and buses are also receiving attention as we don't

want people to die in unroadworthy taxis with worn-out tyres ... if we stop them they taken off the road."

National Taxi Alliance spokesman Theo Malele urged taxi drivers to refrain from using cellphones while ferrying passengers.

"We call on commuters to be vigilant against ill-disciplined drivers and report them to their respective associations.

Malele said they would like to play an active role in helping to reduce road fatalities.

"We appeal for drivers to take a rest after every two hours and stretch their legs," Malele said.

Lives lost on SA roads during festive season:

- 2016/2017 - 1 714;
- 2015/2016 - 1 755; and
- 2014/2015 - 1 535.

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