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Department:  
**Public Works, Roads and Transport**  
North West Provincial Government  
Republic of South Africa

Modiri Molema Road  
Old Parliament Complex  
Mmabatho, 2735  
Private Bag X 2080, Mmabatho, 2735  
Republic of South Africa  
Tel.: +27 (18) 387 2447  
Fax: 086 535 1538  
Website: [www.nwpg.gov.za/public-works](http://www.nwpg.gov.za/public-works)

## **Moves to limit to 100km/h North West government fleet in an attempt to reduce accident rates and cut down on fuel costs. ...**

**Date:** Monday, April 25, 2011

Repairs to North West state vehicles involved in accidents has cost taxpayers more than R2.3 million prompting the provincial government to seriously consider introducing a governed top speed of 100km/h on more than 98 percent of its fleet.

Spokesperson for the department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Matshube Mfoloe, confirmed today (Tues) that provincial government vehicles were involved in 333 road accidents in the past financial year which ended on March 31.

Addressing a pre-Budget Speech media conference in Mafikeng today (Tues), Mfoloe said his department was ``exploring legal methods'' of restricting the speed limit to 100km/h on pool vehicles, excluding executive and emergency vehicles.

He said this may help reduce the rate at which government vehicles were involved in accidents and possibly ``slash by more than half'' the current excessive use of fuel, and speeding fines.

The department is the custodian of government fleet in the province. It purchases vehicles on conditional grants from the national government and distributes upon purchase, vehicles to all provincial departments.

``Of extreme concern to all of us, is an amount of more than R2.3 million the department has spent in repairing damages to vehicles. This is money down the tube, if one considers the difference this `substantial amount' could have had on the lives of the poorest of the poor households in some of our villages,'' said Mfoloe.

He said the worrying costs incurred arising from accidents repairs, was further compounded by ``insufficient budget allocation'' over the past years for fleet vehicles. This has resulted in the provincial pool fleet not been replenished for the past three years.

``Our provincial pool fleet is older than five years and if not attended to soon, it may affect service delivery. The older our pool fleet is, the more expensive it becomes to maintain and service,'' Mfoloe said.

He said with fuel prices escalating ``at an alarming rate'' and not ruling out the possibility of yet another fuel increase in the near future, the use of state vehicles required serious monitoring to avoid ``unauthorized use and abuse''.

Mfoloe cautioned that the misuse and abuse of state vehicles- use of a state vehicle without authority- is tantamount to ``theft'' which is a dismissible offence.

``We are also exploring the possibility of centralising of the management of all types of fleet vehicles- passenger and road works- to eliminate duplication of services. This will improve also improve our management of fuel and the licensing of all vehicles,'' he said.

On the flip side, Mfoloe said the department was working towards ``collapsing'' the advantage and stranglehold enjoyed by established contractors awarded government tenders for major infrastructure projects.

This he said was in order to give small contractors and opportunity to also develop.

``That is the only way to go in order to give emerging contractors an opportunity to graduate from their ever emerging status. There is an army out there of very promising emerging contractors who can also deliver quality service and deliver on time, if given a chance,'' said Mfoloe.

Meanwhile, Mfoloe confirmed the highlights of MEC Mahlakeng Mahlakeng third policy speech in the provincial legislature tomorrow (Tuesday), would focus on job creation opportunities through Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The refurbishing of Mafikeng and the successes and challenges with regards to scholar transport including roads and building infrastructure.

He said the department required at least R2billion to adequately address the road maintenance backlog in the province, excluding repairs to 10 bridges in villages around Madibeng (Brits) districts that were damaged during the recent floods.

The department's entire budget for the currently financial year is more than R2.8billion.

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