

Road safety



According to the Automobile Association (AA) of South Africa, in order to make the roads safer, we all need to lead by example and be the safest of drivers. South Africa has one of the highest road death rates in the world with almost 32 deaths per 100 000 people, or 1200 people a month.

In order to reduce this alarming figure, every person on the road, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists, needs to take responsibility for their own safety and that of others by following these essential road safety tips:

- Always wear a seatbelt and make sure that everyone in the car is wearing a seatbelt.
- Ensure that car seats for children are installed and used correctly.
- Never drink and drive. Statistics indicate that 50% of road deaths result from driving drunk.
- Driving while tired can be as dangerous as drunk driving so avoid driving if you are fatigued.
- If you are driving long distances, be sure to stop and refresh, relax, and stretch every two hours or 200km.
- Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists are the most vulnerable road users, so be aware of them and avoid them at all costs. Give them a wide berth and be aware that their behaviour can be unpredictable.
- Always wear safety equipment when riding a bicycle or motorcycle and follow the rules of the road.
- Always obey the speed limit.
- Avoid confrontation on the road. Stay calm and don't shout, gesture, or intimidate other road users.
- Change lanes only when it is safe and prudent to do so.
- Avoid using your mobile phone while driving as it is illegal and extremely dangerous.
- Ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy.
- Service your vehicle at regular intervals, with an accredited workshop.
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted by passengers, mobile phones, or anything external to the car such as billboards.
- Maintain a safe following distance of two seconds and keep a safe stopping distance.
- If you break down, turn the hazard lights on immediately, move the car to safety out of the flow of traffic, and don't get out of the car unless it is safe to do so. Call for professional help.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility and we can only ensure that we are all safe on the roads if we all obey the rules of the road and drive safely, courteously, and carefully. Your life is your first priority; practise road safety.