

PRESS RELEASE

To : All News Editors
Issued : 30 May 2018
Attention : News Reporters / Transport Reporters, Newswires



FAILURE TO USE SEATBELTS A MAJOR RISK IN SAVING CHILDREN ON SA ROADS

GAUTENG -: We are raising our call on all stakeholders and parents to invest in child seats or restraints, municipalities to provide speed calming measures around schools and design safe play areas to reduce the number of children dying on South African roads. Infants and children need child restraint systems that accommodates their size and weight, and can adapt to cope with the different stages of their development.

The Road Traffic Management Corporation marks the Child Protection Week, which runs from 27 May to 3 June under the theme: "***Let us protect all children to move South Africa forward***". The week is used annually to raise awareness for the rights of children. It aims to mobilise all sectors of society to care for and protect children.

The RTMC also advocates the use of appropriate child restraints that are designed to take into account the child's developmental stage. Child restraints are very effective and it has been shown that, if properly installed and used, they can reduce road deaths among infants

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by 70%, among small children, aged 1–4 years reduce by 54%. And reduce the chances of sustaining clinically significant injuries by 59% among children aged 4–7 years

Appropriate child restraint systems are specifically designed to protect infants and young children from injury during a collision or a sudden stop by restraining their movement away from the vehicle structure and distributing the forces of a crash over the strongest parts of the body, with minimum damage to the soft tissues.

Child restraint are required by law in South Africa. The failure to use a seat-belt is a major risk factor for road traffic deaths and injuries among ages of 0-14 years. Children who were not wearing their seat-belts at the time of a collision account for the majority of occupant road traffic fatalities according to traffic reports analysis.

The majority of children died as pedestrians because the road network is in many places not designed with children in consideration. At total of 764 child pedestrians died in 2016 compared to 743 who died in 2017. Furthermore; a total of 428 passengers in the age group (0-14) died in 2016 compared to 334 in 2017. Fatalities for the passengers aged between 0-14 reduced by 22% in comparison of the two years, 2016 and 2017, also; fatalities for pedestrians aged between 0-14 reduced by 3% in comparison of the two years.

The RTMC supports WHO recommendations that spaces for walking and cycling should be given priority in the design of roads to improve child safety. We also support calls for the construction of traffic-calming measures to reduce speed and the provision of safe spaces for play and physical exercise.

ISSUED BY: THE ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (RTMC)

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ENDS

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