

Road Fatalities in the Limpopo Province in South Africa

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ABSTRACT South Africa has high fatality rates on its roads. Between 2004 and 2008, the country had at least 50,000 fatal road accidents which caused over 70,000 deaths. The Limpopo Province contributed more than 5000 fatal road accidents with well over 6000 deaths during the same period. The most vulnerable road users to fatal road traffic accidents are the drivers, passengers, and pedestrians who collectively account for more than 5000 fatalities in the province between 2004 and 2008. The study, using data of 2008 from the Road Traffic Management Corporation, establishes that the leading contributory factors to fatal crashes and fatalities in Limpopo are human factors such as “speed too high for circumstances”, “pedestrian (jay walking)”, “overtaking when unlawful or unsafe” and “hit-and-run”; road and environmental factors such as “sharp bend”, “poor visibility (rain, mist, dust, smoke, dawn)”, “poor condition of road surface”, “animals (wild or stray)” and “road surface slippery/wet”; and vehicle factors such as “tyre (burst prior to crash)”, “brakes that are faulty” and “overloading”. The study reveals that the human factors accounted for 80.1 percent of fatal crashes and 84.9 percent of fatalities; road and environmental factors accounted for 11.5 percent of fatal crashes and 7.7 percent of fatalities, and vehicle factors accounted for 8.4 percent of fatal crashes and 7.4 percent of fatalities.