



SAFETY ALERT 05 / 2014

SAFETY ALERT!

Driver fatigue

The purpose of this safety alert is to alert employers and employees of the risk and consequences of fatigue when drivers don't get enough rest.

Background

MAKROSAFE clients reported over **154** incidents in the previous year, in which employees were involved in MVA's (Motor Vehicle Accidents). In total 5 fatalities were reported and **991** working days were lost as various employees were booked off due to injury. The total financial impact was calculated to be approximately **R5,251,714.00**.

One driver was transporting employees to a work-site when the vehicle was involved in an accident and overturned. One passenger in the vehicle sustained multiple injuries and was off work for **120** days. The cost of the driver's injuries to the company amounted to **R10,462.50**. This excluded damage to the vehicle and injuries to other employees.

Contributing factors

- The driver was in a hurry due to traffic congestion.
- The driver didn't get sufficient rest in the days prior to the incident, as he was working additional shifts.
- Poor weather had an impact on the driver's ability to judge the condition of the road.
- The vehicle was not checked to ensure it was in good working order before the shift started.
- The driver hadn't had a proper meal for almost 16 hours.

Action Required

- Check the (medical) fitness of all drivers at regular intervals.
- Ensure that drivers have the necessary permits, licences and experience to drive a vehicle.
- Encourage passengers to actively question drivers when fatigue is suspected.
- Maintain vehicles in perfect condition to allow drivers to focus only on driving the vehicle.
- Allow drivers to include extra time for breaks and possible delays.
- Establish teams for long-distance travelling and encourage a regular change of driver.
- Ensure drivers get sufficient time off between shifts.
- Encourage drivers to eat and drink well and limit their intake of alcohol and junk food as much as possible.

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