



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists  
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### **Department intensifies Emergency Medical Services with over 1500 ambulances during festive period**

**Pretoria:** The Department of Health has intensified Emergency Medical Services with over 1540 ambulances deployed across the country's major routes and strategic points, and hotspots to accelerate a turnaround time for emergency medical response during festive season, a period associated with a high demand for emergency medical services.

This number will be complemented by private sector ambulances as part of existing service level agreements entered with provinces to beef up EMS to ensure quick response to major accidents and to prevent avoidable loss of lives resulting from accidents.

Some of the major routes to be prioritised in provinces include **Eastern Cape** (N2,N10,N61, R72); **Free State** (N1, N3, N5, N6,N8); **Gauteng** (N1,N3, N4, N12, N17, R21, R59, R101); **KwaZulu-Natal** ( N2,N3, R56); **Limpopo** (N1,N11,R36, R37,R71,R101, R518, R524, R528, R579); **Mpumalanga** (N2, N3, N4, N11, N12, N17, R23, R38, R40, R573); **North West** (N4, N14, N12, N18, R30); **Northern Cape** (N1,N7,N8, N10, N12, N14, N18, R31, R382); and **Western Cape** (N1, N2, N7, R27, R62)

The department also appeals to communities to join hands with government and law enforcement agencies during this period to create an enabling environment for frontline healthcare workers, especially nurses and paramedics to perform their life-saving duties freely without fear of both verbal and physical violence and aggression.

Health workers have fallen victims of violence and crime in the line of duty over the months and recent years in the country and this can only be stopped if communities become protectors than by-standers. Violence against health workers is unacceptable because it does not only negatively impact on their psychological and physical well-being, but also affects their job motivation and has potential to compromise the quality of care and puts health-care provision at risk.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines attacks against health care as any act of verbal or physical violence or obstruction or threat of violence that interferes with the availability, access and delivery of curative and/or preventive health services during emergencies.

Emergency medical personnel play essential role in the health system by providing a timely and appropriate medical care to patients in need. They respond to emergencies to save lives and risking theirs. It is not possible to have the ambulances to be accompanied by police or armed private security, hence communities need to play a role to end attacks against paramedics and other health workers.

According to the WHO, health workers are at high risk of violence all over the world. Between 8% and 38% of health workers suffer physical violence at some point in their careers.

Some of the associate risks during festive season include vehicles accidents, domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, and drowning. All health facilities will remain open to enable South Africans to access health services.

In a life-threatening emergency, people are reminded to dial **112** from a landline or cellular phone and be aware that the call-centre agents will ask questions to enable them to dispatch an ambulance accordingly. The following important details will be obtained from you: your name, phone number, address, nearest landmark and the current medical status of the patient. Ensure that you get a call reference number before the end of the call to be used when you follow up on the progress of the call.

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