

JC Auditors launches free online safety performance assessment for transport operators

In a bid to enhance road safety, certification body JC Auditors has unveiled a new initiative offering transport operators complimentary access to an online safety performance assessment tool. The programme specifically aims to aid fleet operators, particularly those with limited resources, in evaluating their overall safety performance. This online assessment would also enable an operator to identify its performance in relation to the Road Transport Management System (RTMS) National Standard.



Source: Supplied | Oliver Naidoo, MD of JCA with traffic officials from North West Province.

The RTMS is a comprehensive framework designed to improve safety, efficiency, and compliance within the transport industry. It consists of several key pillars, including load management, driver wellness, vehicle maintenance, journey management, and driving behaviour.

The assessment tool comprises a series of carefully crafted questions focusing on the key pillars of RTMS. Operators can complete the online evaluation, the results of which will be available in a report detailing key risks and recommended improvement actions. This feedback empowers operators to identify potential risks and take proactive measures to enhance safety standards within their operations.

Oliver Naidoo, managing director of JC Auditors, highlights the importance of this initiative, saying: "It is vitally important that transport operators - regardless of their fleet size - have access to resources that can help them enhance their safety performance. By providing this online assessment tool for free, we aim to support South African fleets in adopting RTMS and holistically improving road safety and operational performance."

JC Auditors, who have been actively advocating for safe transport operations in the country, took the lead in discussing safe and sustainable road transport during the May Transport Forum they hosted.

Embracing safe systems

Naidoo highlights four crucial outcomes from the event, shedding light on pressing industry issues. "First and foremost," he asserts, "we need to build capacity in SMEs to embrace safety systems as an integral part of business."

The old adage that the strongest chain is only as strong as the weakest link rings true. Serious truck accidents often cause closure of national roads for hours on end – impacting other transporters (many of whom are professional, safety-focused entities), as well as public road users. Such accidents have a negative social impact (fatalities and injuries) and also severely affect the overall cost of transport, contributing to inefficient supply chains which ultimately affect the economy. So, it is in the national interest that we should aim to gradually increase the number of safety-conscious, professional transporter on our roads.

Additionally, Naidoo emphasises the growing need to promote initiatives aimed at changing the driving culture within the industry. Furthermore, it was observed that the transport sector often does not fully optimise telematics capabilities, despite its ability to identify high-risk behaviour- a matter that requires urgent attention. Lastly, he notes the importance of fostering increased stakeholder collaboration in collective efforts to improve fleet safety performance, which emerged as the fourth key takeaway.

RTMS in South Africa

Speaking at the online event, Dr Paul Nordengen, RTMS National Steering Committee chairperson, highlighted the significant advantages witnessed in the heavy vehicle transport sector through the adoption of the RTMS in South Africa. Dr Nordengen also reported on the significant productivity and safety gains observed in the Performance Based Standards (PBS) pilot project.

Dr Nordengen stated: "Companies that have implemented PBS are experiencing a wide range of benefits - including improved road safety, reduced environmental impact, and cost savings."

Annah Ngxeketo, the founder of SMME operator Mamoja Trading & Projects, shared her company's transformative journey in transporting mining products during the event. She noted that, since achieving RTMS compliance, Mamoja has witnessed tangible advantages in its business operations. Challenges such as prolonged downtime, missed vehicle servicing, and driver incidents, have been effectively addressed through RTMS implementation. The company has implemented a comprehensive maintenance schedule plan that undergoes continuous monitoring. Additionally, they conduct route risk assessments, enforce a speeding policy, and ensure drivers are managed in a professional and progressive manner.

"The adoption and implementation of RTMS, as well as other international standards, play a pivotal role in enhancing road safety in South Africa and ensuring the efficient transportation of cargo throughout the country," concludes Naidoo.

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