

Truck driver safety top priority for RTMS auditors

South Africa faces a pressing road safety challenge, with heavy vehicles, particularly trucks, involved in a disproportionate number of accidents. To address this issue and promote safer roads, raising safety awareness among truck drivers is imperative.

To promote safe driving among truck drivers, certification solutions company JC Auditors (JCA) will participate in a series of roadshows with industry partners to raise awareness and promote safe driving behaviours.



Source: chandlervid85 via [Freepik](#)

The first event will be hosted at the Highway Junction Truck Stop on 4 October 2023, targeting an audience of 2,000 drivers. During this event, drivers will not only be treated to delightful surprises and giveaways, but will also receive a crucial safety message emphasising the importance of responsible driving. The Highway Junction team are spearheading this event, with the JCA team providing driver safety resources and support.

For the second year, JCA will partner with the Reinhardt Transport Group (RTG) for their **Safer Roads** road shows, which will take place in various locations, including Komatipoort, Steelpoort, Rustenburg, Brits and Richards Bay. This collaboration will enable the dissemination of vital road safety information to a broader audience of truck drivers across these high-volume routes.



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In addition to these road shows, JCA will host its third Annual Driver Day at Highway Junction, which will encompass driver health checks and one-on-one driver motivational talks. This event further recognises the challenges faced by truck drivers and aims to express appreciation for their demanding profession.

Each driver will receive a token of gratitude as a gesture of recognition for their commitment to one of the most challenging jobs around.

"The JCA team strongly encourages all stakeholders in the road safety ecosystem to consider and implement initiatives that elevate the professional status of drivers," says Managing Director Oliver Naidoo. "By collectively addressing the issues faced by truck drivers and promoting safer driving practices, we can work towards improving South Africa's lamentable road

safety record."

Fostering a culture of road safety

"South Africa's trucking industry plays a pivotal role in the nation's economy, facilitating the transportation of goods that are essential for daily life," continues Naidoo. "The significant increase in freight volumes proportionately increases the safety risk exposure, hence the need for greater awareness and adherence to safety protocols among truck drivers."

In this regard, Naidoo highlights some key factors the road freight sector should consider:

High accident rates: South Africa has one of the highest road crash rates in the world, and a significant proportion of the accidents involve heavy vehicles. The consequences of these accidents are often devastating, resulting in loss of life, injury, and damage to property.

Economic impact: Road accidents involving trucks have a substantial economic impact, causing delays in supply chains, increased insurance costs, and damage to infrastructure. These costs ultimately affect businesses, consumers, and the overall economy.

Driver well-being: Truck driving is a demanding profession, often requiring long hours on the road, exposure to adverse weather conditions, and significant physical and mental strain. Ensuring the well-being of truck drivers is not only a safety concern, but also a matter of basic human rights. The increasing truck crime statistics and social unrest incidents make the situation even worse.

To address these challenges, there is a growing need for comprehensive safety awareness programs targeting truck drivers. These initiatives should include:

Education and training: Providing truck drivers with access to training programs that focus on safe driving practices, defensive driving techniques, and understanding road conditions. This should not be purely classroom-based which has limited impact, but should use personal, innovative, and consistent means of engaging with the drivers to bring about the desired shift in safety culture.

Mental and physical health support: Offering resources and services that address the mental and physical health of truck drivers, including stress management, nutrition, and regular health check-ups, especially for drivers with chronic illnesses.

Technology integration: Implementing advanced safety technologies such as collision avoidance systems, fatigue monitoring, and using telematics data to enhance driver safety.

Community engagement: Encouraging collaboration between government agencies, the trucking industry, and local communities, to create a collective commitment to road safety.

Recognition and appreciation: Recognising and appreciating the contributions of truck drivers who undertake one of the toughest jobs in the country, often under challenging conditions.