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ROAD ACCIDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1990-2003

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1. INTRODUCTION

Information on the number of registered vehicles, human population, fatal accidents, fatalities and certain rates and trends from 1990 to 2003 is given in Table 1.

A two-day workshop on road traffic safety in 1996 culminated in the publication of the 1996 Road Traffic Management Strategy. This Strategy, which covered all aspects relating to road traffic, was implemented in 1997.

Based on one of the recommendations of the Strategy, the Arrive Alive road safety campaign was launched on 1 October 1997. The Arrive Alive campaign focuses mainly on traffic law-enforcement and communication, supported by a comprehensive information system. Arrive Alive was not intended to be an all-purpose strategic and operational tool, but a limited rolling tactical programme designed to achieve effective practical cooperation between the three spheres of government in ongoing road safety management, especially in the areas of coordinated law enforcement, communication and sharing of information.

2. THE ROAD TO SAFETY STRATEGY: 2001-2005

Following wide consultation with role-players and stakeholders during 2000 and 2001, the Road to Safety Strategy 2001-2005 was launched in November 2001. The 2001-2005 Strategy addresses a variety of programmes and projects to promote law compliance in all fields of road traffic. Targets have been set in carefully separated stages to take a realistic account of the constraints still facing us in the current phase of fundamental restructuring of road traffic safety management. Four key thematic areas have been defined as areas of action:

- Enforcement and law compliance;
- Operator, driver and vehicle fitness;
- Infrastructure, management and information systems; and
- Communication, public education and participation.

Table 1 Vehicle and human population, number of fatal road accidents, fatalities and rates (1990 to 2003)

Year	Vehicle Population (thousand)		Human Population (million)	Vehicle Kilometers Traveled (million)	Fatal Road Accidents (No.)	Road Fatalities (No.)	No. of Fatal Accidents per 10,000 Motorized Vehicles	No. of Fatal Accidents per 100 million Vehicle Kilometers Traveled	No. of Fatalities per Fatal Accidents (Severity)	No. of Fatalities per 100,000 Human Population
	Total (No.)	Motorized (No.)								
1990	5,200	4,616	30.60	101,748	9,174	11,157	19.87	9.02	1.22	36.46
1991	5,325	4,727	31.20	100,380	9,222	11,069	19.51	9.19	1.20	35.48
1992	5,391	4,786	31.90	100,216	8,378	10,142	17.50	8.36	1.21	31.79
1993	5,458	4,845	32.60	99,009	7,932	9,466	16.37	8.01	1.19	29.04
1994	5,524	4,904	40.40	106,490	8,140	9,981	16.60	7.64	1.23	24.71
1995	6,459	5,733	40.63	101,858	8,335	10,256	14.54	8.18	1.23	25.24
1996	6,507	5,776	40.85	110,930	7,850	9,848	13.59	7.08	1.25	24.11
1997	6,555	5,819	41.67	114,664	7,790	9,691	13.39	6.79	1.24	23.26
1998	6,604	5,851	42.34	117,025	7,260	9,068	12.41	6.20	1.25	21.42
1999	6,715	5,955	43.29	116,911	7,342	10,523	12.33	6.28	1.43	24.31
2000	6,815	6,050	43.69	112,563				Un-reliable Information		
2001	6,904	6,160	44.33	113,067	8,802	11,201	14.29	7.78	1.27	25.31
2002	7,000	6,245	45.17	113,983	9,973	12,198	15.97	8.75	1.22	27.00
2003	7,187	6,417	46.13	118,327	10,197	12,353	15.89	8.62	1.21	26.78

3. ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

In 1999 a new accident report form, as well as a revised procedure for the collection and capturing of accident information were introduced. Due to a variety of problems that were experienced, a new form was developed and introduced in 2003. The establishment of a central Road Traffic Accident Bureau for the collection and capturing of information and the publishing of monthly and annual accident reports is currently under consideration.

4. FATAL ACCIDENTS, FATALITIES AND TRENDS: 1990 – 2003

The number of fatal accidents and fatalities from 1990 to 2003 is shown in Figure 1.

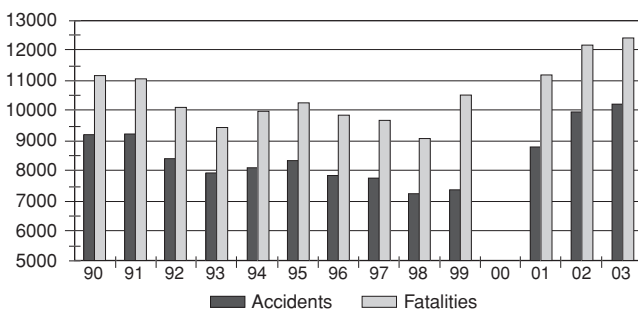


Fig.1 No. of fatal accidents and fatalities

The information in the table and graph above indicate a decrease in the number of fatal accidents from the early 1990's to about 1999 where after an annual increase was experienced. During 2003 a total of 12,353 persons were killed in 10,197 fatal accidents. About 40% of the annual fatalities are pedestrians.

The fatal accident rate decreased from 19.87 fatal accidents per 10,000 registered motorised vehicles in 1990 to a rate of 12.33 in 1999. The rate for 2003 was 15.89. The rates from 1990 to 2003 are shown in Figure 2.

Monthly information on the number of fatal accidents over the last 3 years is given in Figure 3.

The percent change in the number of accidents per month, in comparison with the same month the previous year, is given in Figure 4.

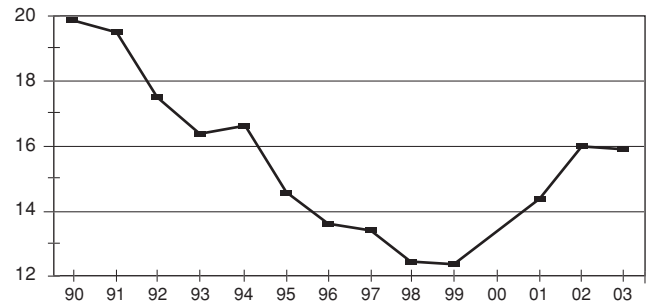


Fig.2 Accidents per 10,000 motorised vehicles

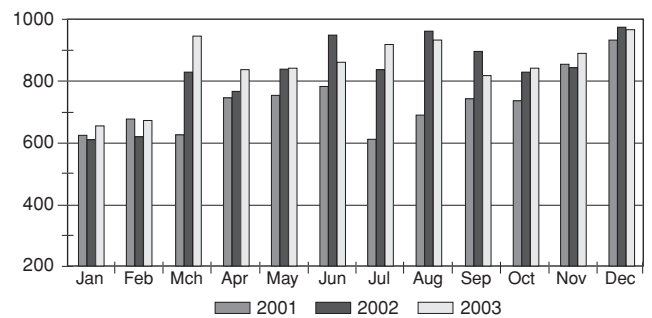


Fig.3 No. of fatal accidents per month

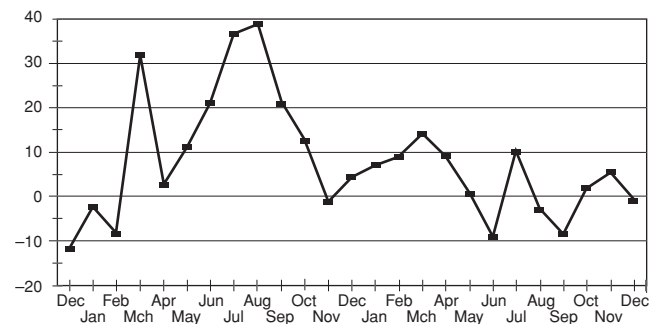


Fig.4 Percentage change from same month previous year (Crashes - Dec. 2001 – Dec. 2003)

The information above indicates that the rate of increase in the monthly number of fatal accidents, over a period of 18 months from about August 2002 to December 2003, is being contained.