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AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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AA initiates road safety workplace programme for South African corporates

Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities and injuries in South Africa, and indeed in most developing countries. One of the contributory factors is that employees have to commute to and from work on a daily basis and because of this; there is a high probability and risk of being involved in a road crash. There is a critical need for integrated traffic safety programmes within the workplace environment to protect both human and financial resources of a company, and ultimately, improve the bottom line.

The Automobile Association (AA) has begun a country-wide initiative of establishing a network of employers for traffic safety (NETS) that can work together to reduce traffic-related deaths. Gary Ronald, Head of Public Affairs at the AA says that the cost to the economy, the loss of life, skills and human capital, is too great to ignore. “The estimated cost to the economy from road crashes is R52 billion; every day 40 people die in road crashes, and 25 people are in wheelchairs permanently due to road crashes. We are losing the equivalent of ten high schools every year and the holes in retaining skills are getting bigger.”

Part of the AA’s initiative is to provide guidelines and recommendations on how companies can implement road safety programmes in the workplace. Every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash and every 5 seconds a crash occurs. The need to involve companies in road safety awareness is because many of these incidents occur during the workday or during the commute to and from work.

The NETS programme is important because it emphasises on safety to and from work; safety during work when walking or driving; safety of family members through alcohol abuse awareness; and implementing stringent road safety policies to improve compliance to basic safety rules such as not using your cell phone when driving, wearing seatbelts, and driving road-worthy vehicles.

“It is the employers who bear the cost for injuries that occur both on and off the job, and the only data we have regarding employee injuries and fatality is from the mining industry,” says Ronald. “A big stumbling block in the successful implementation of

road safety initiatives is that there is little or no data. We have no idea what we are dealing with and because we do not know the shortcomings, do not know where to begin. So companies need to start engaging their employees to begin using the road in smarter, more sensible ways.”

The AA is currently finalising dates, times and venues for companies to attend workshops and conferences in Durban and Cape Town; and is also offering all companies that are interested in the NETS programme free consultation, recommendation and guidelines documentation.

Ends.

About the Automobile Association of South Africa

The AA is the trusted leader in 24-hour roadside assistance, travel and other mobility services. The AA and AA Travel, along with their Travel Experience stores located country wide are uniquely positioned to provide motoring and travel assistance and help you get out there. They have now extended their services past roadside assistance offering motorists driver training to avoid collisions and a training academy, the only one in South Africa offering apprenticeship and short courses for corporates.

For more information please visit www.aasa.co.za

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