

## Transnet Freight Rail intensifies campaign against Railway Level Crossing Accidents

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In a bid to deal with the spate of railway level crossing accidents, Transnet Freight Rail will once again embark on a campaign to warn motorists as well as pedestrians on the dangers of not observing safety precautions when approaching or crossing railway lines. Though aimed to have a national impact, the campaign, which starts on Monday, 11 May 2009, will focus mainly on the major level crossings around the Rustenburg/Brits area. The area has in the past proved to be vulnerable to accidents.

"This campaign is a follow up to the national one held during the Easter period and it is a joint initiative by Transnet Freight Rail, Road Traffic Management Corporation, Traffic Department and Transport, Roads and Safety Department. It involves, first, the element of education where pedestrians and motorists are issued with educational material at such crossings and warned about the dangers of not observing safety precautions. Secondly, level crossings which require engineering attention such as erection of advanced warning signs, road markings e.t.c are attended to. The third element is the strict enforcement of the law around such crossings. In other words, motorists failing to adhere to safety signs will face the full might of the law', said Transnet Freight Rail Spokesperson, Sandile Simelane.

The campaign is aimed at reducing injuries and deaths arising out of train incidents through focussing on changing behaviours and attitudes of the public in general. "Last year there were 122 level crossing incidents that resulted in 22 fatalities. Almost all level crossing accidents are a result of the failure of motorists to stop at the clearly demarcated stop signs at level crossings. Trains take a long time to stop – even when the driver applies brakes, a loaded train can take more than a kilometre to stop".

Transnet Freight Rail would like to appeal to the community to assist in eradicating these tragic and unnecessary incidents by obeying at all times the traffic laws governing rail level crossings. "People involved in railway level crossing incidents are usually complacent when approaching crossings. The law requires motorists to bring the motor vehicle to a complete standstill at a level crossing. Trains can't swerve to avoid you and given the weight of a train, the chances of you surviving a crash are poor as air bags will not be able to save you when you are involved in a collision with a train", concluded Simelane.

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