



**South African Insurance Association**

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## **Joint media release: The South African Insurance Association (SAIA) and Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA)**

**Tuesday, 29 September 2009**

### **Public private partnership launches Alcohol Testing Centre in Randburg**

In Randburg today, an Alcohol Testing Centre, sponsored by the South African Insurance Association (SAIA) was unveiled through the joint efforts of the SAIA, Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA) and the Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD).

Ronnie Napier, Chairperson of SAIA, said: “Road safety initiatives are being implemented by the SAIA in an attempt to curb the high accident rate in South Africa, and to thereby ensure that motor insurance remains affordable. Motor insurance, our largest class of business, is under considerable pressure with around 70% of insurance claims being road accident-related and alcohol consumption is a factor in many of these instances.”

“Given the strong results that the first alcohol testing centre in Village Road Johannesburg has shown, we are hopeful that this centre will help to curb a general sense of lawlessness on South African roads. We are grateful for the support from SAIA and believe that this partnership will assist the law enforcement agencies to promote a zero-tolerance for incidents of drunk driving or driving under the influence”, says Siphwe Nzimande, Deputy Chairperson of BACSA.

Napier shared a number of chilling statistics from Arrive Alive which highlight the extent of lawlessness on South African roads: “On average, 36 lives are lost every day due to road accidents. This accounts for approximately 13,000 people being killed needlessly on our roads every year. Of these, 15 are pedestrians and 3 are killed in taxi-related accidents.



Directors: RS Napier (Chairman), MC Truter (Deputy Chairman), TJ Creamer, MR Durek+, CW Hitchcock, S Isaacs\*, K Kennedy, A Khilisia\*, IM Kirk++, A Klennert+, NG Kohler, BN Madhav\*, V Martindale\*, AL Mhlanga, RJ Moletsane, HR Moses\*, S Naidoo\*, JJ Ngulube, C Nolte\*, N Omar, WT Roos, MA Samie, SH Schoeman, B Scott, D Shaw, J Sibanda, S Somers\*, L Vermaak\*, PG Walters\*

\*Allernates, + German, ++ Irish

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The costs of road accidents to individuals, commerce, and communities is approximately R38 billion per annum”, says Napier.

SAIA, on behalf of its members, has since 2002 donated funds to BACSA in support of its violent and organised crime initiatives. This support has reaped results for the short-term insurance industry with claims related to motor theft and vehicle hijacking reducing to approximately 50% (as measured per thousand vehicles).

“Vehicle crime is no longer the primary cause of concern for motor insurers, although still important. Instead, road safety has become an area of great concern. Many of SAIA’s motor insurance members have recognised a problem in terms of motor vehicle accident-related claims that are linked to alcohol. In fact, some of our members have indicated that, of the accident-related claims where alcohol testing was undertaken, an estimated 80% of the claims end up being rejected,” says Napier.

This year SAIA, on behalf of its members, donated R1 535 000 to BACSA. These funds were used for BACSA's Violent and Organised Crime initiative which includes vehicle crime and other crimes such as business robberies and household robberies, and the rest of the funds enabled the creation of the Randburg Alcohol Testing Centre as part of SAIA’s strategy to address the current road safety problems.

Ndlovu, spokesperson for the JMPD, says that the Randburg Alcohol Testing Centre uses state of the art breathalysing, as opposed to blood testing, technology to test drivers’ alcohol levels. He emphasises the benefits of this technology saying, “The results of breathalysing testing can now be made immediately available and drunken driving cases can be finalised in court much sooner. With this technology and 4 print-outs given for test results, there is no possibility of a blood sample being tampered with or going missing. It is for this reason that the JMPD applauds the actions of SAIA and BACSA in the opening of this centre,” says Ndlovu.

“With the Alcohol Testing Centre now operational in Randburg, this initiative will help to send the message that drunken driving or driving under the influence are serious offences which endanger the lives of others. Drivers will be forced to comply, through the centre and the work of the JMPD, with the rules of the road. This partnership seeks to stop the

needless loss of life due to drunken driving and to change a reckless road culture. More of these centres are needed throughout the country,” says Lorinda Nel, BACSA Project Manager.

The opening of the Alcohol Testing Centre was accompanied by a hand-over of a 1,000 rechargeable lanterns donated by Massmart and Builders Warehouse in support of the work of JMPD officers. Nzimande thanked Massmart and Builders Warehouse for their thoughtful donation and SAIA for taking the lead in supporting this important road safety initiative.

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**Issued on behalf of:**

**The South African Insurance Association**

**Please contact the SAIA Public Relations Officer to set up interviews with Ronnie Napier (SAIA Chair) or Vivienne Pearson (SAIA Manager: Image & Reputation)**

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