

Media release and statement by Executive Mayor, Alderman Patricia de Lille, at Festive Season media briefing held at the Civic Centre

Statement by Executive Mayor, Alderman Patricia de Lille

I would like to start today's proceedings by expressing my condolences on behalf of the City of Cape Town to the family and friends of the member of the public who passed away as a result of injuries caused by last night's tragic accident outside Cape Town Stadium.

I would also like to express my sympathies to the people who were injured and assure them all that they are in the City's thoughts and prayers and that we all wish them a speedy and full recovery.

Of the 12 people hospitalised last night, there has been one sad death, another who remains in a serious condition and the remaining 10 members of the public affected are being closely monitored.

I would also like to give the assurance that the City has moved proactively to institute an independent external investigation into the causes of the incident.

The investigation will be headed by a structural engineering firm.

A City of Cape Town team is also already working with the SAPS and the event organisers as part of the investigation process. We have been assured of, and are grateful for, the full cooperation of the event organisers, BIG Concerts.

I would also like to recognise the professional and swift response of the emergency service personnel who were immediately on the scene of last night's accident to provide the necessary medical care.

Last night's tragedy underscores the need for careful preparation for major events. To this end the City has been working to ensure that we are fully prepared for the forthcoming Festive Season.

As part of our commitment to build a Safe and Caring City, we have put in place a comprehensive plan to enhance public safety during the Festive Season.

Every year around this time, the City welcomes thousands of visitors who come here for leisure travel or to visit their loved ones.

The aim of the City's Festive Season Plan is to increase visible policing to minimise road accident; tackling alcohol and drug related crimes; targeting drunk drivers through holding roadblocks; assisting motorists to ensure that their vehicles are roadworthy; keeping the city clean and providing prompt and adequate emergency services when they are needed throughout the city.

It also ensures that all City facilities, such as municipal swimming pools are managed effectively and able to cope with the increased demand.

Our law enforcement teams will enforce all municipal by-laws with a view to protecting the rights of all who visit our city.

The City's key service delivery depots will be fully operational to ensure that locals and visitors alike can enjoy the best of Cape Town, in safety.

I would like to make a special appeal to all residents, parents and visitors to take personal responsibility for their own safety, and further ensure that their actions do not expose other people to harm.

I would also like to thank the thousands of City officials who will be working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that our beaches, roads and key amenities are clean and secure.

To this end, I will be visiting all our key service delivery depots starting on the 9th December 2012 to show my appreciation for the work they do.

It is as a result of their dedication that the rest of us will be able to have a fun-filled and joyous Festive Season.

MEDIA RELEASE

Cape Town is prepared for Festive Season 2012/13

As part of this administration's mandate to build a Safe and Caring City, the City has prepared a Festive Season Safety Plan to ensure that it is fully prepared for the number of visitors expected in the city around this time of the year. The plan has put in place numerous measures to minimise possible public safety and service delivery risks.

Thousands of domestic and international tourists, as well as local residents, visit Cape Town and its many attractions during the summer holiday season each year. This results in an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

City Departments such as Metro Police, Traffic Services, Law Enforcement, Disaster Risk Management, Fire and Rescue Services, Sport, Recreation and Amenities, Solid Waste Management, the Events and Film Office as well as the Integrated Strategic Communication and Branding Department have therefore devised a co-ordinated plan to alleviate possible high risk eventualities such as avoidable road accidents and fires, and control safety and security at beaches and festival events.

The plan was presented to members of the media at a briefing today (8 November) and will be in effect until early in 2013.

As in previous years, the City has appointed a Festive Season Coordinating Committee comprising representatives from all relevant Directorates, to play a city-wide coordinating role regarding readiness and operational responses to any incidents. This team is led by the City's Executive Director: Safety and Security, Richard Bosman.

"The Festive Season Preparedness Plan ensures that we have proactive measures in place to focus on highly visible policing, tackling alcohol- and drug-related crimes, targeting drunk drivers through holding roadblocks, assisting motorists to ensure that their vehicles are roadworthy, keeping the city clean, and providing adequate emergency services when they are needed across the city," said Alderman Patricia de Lille, Executive Mayor for the City of Cape Town.

Key highlights of the plan are:

Disaster Risk Management

Staff of the Disaster Risk Management Centre, together with volunteers, will be deployed across the city at beaches and swimming pools to provide support services to lifeguards. They will also do duty at tourist destinations in order to ensure maximum safety.

The City's Disaster Management Team is on 24-hour full alert and is geared for all eventualities. The public may report any life or property threatening emergency (including medical, crime, fire and traffic) to the 107 emergency number from a Telkom line. Cell-phone users must dial 021 480 7700.

The City's Disaster Risk Management Team, together with the City's Fire and Rescue Services, will also embark on a strategy to mitigate the occurrence of devastating fires. The DRM Centre will commence a campaign that will run throughout the Festive Season to highlight the dangers of fires and to teach communities how to avoid fires that could result in loss of life, injuries, damage to property and the environment.

Law enforcement

"The City's law enforcement teams will be on high alert during the entire Festive Season period, and can respond to any eventuality around the clock. Coordinating measures are in place to ensure open communication between all branches of City, Provincial and National law enforcement agencies," said Alderman JP Smith, Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security.

This year, the City will also make use of Neighbourhood Safety Officers to be deployed in their neighbourhoods – they will be tasked with identifying any potential law enforcement problem and to alert the relevant law enforcement authority, speedily.

A geographical deployment plan has been drawn up to ensure the most effective deployment of resources during this Festive Season. Priority days have also been identified, where extra officers will be deployed on active duty. Regional "co-ordinating centres" will ensure effective law enforcement on grass-roots level.

Traffic Services

Traffic Services will conduct free basic vehicle safety checks at the following traffic centres: Bellville, Kuils River, Brackenfell, Hillstar, Goodwood and Durbanville, between 10:00 and 14:00 each working day from 26 November 2012 to 14 December 2012.

Traffic Services will launch 'Operation Exodus', aimed at clamping down on unsafe vehicles leaving the city, with a particular focus on targeting

long-distance public transport operators. A strong emphasis will be placed on the enforcement of public transport vehicles over the Festive Season, with the aim of reducing the alarmingly high accident rate on our roads.

Various Public Transport Interchanges, including Joe Gqabi, Bellville/Parc Du Cap, Mfuleni, Langa, Dunoon, Cape Town Station, R27 and Epping will be manned by traffic officers. Vehicle check points and speed checks will be set up in the vicinity of the interchanges.

Traffic Services will also be attending to a number of special events over the Festive Season including the traditional Minstrel events, as well as increased traffic deployment around all of the beaches within the city.

Metro Police

Metro Police will be focusing primarily on driver and vehicle fitness, drunk driving, the enforcement of Municipal By-laws, the transportation of and dealing in illegal narcotics, patrols in the vicinity of places of entertainment, visible patrols on routes to and from major shopping centres, tourist attractions, business and residential areas to combat property crimes and a presence along main routes to and from our popular beaches.

This will be in line with the Metro Police's operational interventions and visibility strategy of a Safe Festive Season for all residents and visitors to the city.

Fire and Rescue Services

Fire and Rescue Service is prepared for carrying out its function of fire-fighting, rescue and fire prevention activities to the communities of Cape Town on a continuous basis. A total of 905 professional firefighters can be called upon for major incidents, and of these a minimum of 180 are on duty per shift and available on a 24 hour basis at the 30 fire stations across the city.

Leave over the December/January period will be limited to ensure that the service is able to operate optimally. A group of 29 Learner Firefighters, currently undergoing their eight months basic training, will graduate on 14 December 2012 and be deployed to pre-determined fire stations across the city. A total of 120 seasonal firefighters have been recruited and will commence duty on 1 December 2012, undergo basic training, and be deployed at designated District fire stations as from mid-December 2012 to 31 May 2013. Their main function will be to assist professional fire-fighters with veld fires and veld-fire management and prevention methods.

All dayshift uniformed staff are on a standby roster for after-hours responses and support functions. Should the need arise, an overtime budget is available for personnel being called in to staff the fire stations

on a continuous basis. Workshop personnel are placed on a standby roster to provide immediate back-up service in the event of unforeseen vehicle breakdowns.

The Fire and Life Safety Inspectorate and Education Awareness personnel will strive to increase their inspections and campaigns at organized festive season events and venues to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations. Concentrated efforts to inspect high risk buildings will be undertaken to minimize the threat of fire at these establishments.

The City's Fire and Rescue Service, Table Mountain National Parks and their Volunteer Wildfire Services, the Working on Fire programme and the qualified Disaster Management volunteers will be working closely together during the summer period.

The City Fire and Rescue Service's contracted helicopter (Kamov) will operate from Cape Town Harbour as from 1 December 2012. A signed agreement between the City and the Provincial Government has been concluded for the use of additional Provincially funded aircraft should the need arise.

Signed Mutual Aid Agreements are in place between the City and neighboring District Municipalities in the event of major incidents requiring assistance. The above measures are in place on a regular basis during the year as a norm, except for the availability of aerial firefighting support, which is stepped up over the festive and summer period.

City Health Services

City clinics will function as per normal over the Festive Season. Primary Health Care Clinics will be open on weekdays, with the Provincial Government of the Western Cape's 24-hour Community Health Centres (day hospitals) open on weekdays as well as over weekends and public holidays.

The City's Environmental Health Department, together with Water and Sanitation's Scientific Services, will carefully monitor the quality of drinking water and recreational water during the Festive Season. There will also be an increased focus on monitoring food premises, accommodation establishments, public ablution facilities and special events.

Cleansing

R12.2 million has been budgeted for cleansing during the Festive Season. Refuse removal will continue uninterrupted over this period (even on public holidays). More than 1 834 extra cleansing staff will be appointed to conduct additional cleansing in business districts and on scenic routes and beaches.

Social Development and Early Childhood Development

The Social Development and Early Childhood Development Directorate in partnership with ward councillors, other Departments of the City, Provincial Government and community based organisations will be implementing a holiday programme commencing on 25 November to coincide with the 16 Days of Activism and ending with a two-day Youth Festival at the Athlone Stadium on 21 – 22 December 2012.

The aim of the holiday programme is to ensure that children and youth are occupied and kept safe whilst parents are still working. It is a fact that during this period, the rate of child abuse escalates, youth are susceptible to be lured into various activities such as substance abuse, sexual activities, loitering and begging for hand-outs on the streets and thus a plan was developed to ensure that youth do not stray but partake in fun, yet educational activities.

Sport, Recreation and Amenities

The Sport, Recreation and Amenities Department has planned approximately 1 000 holiday programmes which will run daily, from 7 December 2012 to 6 January 2013. The programmes will be presented at the City's various swimming pools, beaches, resorts and sport and recreation facilities.

Each of the five districts within the Department will employ a number of temporary play leaders to boost the existing permanent staff capacity, and will also use the services of volunteers to ensure that all of the programmes are effectively implemented. The goal with these programmes is to encourage children from communities throughout the city to participate in sport and recreation activities during the holiday period, and in the long-term.

Approximately 250 trained and accredited lifeguards will be deployed to various beaches between 10:00 and 18:00 daily. This is in addition to private lifesaving clubs on some beaches, Lifesaving Western Province's volunteer services, the National Search and Rescue Institute (NSRI) and Medic helicopter. The City will be making beach wheelchairs available at ten of its beaches. The provision of the wheel chairs underscores the City's commitment to enhance access to natural resources to all its citizens.

There will also be 283 lifeguards on duty at the City's 36 public swimming pools this Festive Season. All public pools will be open between 10:00 and 17:00 daily, except for Blue Downs, Long Street, Strand and Sea Point swimming pools, which will be open from 07:00 to 19:00 daily.

Regular checks will be conducted on public amenities at beaches and swimming pools to ensure that all bathrooms and showers are clean and

in working order, facilities are kept neat and maintained, and that tidal pools at beaches are managed properly.

The City has a formal partnership with Lifesaving Western Province who will appoint and deploy a total of 250 lifesavers mainly sourced from existing lifesaving clubs in addition to its volunteer services at all of the City's popular beaches. During peak periods however, the lesser known beaches will receive similar attention.

A total of 23 Shark Spotters will be deployed this Festive Season at Glencairn, Clovelly, Muizenberg Corner, Fish Hoek, St. James, Kalk Bay, Noordhoek and Kogel Bay (The Cave).

Events

A number of high profile events will take place in and around the city. The Festive Season is launched with the Switch on of the City's Festive Lights at the Cape Town Stadium, on 2 December. Several other events will entertain holidaymakers – such as the Lady Gaga Concert on 3 December, Kirstenbosch's Carols by Candlelight between 13 and 16 December, New Year's Eve Concert and Fireworks Display on 31 December and Tweede Nuwejaar/ Minstrels on 2 January 2013.

MyCiTi Services

As from 1 December 2012, all MyCiTi services will be extended by one hour on Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) and Public Holidays. This may be extended further depending on the public's response and usage of the service.

Baboons

Residents and visitors to the South Peninsula are reminded to lock doors and close windows of vehicles as well as rented homes in known baboon areas. Please remember that it is illegal to feed baboons that roam in and around our city. The best advice is to steer clear of the animals, and not to leave any open food which they can steal. Please manage your waste responsibly by locking it away.

Visitors are also requested not to interfere with the work of the Baboon Rangers. Rangers are using paintball markers to keep baboons out of urban spaces and humans safe. Please remember that it is illegal for any person without a permit to use these devices against wildlife.

General safety tips

- The public is requested to report any life or property threatening emergency (including medical, crime, fire and traffic) to the 107 emergency number from a Telkom line. Cell phone users need to dial 021 480 7700.
- Motorists are encouraged to ensure that their vehicles are in a sound roadworthy condition. They are therefore urged to make use of the Traffic Services' free roadworthy testing services during the Festive Season.
- Swim in designated bathing areas on beaches which will be indicated by yellow and red flags positioned by lifeguards and obey their instructions.
- Pay close attention to the shark warning system of the Shark Spotters, and always follow the instructions of the lifeguards on duty.
- The Cape's long, dry summer season, brings an increased risk of runaway fires. The casual tossing away of cigarettes, unauthorised burning of refuse or rubbish, and lighting of fires in non-designated areas could lead to a fire of devastating proportions. Practise extreme caution around any action that could result in the ignition of a fire of any kind. Keeping the vegetation on your premises/property trimmed, clean and well-maintained, extinguishing cooking or braai fires after use, switching off all electrical appliances after use and limiting children's access to matches and lighters will minimise the risk of fires starting or spreading.
- Summer also sees an increase in the incidence of diarrheal disease. Washing hands before preparing food and after toilet use, ensuring that food is prepared in hygienic conditions and kept refrigerated, as well as keeping flies away from prepared food, are some of the measures that should be taken to prevent diarrheal disease. Severe dehydration can cause death in children following diarrheal disease and parents are encouraged to visit their nearest health clinic as soon as possible if children under five years have continuous diarrhoea, refuse to take in fluids (or not sucking for babies who are still breast- or bottle-fed), are lethargic, or have sunken eyes or fontanelles. On weekends and public holidays children must be taken to the nearest 24-hour Community Health Centre (Day Hospital).

Capetonians who will be away on holiday should ensure that they visit their clinics and Day Hospitals before leaving to ensure that they obtain their vital medication, such as T.B. medication, anti-retrovirals, family planning and other chronic medication, for the period that they will be out of town. Alternatively, their appointment cards can be taken with them so that the local primary health care clinic closest to their holiday destination can be accessed.