



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safely To School and Back

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital (RCWMCH) annually treats approximately 7500 children for injuries which are preventable. For every child death as a result of road crashes, many more are hospitalized, hundreds of emergency department visits and thousands of clinic and doctors' visits. Many children surviving a road crash sustain temporary or permanent, life changing disabilities. There is little focus on these injuries despite road crashes being the number one killer of young children in our communities in South Africa.

Road crashes are the leading cause of death of young children between 5 and 12 years. Last year, 771 children were treated at RCWMCH alone for traffic related injuries. About 1300 (Janmohammed *et al.*, 2018) children are killed on our roads every year. Many thousands of children in South Africa are transported to and from school every day, by drivers who are poorly trained as scholar drivers and often in vehicles which are unsafe or unsuitable for transporting children.

The Safe Travel To School Project (STTS) a project initiated by ChildSafe and Discovery aims to make scholar's daily journeys safer, by encouraging scholar drivers to install a tracking device which helps them monitor four key driving behaviors viz; braking, cornering, accelerating and speeding.

The STTS project, launched in 2014 recruits about 250 scholar drivers per year. To date, there is a cumulative total of 955 scholar drivers in project. STTS ensure that each driver participated in a series of key interventions including:

- Conducting a multi-point vehicle check before the installing a tracking device
- Monitoring driver behavior using telemetric data transmitted by the car tracking device
- Providing regular feedback and awarding incentives to improve driving behavior
- Testing drivers' eyesight and providing glasses where necessary
- Training the drivers in first aid, defensive driving, child safety and stress management
- Monitoring health indicators and referring drivers to local health providers for necessary treatment

Research conducted by the South Africal Medical Research Council (van Niekerk *et al.*, 2014) shows that STTS scholar drivers are significantly better, safer drivers than the general driver population.

If you are paying someone to transport your children, you need to:

- Provide the person with a letter of permission to transport your child
- Have the driver’s contact details and give the driver your contact details

If you are a principal, you need to:

- Ensure that there is a safe, demarcated area at the school for children to be dropped off and collected.

If you are transporting school children, you will need:

- A roadworthy vehicle not older than 12 years and a valid an operating licence OL.
- Valid professional driver’s permit (PDP).
- Training in first aid and have a first aid kit in your vehicle
- Seat belts and, if applicable, car seats.
- Adult to supervise primary school and special needs children.
- Letter of permission from school and parents.

October is National Transport month and ChildSafe will be recruiting drivers for 2021 into their STTS project. The recruitment will be taking place at following places:

Date	Venue	Address
20 th , 21 st , 22 nd October	Provincial Regulatory Entiti (PRE) offices	Corner of Volstruis&Bosduif Roads,Bridgetown, Athlone, Cape Town, 7769. Near Vangate Mall
27 th October	Makhaza Shopping Centre	Corner Lansdowne Road, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 7784
29 th October	Bonjour Total Garage	Corner of Mbona Street & Makabeni Road, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 7784
30 th October	Liberty Promenade Mall	A.Z Berman Drive, Mitchells Plain, Cape Town, 7785

If you are interested to join the STTS project as a driver or recommend your child’s driver, contact ChildSafe: 021 685 5208 or info@childsafeg.org.za

About ChildSafe

ChildSafe, an injury prevention unit based at the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital is a non-profit organization that aims to reduce and prevent injuries of children through research, education and recommendations to legislation. We work with other non-profits, government, corporates and communities to achieve this. Our core focus though is the prevention of unintentional injuries that are usually regarded as accidents, such as, burns, falls, drowning, road traffic crashes, choking and poisoning.

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