

## Relieving the taxi headache

"I haven't got time for headaches," is the slogan emblazoned on the side of many taxis - causing more than one motorist to raise eyebrows, because that is exactly how many South Africans view taxis - as a headache.



At the launch: Heribert Voss MD of GSK, Director General of DoT Mpumi Mpofu and Phillip Taaibosch, Secretary General of SANTACO.

But now, building on the success of its initial campaign in 2006, Grand-Pa®, a leading South African analgesic brand, is again stepping into the breach to make taxis safer for thousands of commuters by installing first aid kits and giving first aid demonstrations at taxi ranks. All these efforts are aimed at raising awareness and they will be followed up by the training of taxi drivers as Level 1 First Aid Marshals. This year, the company will be partnering with the Department of Transport, Arrive Alive and the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) to roll out the campaign nationally.

"The focus of our 2007/08 Safer Taxis CSI initiative will be to sign up 100 drivers of the new roadworthy taxis to this accredited Level 1 first aid training course," explains Heribert Voss, General Manager, GlaxoSmithKline Southern Africa. "Training began in October 2007 and will proceed through to May 2008. The campaign will then recommence in August 2008 with further training being provided," he added.

The campaign is particularly important in view of the Taxi Recapitalisation Program, which was launched in 2006 with the introduction of new taxi vehicles. The main aim of the program is to eradicate 80% of old, un-roadworthy taxi vehicles by 2010. By October 2007, over 10 000 old un-roadworthy taxis were scrapped and over R427-million was paid out to various taxi owners as a scrapping allowance (each taxi owner received R50000 per vehicle scrapping).

Despite its poor image, the taxi industry is invaluable and without it, the economy would probably grind to a halt. Thousands of people rely on taxis for their daily transport, and while there are inevitably the "cowboys" who take the rules of the road into their own hands, the vast majority of taxi drivers are responsible, hardworking individuals who are very keen to improve their skills.

The launch of the company's 2007 Safer Taxis campaign took place at the 2007 GATACO (Gauteng Taxi Council) AGM on 23 October at Emperors Palace, where the Director General Department of Transport Ms. Mpumi Mpofu officiated.

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