

25 August 2010

## **RSR'S PRELIMINARY INSPECTION FLAGS POSSIBLE VEHICLE DRIVER NEGLIGENCE**

The Railway Safety Regulator's (RSR) inspectors have conducted a preliminary inspection following this morning's fatal level crossing accident in Blackheath, in the Western Cape. The accident claimed nine (9) children's lives this morning.

The RSR's inspectors are on site and have observed that the level crossing protection was found to be adequate. The flashing lights and booms were found to be in working order. The level crossing is also marked by road signage. This is the maximum level of protection which can be afforded to a level crossing.

In light of the above measures, preliminary indications point towards possible negligent vehicle driver behaviour at the crossing point.

The collision occurred at 7:10 am on Wednesday morning, when a train collided with a minibus taxi at a level crossing in the Blackheath area. The taxi was transporting 13 children to school. Nine children are confirmed deceased. The taxi driver and the children who were critically injured, were taken to hospital.

No injuries were reported for the occupants of the train, including its driver. The train was travelling out of Cape Town towards Eersterivier. The level crossing is at the intersection of Butskop road and the railway line between Blackheath and Eersterivier stations.

The Regulator extends condolences to the families of the deceased children. The RSR remains committed to reducing loss of life, harm to people, crime as well as damage to infrastructure and property in and near South Africa's railways. One life lost, is one life too many.

More information & sound bites: Carvel Webb 083 277 7330  
Media Enquiries: Lavinia Mahlangu (011) 417 0002 / 082 888 6184

Note to Editors

The mandate of the RSR is to:

- oversee safety in railway transport, while operators remain responsible for managing safety of their operations
- develop an appropriate regulatory framework through the development of regulations and standards for safe railway operations
- monitor and ensure safety compliance through the conducting of audits, inspections, safety assessments and occurrence investigations
- collect and disseminate information relating to safe railway operations
- promote the harmonisation of the railway safety regime of South Africa with Southern African Development Community (SADC) railway operations and
- promote improved safety performance in order to promote the use of rail.