



▲ Although the first training day starts off with a room full of rather sceptical cops wondering what us 'mlungus' can teach them, the atmosphere changes into a spirit of camaraderie and vibrancy that is tangible. This is 'empowerment' at its best adding credence to the maxim that 'Knowledge is Power'.

# Brake & Tyre Watch visits Potchefstroom

## 30 tested 21 failed 70% failure rate

There's something just so special about spending two days training cops. The first day starts off with a group of rather sceptical cops sitting in a training room thinking: "What can these mlungus teach us?" As the day goes on, the interest, interaction and participation become lively and stimulating.

After the second day - the practical day where trucks are taken off the road and put on a brake roller tester with the 'guys and dolls' climbing into the pit under the trucks - the atmosphere is totally changed. By that time, a vibrant camaraderie has developed between the cops and their expert team leaders from our partner companies that is just so fantastic. You can feel the vibe change and the confidence levels rise as the cops put into practice the skills they have learnt.

All this was once again experienced when the *Brake & Tyre Watch* team visited Potchefstroom to train a group of 72 cops. While



Brake & Tyre Watch



## Training Day

The first day is a 'heavy' session with theoretical training provided in a classroom set up with lectures given by our expert partners. This is followed by a second practical day's training.



▲ Manie Roux of Jost presents a prize to one of the participants.

the good news is that we left behind 72 cops who previously knew nothing about trucks and were now empowered with knowledge to do their jobs better, the bad news is that out of the 30 trucks taken off for testing, 21 were discontinued. Only nine trucks passed. That's a 70% failure rate.

I'm not sure how one gets transport operators to ensure their trucks are maintained. And that's all that needs to be done. Certainly there are some trucks that are neglected way beyond the point of reasonableness and those operators should not be in this industry. However, most of the trucks would get through if the operators simply paid more attention to basic preventive maintenance.

It's not asking a lot. It's actually spelt out in Section 49 of the Road Traffic Act. It is the duty of an operator to maintain and keep roadworthy the trucks he runs on public roads. Why then are so many not doing so? Is it a lack of mechanical skills and knowledge among their diesel mechanics? Is it a false cost saving exercise? Is it the knowledge that the majority of cops out on the roads will not spot the faults? Is it that some just

don't care- that they just don't give two hoots about road safety or any form of professional operational standards?

Whatever the cause, *FleetWatch* has warned that this type of result – a 70% failure rate - will kick back on the industry as a whole in some or other way. And it has now happened. The Minister of Transport now wants to introduce restricted operating hours for trucks in the morning and evening to keep them off the roads as a means of reducing the road carnage. It's a crazy and illogical idea but is a kickback – I imagine – to some of the high-profile accidents that have involved trucks.

Without going into the full debate on that one, (*FleetWatch* has already covered it and will continue to do so), suffice to say that the unroadworthy trucks on our roads have served to put the whole industry in the same basket of bad apples – and that industry now has to fight off a dilly idea of banning trucks at certain times of the day from operating on the roads.

Get those trucks maintained – or do you want to wait for one of your trucks to be involved in a horror accident that captures the nation's attention? ☐

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## Thanks to Volvo Trucks

**At every Brake & Tyre Watch event, we invite a different truck manufacturer as a partner for that particular event so as to expose the cops to the new technology and safety features of modern trucks available on the market. We also use a rig to show the cops what the components on a roadworthy truck-tractor/trailer combination should look like compared to some of the 'drek' brought in for testing. In Potchefstroom, Volvo Trucks joined us and provided this magnificent FH12 linked to an Afrit tri-axle. Thank you Volvo Trucks.**



▲ A guy who is as passionate about trucks as we are is Phillip Phasha (right), driver trainer at Volvo Trucks, seen here joking around with one of the cops who attended the training days. His presentation on some of the safety features available on modern trucks left no doubt that truck manufacturers such as Volvo are playing their part in making trucking safer for all of us.

## Practical Training



▲ Visual inspection is conducted prior to the rigs being put on the brake-roller tester and over the pit.



▲ Our stalwart trailer expert Wolfgang Lehmann brought his crutches along for the ride. What a boykie!



▲ Inspecting the rigs brought in for testing requires each team to fill in a comprehensive form on the condition of the various components on the truck.



▲ Trucks randomly taken off the road seen lined up outside the test centre where they are visually inspected by the teams prior to going over the brake roller tester.



▲ One of the rigs being taken over the brake roller tester in the test centre.



▲ Everything wrong: Chunks out the tyre, flat spots and no legal tread depth.



▲ The affable Enoch Silcock, MD of Wabco South Africa – an avid and enthusiastic partner of Brake & Tyre Watch since the beginning.



▲ Paul Nordengen, representing the South Africa Road Federation, is an avid supporter of this initiative using the results to promote and give ammunition to the need for implementation of the RTMS system in fleets.

With thanks to  
**VALUED  
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▼ It gets pretty crowded in the test centre when the trucks start rolling in and the cops get to learn how a brake roller tester works.



▲ Finding such a 'gemors' is not unusual on our Brake & Tyre Watch exercises. An operator with such a rig should not be in transport for he clearly knows absolutely nothing – or cares absolutely nothing – about good practise.

► It also gets pretty crowded in the pits when teams go under trucks to identify unroadworthy components that go unseen out on the road.



► Wabco's Kugendren Gounden (second from left) looks on highly pleased as his team correctly identifies unroadworthy faults on a rig and fills them in on the supplied forms.



◀ And another one bites the dust as the license disc is removed following a Discontinuation of Service notice being issued.

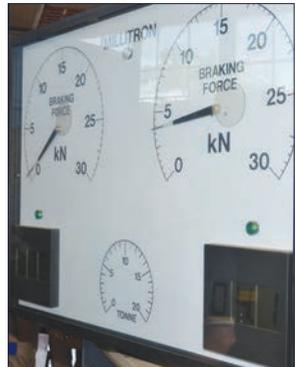
## And the faults...



▲ Oil and muck all over the brake drums. Might as well be braking on ice.



▲ The use of 'bloudraad' on small things is a sure sign of bigger faults on a rig.



▲ Over 90% brake imbalance on this axle with no brakes on the left and a dismal fail on the right. How can operators allow such rigs on the road?



▲ The bush is missing from this shock absorber rendering it totally useless in its function.



▲ This is not a fault. Rather it is excellent practise putting a lock on the fifth wheel safety catch.



▲ An ABS sensor is disconnected rendering the ABS system useless.



▲ Shocking. Totally bald tyre with a huge cut on the inner wall. A blowout just waiting to kill.



▲ One of the traffic officials shows the huge gap between the brake lining and the drum – impossible to brake. Total fail. This is common on many trucks we take off for testing.



▲ Expired – by two years – license and roadworthy disc and operator card. Get off the road.



▲ The adjustment bracket is supposed to be for an automatic slack adjuster (Ling Zong) but the operator has replaced both automatic slack adjusters with manual slack adjusters making this trailer illegal. Also note the camshaft is moving excessively



▲ When slack adjusters are incorrectly set such as is seen here, this is a sure sign of imbalanced – and invariably no braking.

# C'mon truckers Clean up your trucks!

► Not the tidiest of videos but this gives an idea of what we often find when testing trucks. Excuse the language. Not sure how to 'beep' it out. The descriptions are accurate however:

**WATCH THE VIDEOS**



**Brakes Fail on roller tester**