

FleetWatch

EMag Vol 93 / 2026

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Online Trucking Magazine

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Special Report

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Contents

Vol 93 / 2026



4

Cover story

Sinotruk lands its flagship with Motus..... 4

Sinotruk has taken a giant step forward with the opening of its flagship dealership with the Motus Group - the first of the big dealer groups to come on board.



10

Special Report

Super El Niño – Can your trucks take the heat? 10 - 34

FleetWatch asked OEMs to supply their advice on how to ensure trucks stay safe in extreme heat - above average temperatures expected in the months ahead. This is what operators need to be focusing their attention on.



36

Opening a window to tyre info 36

One vital key was missing from Danie Van Tonder's meticulous attention to detail in the running of his fleet. He has now found that key.

The sharp eye protecting the protectors..... 40

A solid partnership relationship between iZi Cash and FleetCam ensures the money gets to where it has to be - safely.

Women in transport

Extreme Exposure, Exemplary leadership..... 44

FleetWatch writer Paul Collings spoke to Mpho Matseba, the new Head of FUSO Trucks Southern Africa and unpacked her career path to success.

Breaking Barriers in the Fuel industry..... 48

Engen's Lerato Ntuli is the first woman Terminal Manager at Langlaagte - an inspiring story of perseverance in a male dominated industry.

The Workforce Challenge that can't be ignored..... 50

Kareshma Naldoo, chief of staff and HR Director - Africa, Babcock looks at the challenges facing organizations today - not technological but people.

57th Brake and Tyre Watch event .. 54

Enthusiasm for learning was the name of the day at Donkerhoek in Gauteng

SA trucking becoming smarter but not necessarily more productive ... 60

Instead of using technology to drive new efficiencies operators are often deploying it to maintain service and keeps trucks moving. Wesley Niemann share his views in this Opinion Piece.

OEMS

20th Anniversary for Volvo Assembly Plant 66

A milestone achievement underlines Volvo's history in SA.

60 years and counting 70

Isuzu Motors SA is preparing to launch its new generation truck - the latest chapter in a commercial vehicle story that stretches back 60 years.

Connected vehicle data from Hino and Fuso..... 72

A collective 250 000kms for Volvo eTrucks..... 74

150 000 locally built trucks for Daimler..... 76

GENERAL

AARTO Phase 2, but don't panic 77

AARTO Could become a bureaucratic nightmare..... 80

6 questions you need to ask before moving to an electric fleet 84

Pangolin Logistics buys 10 new DAF 6x4s . 86

SMSA Logistics expands capacity 88

SA needs to accelerate transport reform ... 90

Can SA really enforce a 0% alcohol limit? .. 92

IMESA calls for young engineering talent ... 94

Humanitarian logistics academy launched by DHL 96

Fastway Couriers franchise model tackles job crisis 98

The power of one - job 100

FUSO expands regional skills development 101

Rizon expands electric truck capability 102

Industry Directory 105

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www.mariettemartin.co.za

Published By:

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SA'S LEADING ON-LINE TRUCKING MAGAZINE

www.fleetwatch.co.za





Climate change is no longer tomorrow's problem. It is now our reality

It's not looking good and I'm genuinely worried. I'm referring to climate change and global warming. If you think the warnings are still about some distant future, think again. They are no longer tomorrow's problem. They have become today's reality.

Over the past few months, Europe has endured one record-breaking heatwave after another. In France alone, more than 2 000 people are reported to have died as a direct result of the extreme heat, while health authorities recorded 5 764 more deaths than normal during the heatwave - describing the excess mortality as "unprecedented". Across France, Spain and Greece, devastating wildfires forced mass evacuations and states of emergency, while temperatures in parts of Spain reached 40°C. At the same time, South Korea has been battling an equally relentless heatwave. President Lee Jae Myung summed it up perfectly when he said: "Extreme heat on a scale we have never experienced is continuing day after day. Heatwave conditions once seen only in foreign news reports have now become our reality."

That phrase "heatwave conditions have now become our reality" struck me because it applies not only to South Korea but to the entire world. And if you're wondering what any of this has to do with trucking, the answer is: a lot. According to a recent Bloomberg report, Ravi Menon, Singapore's ambassador for climate action and former central bank chief, described climate change as the "mother of all supply-chain disruptions." That isn't some distant prediction. It is already happening. One example is the River Rhine, one of Europe's most important freight arteries. Water levels fell so dramatically that cargo barges were forced to carry lighter loads to avoid running aground. Freight is moving more slowly, transport costs are rising and supply chains are already feeling the effects. Climate change is no longer simply an environmental issue. It has become a logistics issue.

The world needs to wake up to the reality that time is running out to slow the effects of global warming. Some scientists argue that we have already passed the point where certain changes can be reversed. I hope they are wrong. Perhaps that's wishful thinking.

More accurately, it's hope for my children and grandchildren. But hope alone won't solve anything. The first step is accepting, as South Korea's President said, that climate change has "now become our reality."

That is why it concerns me when influential world leaders dismiss overwhelming scientific evidence. Climate change does not recognise national borders. Every country's actions affect every other country. The leader of one of the world's largest economies, US President Donald Trump, should be helping to lead the fight against climate change, not dismissing it as a "hoax" thereby leading others to question whether it exists. This is not only an American problem. It is a global one that demands global leadership - and South Africa cannot afford to think we are somehow insulated. We are not. Consider this...

Transport operators benefitted by record citrus exports this past season but there is no guarantee that will continue. Meteorologists are warning that a powerful Super El Niño - some commentators referring to it as a 'Godzilla El Niño' - could combine with the long-term effects of global warming to produce one of South Africa's hottest summers in years. France has already experienced reduced grape yields after scorching temperatures stunted growth across wine-producing regions including Champagne, Bordeaux and Burgundy. Producers expect harvests to be around 10% smaller than last year. Fewer grapes don't only mean fewer bottles of wine. They also mean fewer truckloads to move. The same principle applies across agriculture. Lower crop yields, disrupted production and damaged infrastructure ultimately translate into fewer products requiring transport, interrupted supply chains and increased operating costs. Climate change affects every link in the logistics chain.

Am I being alarmist? Perhaps. But I would rather sound the alarm than ignore the warning signs. One area that does give me encouragement is the commercial vehicle industry itself. For years, truck manufacturers have invested billions in cleaner engines, lower emissions, improved fuel efficiency and alternative-energy technologies. Whether through Euro emissions standards, battery-electric vehicles, hydrogen development or other innovations, the industry has shown a willingness to invest today for a better tomorrow. In my opinion, the trucking industry has become one of the strongest examples of an industry preparing for a future that many others are still debating. To the truck OEMs I simply say: thank you. Please keep going because climate change is no longer tomorrow's challenge. It is now our reality. □

Read Special Report El Niño
Can your trucks take the heat – pg 10

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Sinotruk lands its flagship with Motus

South Africa's truck OEM arena grows more crowded by the month with Chinese brands pushing hard against the established order. Now Sinotruk South Africa has taken its boldest step yet: a dedicated flagship independent dealer with the Motus Group marking the first of the country's big dealer groups to come on board. Patrick O'Leary was at the opening and came away with the firm belief that Sinotruk is planting deep roots in South Africa's soil.

When the doors opened on the new Sinotruk Motus Midrand dealership, it marked more than another franchise on the map. It was the moment this Chinese manufacturer moved into the heart of South Africa's mainstream retail network and did so through a dedicated facility that both partners are happy to call their flagship.

Leading the Sinotruk charge in building the brand locally is Rory Schulz, Chief Operating Officer of Sinotruk South Africa, who the Chinese managed to wean out of retirement so as to bring into the stable Schutz's 38 years of trucking experience gained at UD Trucks, latterly as general manager of product and strategy.

Impressive line-up

▲ It's an impressive line-up that greets customers when entering the new Motus Sinotruk Midrand dealership. The tall signage column inserted here overlooks the busy N1 highway.

Opportunities

▼ Rory Schulz, Chief Operating Officer of Sinotruk South Africa, driving the further growth of the company in the South African market.



COVER STORY

MOTUS | SINOTRUK

Joining Forces

► Top management from Sinotruk and the Motus Group join Gideon Jansen van Rensburg, Chief Executive Officer of Motus Retail South Africa (middle behind the ribbon) and Rory Schulz, Chief Operating Officer of Sinotruk South Africa, as they jointly cut the ribbon marking the official opening of the new dealership.



Dealer Principal

► Naude Terblanche, dealer principle of Sinotruk Motus Midrand, brings with him many years of experience in the dealer arena. And yes, that's a HOWA, a Sinotruk brand that will also be sold from this dealership alongside the Sitrak models.

"They were looking for somebody to develop and expand the Sinotruk brand in South Africa but to do it in a way that was compatible with the South African way of doing business," says Schulz, adding that South Africa is the only country in which Sinotruk

plays the role of OEM itself rather than going through a distributor who then appoints dealers. "This is out of respect for a market it sees as uniquely complex," he adds.

While Sitrak trucks have become a familiar sight on South Africa's roads, these were sold via franchise dealers such as Alpine Truck & Bus and Truk Afrik which have played a vital role in establishing the marque in some major fleets. However, while still embracing these franchised dealers, Sinotruk is now placing full effort as an OEM in driving the brand further. And that is one of the responsibilities of Schulz.

Ask Schultz about strategy and the talk turns to support, not sales. He has rebuilt the network in phases: retaining around 15 dealers, aligning some 27 service points and adding five dealers from the bigger groups to reach a national footprint from the East Rand to Cape Town. A "corridor project" is now filling the gaps between the major centres. The Sinotruk Motus Midrand is, as mentioned the flagship independent dealer.

In expanding, one discipline holds. "The aftermarket is critical and I don't want any gap between the number of new vehicles sold and our ability to support them," says Schulz. Growth, in other words, will be paced to the ability to keep trucks moving. And check this out. Last year, 749 units were sold. Year to date (to end August 2026), sales have already surpassed last year's total reaching 753 units sold. It's growth time folks.

What many don't realise is the scale of Sinotruk's operations in Africa. Last year, the group sold 77 000 trucks across its Sitrak and HOWO ranges commanding ► 6

**We think trucks,
we speak trucks,
we live trucks on
a daily basis.**

Paul Jooste
Franchise Executive
Motus Commercial Vehicles



COVER STORY

MOTUS | SINOTRUK

► 5 around 45% of the African market. "Globally," Schulz notes, "Sinotruk has been the first company to surpass the Daimler Group for truck sales."

It's all this, plus a lot more to come, that helped seal the deal between the Motus Group and Sinotruk. For Motus, the tie-up completed a deliberate hunt. Its Commercial Vehicle Division, which is barely a year old, wanted Chinese representation and according to Gideon Jansen van Rensburg, Chief Executive Officer of Motus Retail South Africa, its customers pointed the way.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, he said that when the Group looks for partners, it looks for what can add value to its customers. "So, we spoke to our customers and a lot of them said that out of all the Chinese brands, Sinotruk is the one they see value in" Given that, it was all systems go and the deal was signed only six months ago.

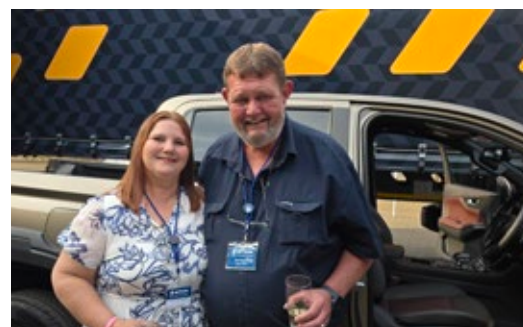
Cover photograph

Linking hands for growth, from left: Paul Jooste, Franchise Executive Motus Commercial Vehicles; Gideon Jansen van Rensburg, CEO of Motus Retail South Africa; and Rory Schulz, COO of Sinotruk South Africa.

Through the Motus Group, this Chinese manufacturer has moved into the heart of South Africa's mainstream retail network.

So will it all work. All parties are confident of total success, not least of which is Paul Jooste, Franchise Executive Motus Commercial Vehicles, who noted a happy omen: "This is Motus's 13th commercial dealership and ninth OEM. While the number 13 may be considered unlucky for some, I recently discovered that in Mandarin, 13 translates as "assured growth". And that's what everyone is projecting.

Over the years, I have attended a number of brand openings but this one felt different. Sinotruk hasn't rushed to put metal on the road; it has built and is now extending its network, is now investing in an assembly plant (that's a head-up for our readers) and has partnered with people who understand that a truck is judged long after it leaves the showroom - on uptime, on parts and on the relationship behind it. It has all the ingredients of a win-win partnership - something the trucking industry thrives on. □



Customers

▲ Among the many guests who attended the opening was that grand trucking man Piet Potgieter of Cargo Carriers and his lovely wife Lana. Here's a head-up. That's a Sinotruk bakkie behind them.



Motus Retail

▲ Gideon Jansen van Rensburg, CEO of Motus Retail South Africa. "When we look for partners, we look for what can add value to our customers."





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Tackle rising fuel costs with telematics



*By Silvia Schollenberger,
Tracker Chief
Commercial Officer*

Fuel is one of the largest operating expenses for many businesses. With fuel prices continuing to place pressure on operating budgets, fleet managers are under increasing pressure to control costs while maintaining productivity, customer service and operational efficiency.

While businesses cannot control the price of fuel, they can control how efficiently it is used. This is where telematics can make a measurable difference.

Tracker Ascend and Tracker Elevate, powered by Geotab, a global leader in connected operations, video telematics and AI-powered insights, give businesses greater visibility into fleet operations, helping them identify fuel usage patterns, fuel waste and opportunities to improve efficiency.

See where your fuel spend is going

Many fleet operators recognise that fuel costs are increasing, but identifying the underlying causes can be challenging without access to accurate, near real-time information. Telematics provides visibility into vehicle usage, routes, driver behaviour and fuel consumption trends, allowing fleet managers to make decisions based on data.

By monitoring fuel economy, fuel usage and distance travelled, businesses can identify vehicles, routes or operating practices that may be contributing to unnecessary fuel spend.

Identify wasteful behaviours

Excessive idling, speeding and harsh driving behaviours increase fuel consumption and vehicle wear.

Telematics reports and dashboards

provide visibility into driver performance, making it easier to pinpoint opportunities for improvement and focus coaching efforts where they are needed most.

Turn insights into action

The greatest value of telematics lies not only in collecting data, but in using that information to drive meaningful change.

Analysing fuel and idling trends can help businesses assess whether fuel-saving initiatives are working, while route and mileage data may reveal opportunities to reduce unnecessary travel, avoid congestion or improve scheduling.

Managers can also recognise and reward fuel-efficient driving habits across the fleet.

When organisations combine visibility with coaching and accountability, small improvements can deliver significant savings over time.

Optimise routes and improve productivity

Fuel consumption is not only influenced by driver behaviour. Route selection, traffic congestion and vehicle utilisation also play an important role.

Every unnecessary kilometre travelled increases fuel costs, while time spent in traffic adds further expense through increased fuel consumption, driver hours and vehicle wear.

With visibility into routes, mileage and vehicle activity, businesses can identify inefficient journeys and optimise operations. This can reduce fuel consumption while helping drivers complete more customer visits and service calls throughout the day.

Smarter decisions, lower costs

Reducing fuel costs requires ongoing visibility into fleet operations and the ability to identify opportunities for improvement.

Tracker Ascend and Tracker Elevate help businesses do exactly that. Through Geotab's internationally recognised telematics platform, data intelligence capabilities and open ecosystem, organisations gain actionable insights that can help reduce fuel waste, improve driver behaviour, optimise vehicle utilisation and enhance operational efficiency.

The result is more informed decision-making, improved fleet performance and greater control over one of the largest operating costs facing businesses today.

Reducing fuel costs requires ongoing visibility into fleet operations and the ability to identify opportunities for improvement



SUPER EL NIÑO | SPECIAL REPORT

Can your trucks take the heat?



There's an extremely hot summer coming our way. Scientists are warning that we could face one of the hottest summers in years as a powerful "Super" El Niño pattern combines with the long-term effects of global warming to push temperatures higher across much of the country. The trucking industry needs to be prepared and with this in mind, FleetWatch approached a number of truck OEMs - as well as a tyre manufacturer - for advice on how operators should prepare and what they need to pay particular attention to during periods of prolonged extreme heat. Our thanks go to those who responded. The good news is that, across the board, the OEMs are confident their trucks

can withstand the heat, having been tested during development in conditions of extreme heat and cold. But that doesn't mean operators can afford to be complacent. Scientists have warned that climate change could intensify the effects of El Niño and the extreme temperatures associated with it - thus the term "Super" El Niño. That means extra precautions need to be taken to ensure trucks remain reliable, safe and productive when the heat is on. In the pages that follow, the experts tell us where operators should be focusing their attention. Good luck - and stay cool.

Patrick O'Leary, Managing Editor

TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT

IVECO



By Elvis Mutseura
Product Manager
Iveco South Africa

I am quite alarmed at the temperature forecasts I am seeing when researching the expected impact of the Super El Niño conditions. Some are predicting highs of 48°C in areas like Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the North-West. This will have serious implications for almost all cross-border traffic. The north-south cross border traffic will be impacted harshly because the conditions will probably get worse further north and the support systems available to drivers diminish. The predictions will certainly test our industry.

At an ambient temperature of 40 °C asphalt surface temperatures can reach 60 °C. At 48 °C ambient temperature we will easily be able to fry eggs on the tarmac. Such conditions will keep the tyre maintenance people extremely busy but on our end, we have enough to

take care of already. So here are some points for truck operators to consider for the upcoming scorching summer months.

Engine coolants and heat exchangers are probably the first vehicle systems that will take strain during the heat waves due to a lower thermal difference between the working fluids and ambient temperatures.

The traffic congestion that has come to characterise the N3 - in particular - means that there is little to no ram-air flow through radiator cores and thus more work for the cooling fan to do. Ram-air flow relies on a pressure differential between the high-pressure air entering the front grille and the low-pressure area behind the core to force ambient air through the radiator. Our radiators and heat exchanger are sized for hot climates and their capacity is sufficient. However, maintenance becomes even more critical than at other times.



FRONT GRILLE

▲ Pre trip inspections must be conducted before each trip. Check engine oil; engine coolant; wiper fluid; power steering fluid. Weekly inspections should include air dryer; radiator anti-clogging screen and wash radiator guard grille; tyres.

Operators should ensure that the external radiator, intercooler, A/C condenser and hydraulic retarder surfaces are clean. This should be done using low-pressure chemical washes. High-pressure water streams at acute angles should be avoided as this can bend delicate aluminium fins and permanently restrict airflow.



ENGINE

▲ Viscous fans engage in reaction to the temperature of the air passing over the radiator fins. The activation of the fan can be affected negatively if the radiator fins are clogged with dust, bugs, leaves etc.

Use recommended engine coolant

Modern engine coolants are formulated to withstand high operating temperatures and to protect the engine against corrosion. Care should be taken to strictly use the recommended engine coolant and to avoid diluting this, especially with untreated tap water that can lead to the formation of scale on internal heat-transfer surfaces and consequently poor cooling performance.

Mixing legacy Inorganic Additive Technology (IAT) with modern Organic Acid Technology (OAT) causes chemical precipitation, creating a gel-like sludge that chokes radiator passageways. This can be



a very costly mistake! Operators should regularly test their radiator pressure caps because a leaking cap prevents the cooling loop from maintaining design pressure, dropping the coolant boiling point by up to 15 °C and causing premature boil-over. The high temperatures will increase compressor operating temperatures. In extreme cases this can overload the air dryer and force moisture and vapourised engine oil into the air reservoirs.

High-heat maintenance protocols

To prevent component corrosion and brake system failure, fleet managers must immediately transition to high-heat maintenance protocols. Replace air dryer desiccant cartridges ahead of schedule before they become saturated with oil mist, and clean mud and debris off the compressor-to-dryer metal discharge pipe to maintain critical cooling efficiency.

Operators should enforce mandatory daily manual drains of the air reservoirs to catch moisture bypass before it reaches the brake lines. Warning signs of a compressor that is running too hot include air purge cycles that are more frequent

COOLANT CAP

◀ It may look simple but this cap is an engineered component that contains a built-in pressure control and relief valve. It seals the closed system to allow the coolant to expand under pressure safely, raising the boiling point of the liquid. If the engine overheats and pressure exceeds safe limits, the internal spring mechanism vents excess air or steam to prevent the expansion tank or hoses from bursting. The cap should be replaced according to maintenance guidelines. Ahead of summer, inspect for visual signs of damage to the O-ring seal and check for any signs of leaking.



DRIVERS

▲ Open windows will burn fuel at highway speeds. It is much better to run the aircon. In slow-moving urban traffic, reduce the use of devices with high energy consumption (interior ventilation at high speed) to a minimum.

than normal and excessive lag in pressure build up after heavy brake use.

Fuel economy negatively affected

Fuel economy is negatively affected by very high ambient temperatures



GENERAL MAINTENANCE

▲ Fleet managers must transition to high-heat maintenance protocols.

because of losses in thermodynamic efficiency and increased parasitic mechanical loads (cooling fans can consume as much as 3% to 5% of available engine power). The air conditioning compressor will also operate at high duty cycles in this weather. This, however, should be embraced for its essential value as an active safety feature that keeps the driver energetic and attentive. There can be no compromise on safety.

For their part, drivers can help by choosing a temperature setting for example of 22 °C rather than blasting at 16 °C. Making extensive use of the recirculating setting on the air conditioner will also help to keep the a/c costs down. Drivers should also be encouraged to deploy internal windshield reflective blinds and side window sunshades immediately upon parking to block radiant heat transfer into the sleeper compartment.

As with all things, there is no substitute for smart management. Operators can mitigate many heat related risks and costs for example:

- Scheduling transit through high temperature areas between 18h00 and 06h00 to bypass peak radiation windows.
- Avoiding steep and slow-moving mountain passes during mid-day heat peaks.

This will clearly not be possible at all times but a conscious effort to implement such tweaks can make a big difference this coming summer. □



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BABCOCK DAF



▲ Mark Gavin (left) and Marius Barnard of DAF Trucks

**DAF Trucks South Africa
By Marius Barnard,
Managing Director and
Mark Gavin, Sales Director**

1. What vehicle systems are most affected by extreme heat?

The systems most influenced by prolonged high temperatures include engine cooling systems, tyres, braking systems, batteries, air-conditioning units and refrigerated transport equipment. Heat also affects lubricants and electronic components, making regular inspection and maintenance increasingly important during summer months.

TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT

2. How well are your current truck models engineered to cope with prolonged ambient temperatures that could rise above 40°C?

DAF trucks are developed and tested for operation in some of the world's most demanding environments, including regions where ambient temperatures regularly exceed 40°C. Our cooling systems, engine management strategies, driveline components and HVAC systems are designed with sufficient performance margins to ensure reliability under prolonged heat exposure.

South African conditions have always required robust engineering, and our vehicles are specified accordingly. DAF then goes further to reduce the demands on the cooling system by supplementing more of the demands on the foundation and hydrodynamic retarder braking systems with the powerful MX Engine braking system, which dissipates more of the heat generated during braking to the atmosphere via the exhaust system.

3. Are South African operating conditions becoming noticeably more demanding than they were 10 years ago?

Yes. Fleet operators are seeing more frequent periods of extreme heat, coupled with increasing traffic congestion, heavier payload demands (PBS requirements) and longer operating hours. These factors place additional pressure on vehicles and drivers alike. Modern trucks are better equipped to handle these conditions, but operational discipline and preventative maintenance have become more critical than ever.

4. What preventative maintenance should operators prioritise before summer?

Operators should focus on cooling system inspections, radiator cleanliness and annual cap replacement, coolant condition, belt and hose integrity, battery health tyre condition and maintenance. A comprehensive pre-summer inspection can significantly reduce the risk of heat-related breakdowns. Assuming that vehicles are well-



TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT



HEAVIER PAYLOADS

▲ Operators are seeing more frequent periods of extreme heat coupled with heavier payload demands such as PBS requirements.

maintained, fit for purpose, in good-operating condition and conform to the service schedule, there are no further prescribed interventions that need to be specifically applied over and above those outlined in the operators' manuals.

5. Which components should receive particular attention during routine inspections?

Key inspection points include:

- Radiators and intercoolers.
- Radiator cap integrity and annual replacement.
- Cooling hoses and clamps.
- Cooling fans and fan drives.
- Engine oil and coolant levels.
- Batteries and charging systems.
- Tyres and wheel assemblies.
- Brake components.
- Air-conditioning systems.

6. How important is cooling system maintenance and what are the most common mistakes operators make?

Cooling system maintenance is

critical. Common mistakes include neglecting radiator cleaning, mixing incompatible coolants, ignoring minor leaks and delaying coolant replacement intervals. Even a small reduction in cooling efficiency can become a major issue during extreme heat. Another small component often neglected is radiator cap inspection and replacement.

7. Does coolant specification become more critical during extreme heat?

Yes. The correct coolant specification provides not only freeze protection but also corrosion protection, boiling-point enhancement and heat-transfer efficiency. Always use coolant approved by DAF Trucks and adhere to recommended replacement intervals or according to DAF maintenance schedules. Glycol raises the boiling point of the coolant premix substantially and it is therefore even more critical during extreme heat to apply the correct coolant specification.

8. Should operators shorten service intervals during prolonged hot weather?

Not necessarily, provided vehicles

operate within their designed duty cycle and receive maintenance according to DAF service schedules. However, fleets operating in severe conditions may benefit from more frequent inspections, particularly of tyres, brakes and cooling systems. DAF maintenance contracts do provide for annual preventative maintenance inspections.

9. What effect do high road surface temperatures have on tyres?

Road temperatures can exceed ambient temperatures by a considerable margin. Elevated surface temperatures increase tyre operating temperatures, tyre pressures, accelerate wear and can contribute to casing fatigue if inflation pressures are not properly maintained. New DAF trucks are fitted with only well-known European tyre brands.

10. Should tyre pressures be adjusted during extreme summer conditions?

Operators should always use the manufacturer's recommended ►

**Always use
coolant
recommended
and approved
by the
manufacturer.**



► 15 tyre pressures. Tyres are designed with normal temperature fluctuations in mind. Arbitrarily reducing pressure to compensate for heat can increase rolling resistance, heat build-up and tyre wear. We recommend serious focus on tyre management and even small initiatives like only inflating tyres when tyre temperature is low to maintain correct pressure in operation.

11. What warning signs should drivers look for that could indicate tyre or brake overheating?

Drivers should remain alert for:

- Burning smells.
- Vibrations or unusual handling.
- Visible tyre damage or bulging.
- Smoke from wheel ends.
- Reduced braking effectiveness.
- Brake fade during descents.
- Any of these symptoms warrant immediate inspection.

12. How does heat affect braking performance, particularly on long descents?

Excessive heat can lead to brake fade, reducing braking efficiency. Drivers should use engine braking systems and retarders wherever possible, select the correct gear before entering a descent and avoid continuous application of service brakes. We recommend advanced driver training on delivery or with

new drivers and periodic driver refresher programmes. DAF Trucks South Africa provides detailed vehicle familiarisation and driver training programmes.

Fortunately, the DAF vehicles come standard with the DSC (Downhill Speed Control) feature to help co-ordinate and regulate these systems independently of the driver when activated. Drivers need only target a lower descent speed and activate it on the multifunction steering wheel and the vehicle will automatically apply these systems leaving the driver to focus on the road ahead while paying attention to the coolant temperature, road speed, vehicles ahead and surroundings.

13. How can operators minimise the risk of engine overheating?

The most effective measures include maintaining cooling systems correctly, cleaning radiators regularly, monitoring coolant levels, avoiding excessive engine idling and ensuring engines operate within recommended load parameters. Driver training and early warning / alert awareness. DAF Trucks South Africa provides comprehensive maintenance contracts for peace of mind trucking in extreme weather conditions, ensuring maximum uptime performance.

Fleet operators are seeing more frequent periods of extreme heat. Climate resilience is an important factor in the design.

14. What advice do you have regarding idling, stop-start traffic and steep climbs during extremely hot weather?

DAF/PACCAR engines manage temperature very effectively but operators should minimise unnecessary idling. In slow-moving traffic, drivers should monitor temperature gauges and warning systems. On steep climbs, selecting the correct gear helps maintain airflow and cooling efficiency while reducing stress on the drivetrain. With DAF technology, hill climb assist, gear selection



COOLANT CHECK

◀ Coolant levels should be checked regularly to ensure optimum engine cooling and prevent overheating.

ENGINE CHECK

► Regularly inspect the engine compartment for coolant leaks, damaged components and other signs of potential problems.



GENUINE PARTS

◀ Always use genuine PACCAR filters to ensure reliable filtration, engine protection and optimum performance.

TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT

and traffic crawling assist with extreme operational requirements. However, driver training is very important to understand how to utilize these technologies effectively.

15. Are modern engines less susceptible to overheating than older models?

Yes. DAF customers benefit from advanced electronic management systems, improved cooling technologies and sophisticated sensor networks that continuously monitor operating conditions. However, maintenance remains essential to ensure these systems perform as intended.

16. Does extreme heat affect fuel consumption?

Extreme heat can increase fuel consumption indirectly. Higher air-conditioning usage, traffic congestion, lower air density and longer idling periods may all contribute to reduced fuel efficiency. With DAF trucks South Africa's telematics system, Executrax, all these parameters can be monitored and managed remotely for best fuel consumption results.

17. Are there driving techniques that improve efficiency during very hot conditions?

Drivers should maintain steady speeds, avoid harsh acceleration, minimise idling, anticipate traffic conditions and use cruise control when appropriate. Smooth driving reduces vehicle stress and helps improve fuel economy. DAF trucks provide all driver aid requirements for optimum vehicle performance and driver comfort.

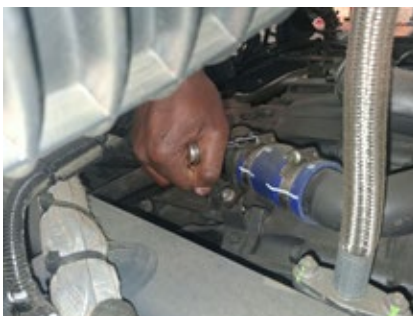
18. Can route planning or journey scheduling reduce heat-related operating risks?

Absolutely. Planning routes to avoid peak traffic congestion and scheduling certain operations during cooler periods of the day can improve vehicle efficiency, reduce thermal stress and enhance driver well-being.



COOLANT SYSTEM

▲ Technicians should regularly inspect the cooling system, including coolant levels, hoses and connections, to ensure reliable engine performance and prevent overheating.



CHECK CLAMPS

▲ Technicians should inspect cooling-system pipe clamps regularly to ensure they are secure and correctly fitted, preventing coolant leaks and potential overheating.

19. Drivers often describe the cab as their "home away from home." What practical advice do you have for remaining safe and comfortable during prolonged heat?

Drivers should ensure the air-conditioning system is functioning properly, stay hydrated, wear lightweight clothing, use sun protection and take regular breaks where possible. A comfortable driver is generally a safer and more productive driver. Resting well, good sleeping patterns and staying fit, healthy and appropriate diet enhances driver ability and alertness. DAF driver training modules covers some personal wellness suggestions to drivers and operators.

20. What symptoms of heat stress or heat exhaustion should drivers recognise?

Symptoms include:

- Excessive sweating.
- Dizziness.
- Headaches.
- Fatigue.
- Muscle cramps.
- Nausea.
- Reduced concentration.
- Rapid heartbeat; and in some cases, impaired vision.

Drivers experiencing these symptoms should stop, cool down and seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

21. How much water should drivers be drinking during a shift?

Hydration requirements vary by individual and environmental conditions but drivers should drink water regularly throughout the day rather than waiting until they feel thirsty. Consistent hydration is key to maintaining alertness and performance. Old school will tell you two litres of water a day is sufficient.

22. Are there particular foods or drinks drivers should avoid?

Heavy meals, excessive caffeine, highly sugary drinks and alcohol should be avoided, particularly in hot

conditions. Light meals and regular water intake generally support better concentration and comfort. A balanced diet in small portions is advised when sitting in one position for 2 hours of driving at a time.

23. How important is sleep quality before operating in extreme heat?

Very important. Heat places additional stress on the body, increasing fatigue levels. Drivers who start a shift well-rested are better equipped to maintain concentration, make sound decisions and manage physical demands throughout the day. DAF truck cabs are some of the most comfortable, ergonomic and well designed in the industry, focussing on driver comfort and safety, as well as aerodynamics.

24. How should operators adjust work-rest schedules during heatwaves?

Operators should assess working conditions continuously and consider more frequent rest breaks, especially during the hottest periods of the day. Driver health and safety must remain the primary consideration.



25. How important is regular maintenance of cab air-conditioning systems?

Air-conditioning systems are essential safety and comfort systems. Regular servicing ensures effective cooling, reduces driver fatigue and helps maintain concentration during long shifts. Opening the window from time to time to allow fresh air and a “wake-up” breeze doesn’t do any harm either.

PREVENT OVERHEATING

▲ Technician checking and confirming the coolant level is correct to ensure optimum engine cooling and prevent overheating.

26. What simple checks can drivers perform if cooling performance deteriorates?

Drivers can:

- Check cabin air filters.
- Ensure vents are unobstructed.
- Verify correct blower operation.
- Look for warning messages.
- Report reduced performance immediately before it becomes a larger issue.

27. What additional precautions should refrigerated fleet operators take during extreme temperatures?

Operators should increase monitoring of temperature-control systems, inspect door seals regularly, minimise door-opening times and ensure refrigeration units are serviced according to manufacturer guidelines. Understand customer and product

SECURE CAP

◀ Always ensure the coolant cap is securely fitted and tightened to prevent coolant loss, leaks and potential overheating.





JOST SOLUTIONS

TRANSPORT



DCA – Durable Compact Axle

Intelligent axle systems with multiple talents

- ◆ In January 2015, JOST acquired the Mercedes-Benz Trailer Axle Systems business, establishing itself as a leading manufacturer of trailer axle systems in Europe.
- ◆ The DCA range provides the ideal axle solution for all common 9-tonne trailer configurations, from curtain-siders to tippers. Designed around a fully modular platform, the DCA series offers exceptional flexibility while minimizing the number of different components required.
- ◆ This modular design delivers significant benefits to customers, including reduced spare parts inventories, lower stockholding costs, and reduced total life-cycle costs. Combined with JOST's renowned quality and reliability, the DCA offers outstanding long-term value and performance.
- ◆ For applications requiring superior maneuverability, the DCA can be equipped with the technically advanced JOST CSA command-steer axle. This solution easily meets the highest demands for the maneuverability of semi-trailers and trailers, ensuring enhanced operational efficiency in even the most challenging environments.





COOLANT FAN

▲ **Left:** Cooling fan inspection: Ensure the fan is clean, secure and free from damage to maintain effective engine cooling and prevent overheating.

▲ **Right:** Cooling-system piping: Regularly inspect pipes, hoses and connections for wear, damage or leaks to ensure reliable coolant circulation

cooling requirements with continuous monitoring and cooling data recording.

28. Does prolonged extreme heat affect refrigeration performance or maintenance intervals?

Refrigeration units must work harder during extreme heat, potentially increasing component wear and fuel consumption. More frequent inspections may be beneficial during periods of sustained high temperatures.

29. How can telematics help identify heat-related problems before they become breakdowns?

Modern telematics systems can provide early warning of abnormal engine temperatures, excessive idling, battery issues and driver behaviour that may contribute to overheating. Early intervention helps prevent costly downtime. With Executrax, DAF SA's telematic system helps with all related challenges, assisting driver behaviour, fuel management, remote diagnostics and early warning systems.

30. Which vehicle parameters should fleet managers monitor most closely?

Fleet managers should closely monitor:

- Engine coolant temperature.
- Fuel consumption trends.
- Idle time.
- Tyre pressure monitoring systems (where fitted) or regular checking.
- Driver behaviour data.
- Refrigeration temperatures.
- Maintenance alerts and fault codes.

31. Is extreme heat now becoming a permanent engineering consideration for future truck design?

Yes. Climate resilience is increasingly becoming an important factor in vehicle design. Future truck development will continue to focus on thermal management, fuel efficiency, driver comfort, system durability and predictive maintenance technologies. However, the same focus is given to extreme cold in some cases.

32. If you could give fleet operators just three priorities before this summer, what would they be?

- Ensure cooling systems, tyres and brakes are thoroughly inspected and maintained.
- Prioritise driver health, hydration and fatigue management.
- Use vehicle data and preventative maintenance programmes to identify potential issues before they lead to breakdowns.

The combination of modern vehicle technology, disciplined maintenance and professional driver management remains the most effective way to ensure safe, efficient and reliable transport operations during periods of extreme heat. DAF Trucks South Africa remains committed to supporting operators with vehicles engineered for demanding African conditions and the aftersales support required to maximise uptime throughout the year. □

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for every application.

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AND TESTED

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ISUZU

1. What vehicle systems are most affected by extreme heat?

The systems that deserve the closest attention are the engine and transmission cooling circuits, the radiator and charge-air cooling pack, tyres, brakes and wheel hubs, batteries and charging systems, cab air-conditioning, lubricants and - where fitted - refrigeration equipment. Heat can also expose marginal conditions that may not be obvious in cooler weather, such as a partially blocked radiator, a weak pressure cap, an ageing hose, an under-inflated tyre, a dragging brake or a battery nearing the end of its service life. The important point is that heat rarely creates a problem in isolation; it reduces the operating margin of components that are already under load.

2. How well are your current truck models engineered to cope with prolonged ambient temperatures that could rise above 40°C?

Isuzu Trucks are engineered for demanding operating environments, including inner-city distribution, long-haul freight, construction, mining and harsh off-road applications. In practice, temperatures above 40°C are conditions that fleets in this region can encounter, and the vehicle's



**Isuzu Trucks
By Mpho Nkhumeleni,
Department Executive:
CV Sales and Isuzu
engineering team**

thermal-management systems are designed with demanding duty cycles in mind. Sustained high load, steep gradients, low road speed, restricted airflow around the cooling pack and poor maintenance can all reduce the available cooling margin.

3. Are South African operating conditions becoming noticeably more demanding than they were 10 years ago?

Yes, we believe fleets should plan on the basis that high-temperature exposure is becoming a more important operating risk. South African climate authorities have documented a long-term warming trend and an increasing concern around heatwaves, while SAWS continues to issue heatwave warnings and recorded new long-standing March temperature records at multiple stations in 2026.

Not every route or region will experience the same change but the operational implication is clear: more frequent hot days increase the cumulative thermal load on vehicles, tyres, refrigeration equipment and drivers. That makes preventative maintenance, telematics-based monitoring and heat-aware scheduling more important than they were a decade ago.

4. What preventative maintenance should operators prioritise before summer?

We suggest that customers start with the cooling system and then work outward. Check coolant level and condition, pressure-test the system where appropriate, inspect hoses and clamps, confirm the radiator cap and thermostat are serviceable and ensure the radiator, condenser and charge-air cooler are clean and unobstructed.

Check fan operation, drive belts, engine oil and other specified lubricants, battery condition and charging voltage. Tyres should be inspected for correct cold pressure, damage, tread condition and valve integrity. Brakes and wheel hubs should be checked for wear, adjustment and signs of dragging or overheating. Cab air-conditioning should be tested before the first heatwave, and any fault codes or recurring temperature warnings should be investigated rather than cleared and ignored. All work should follow the applicable ISUZU service schedule and model documentation.



Fleets should plan on the basis that high-temperature exposure is becoming a more important operating risk.

TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT

5. Which components should receive particular attention during routine inspections?

We would place particular emphasis on the radiator and cooling fins, coolant hoses and clamps, pressure cap, fan and fan drive, water-pump area, drive belts, air cleaner, tyres and valves, brake linings or pads, drums or discs, wheel ends, batteries and terminals, and the air-conditioning condenser and cabin filter where fitted. On vehicles working in dusty construction, mining or agricultural environments, cooling-pack cleanliness is especially important because dust, insects and debris reduce airflow exactly when the system needs maximum heat rejection.

6. How important is cooling system maintenance and what are the most common mistakes operators make?

It is one of the most important preparations for summer. The cooling system has to reject the engine's normal heat plus the additional thermal load created by high ambient temperature, heavy loads, low-speed operation and long climbs.

Common mistakes include running with low coolant, topping up repeatedly without finding the leak, using the wrong coolant or mixing incompatible products, substituting plain water, allowing the radiator or charge-air cooler to become blocked, ignoring a weak pressure cap or damaged hose, and using non-approved parts that alter thermostat or fan performance. Another serious mistake is opening a hot pressurised cooling system. If overheating is suspected, the driver should stop safely, follow the vehicle operating instructions and allow the system to cool off before any inspection.

7. Does coolant specification become more critical during extreme heat?

Yes. Correct coolant is not simply an antifreeze issue; it is part of the engine's thermal-management and corrosion-protection system.



The approved coolant type and concentration help maintain heat transfer, corrosion protection, water-pump and seal life, and the boiling margin of the pressurised cooling system.

Operators should use only the coolant specified for the particular Isuzu model and should avoid mixing products or guessing the concentration. More concentrate is not automatically better: an incorrect mixture can reduce heat-transfer performance. If there is any uncertainty, the correct approach is to consult the vehicle documentation or an authorised ISUZU dealer rather than topping up with an unverified product.

8. Should operators shorten service intervals during prolonged hot weather?

Isuzu's guidance is to service trucks according to the prescribed service schedule, and warranty validity depends on proper maintenance at those intervals. What should change in extreme heat is inspection frequency and condition awareness. Fleets operating in severe duty, high idling, dusty environments, repeated steep climbs, heavy stop-start work or sustained high ambient temperatures - should inspect cooling packs, fluids, tyres, brakes

COOLING SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

◀ Maintenance of the cooling system is one of the most important preparations for summer. The cooling system has to reject the engine's normal heat plus the additional thermal load created by high ambient temperature, heavy loads, low-speed operation and long climbs.

and air-conditioning more frequently and discuss the appropriate severe-duty maintenance approach with their ISUZU dealer. In other words, do not invent a new service interval; intensify checks and apply the model- and application-specific schedule correctly.

9. What effect do high road surface temperatures have on tyres?

High road and ambient temperatures increase tyre operating temperature and internal pressure. The greatest concern is not a correctly inflated tyre becoming warm in normal service; it is a tyre that is under-inflated, overloaded, damaged or already structurally compromised.

Check pressure when tyres are cold. Never deflate a hot tyre. Follow recommended pressure for the load and use.



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TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT

CHECK TYRE PRESSURES

► Operators should not make arbitrary summer pressure reductions. Tyre pressure should be checked cold and set to the vehicle or tyre manufacturer's recommendation for the actual axle load and application.



Schedule the most demanding legs, loading work and sleep routes for cooler parts of the day.

Under-inflation increases sidewall flexing and heat generation which can damage the casing and increase failure risk. Isuzu has also highlighted the cooler-running benefit of tubeless tyres across its truck range because there is no tube-to-tyre friction. The summer routine should therefore be simple: correct cold pressure for the load, regular visual inspections, no overloading, and immediate investigation of any tyre that is losing pressure or running noticeably hotter than its axle partners.

10. Should tyre pressures be adjusted during extreme summer conditions?

Operators should not make arbitrary summer pressure reductions. Tyre pressure should be checked cold and set to the vehicle or tyre manufacturer's recommendation for the actual axle load and application. Pressure naturally rises as the tyre heats while driving; that is expected, and a hot tyre should not be bled down to the cold-pressure figure. Commercial-vehicle guidance is explicit on this point: check pressure when tyres are cold, never deflate a hot tyre, and follow the recommended pressure for the load and use. The more useful summer action is to increase the frequency and discipline of pressure checks, using an accurate calibrated gauge or a tyre-pressure and temperature monitoring solution.

11. How does heat affect braking performance, particularly on long descents?

Brakes convert vehicle kinetic energy into heat, so a long descent can create very high brake temperatures even before ambient heat is added. Excessive or continuous service-brake use can cause brake fade and increase stopping distance; drum systems are particularly vulnerable because heated drums expand away from the friction material.

The correct technique is to enter the descent at a safe speed, select an appropriate gear, use the engine brake or retarder where fitted and suitable and use the service brakes in a controlled manner rather than riding them continuously. The objective is to manage speed before brake temperature becomes the limiting factor. Brake condition, adjustment and correct replacement parts are equally important because heat exposes any weakness quickly.

12. How can operators minimise the risk of engine overheating?

Prevention is mainly about preserving cooling-system capacity. Keep the cooling pack clean, maintain the correct coolant level and specification, repair leaks, ensure fan and belt systems are operating correctly, and use the correct lubricants. Do not overload

the truck or operate it outside its intended application. Drivers should monitor temperature gauges and warnings and avoid labouring the engine in an inappropriately high gear on a climb. If temperature begins to rise abnormally, reduce the load on the engine, respond to the warning promptly and stop safely if the condition persists. Do not continue driving in the hope that the temperature will recover and never remove a pressurised cooling-system cap while hot.

13. Are modern engines less susceptible to overheating than older models?

Modern engines benefit from better electronic control, more precise fuel management, improved cooling-system design and earlier warning or protection strategies. Isuzu's current truck ranges use modern common-rail turbocharged diesel technology and integrated vehicle management. That does not make them immune to overheating.

Modern engines also operate at high specific output and depend on their cooling, lubrication and electronic-control systems being in good condition. The practical advantage is that today's vehicle engine management systems can often identify an abnormal trend earlier; fleet managers or operators must still act on the information. Good maintenance remains the decisive factor.

14. Does extreme heat affect fuel consumption?

It can. In very hot weather the air-conditioning compressor and cooling fan may work harder or for longer; stop-start traffic can increase idling and under-inflated tyres create additional rolling resistance. These effects can raise fuel usage or consumption, even when the engine is operating normally. Some fuel-economy methodologies explicitly account for hot-weather air-conditioning load, although the exact penalty on a truck varies greatly with vehicle duty cycle and ambient conditions.

For fleets, the useful message is not to chase a universal percentage; it is to control the avoidable contributors - correct tyre pressure, clean cooling systems, efficient route planning, limited unnecessary idling and smooth driving.

15. Can route planning or journey scheduling reduce heat-related operating risks?

Definitely. Where the operation allows it, schedule the most demanding legs, loading work and steep routes for cooler parts of the day; avoid predictable peak congestion that creates long periods of low-speed heat soak; and monitor SAWS heatwave warnings.

Route planning should consider gradients, roadworks, rest facilities, fuel availability and dealer or roadside support. For temperature-controlled freight, delivery sequencing can also reduce the number and duration of door openings during the hottest part of the day. Telematics makes this more effective because planners can compare actual route speed, idle time, fuel and vehicle condition instead of relying only on a planned timetable.

16. How should operators adjust work-rest schedules during heatwaves?

Use a risk-based approach rather than a fixed one-size-fits-all rule. As temperature, humidity, solar

load and physical work increase, shorten exposure periods and increase recovery time in a cool or air-conditioned area. Schedule loading, tarping, inspections and other physical tasks for cooler periods where practical, rotate demanding duties, and give new or heat-unacclimatised workers more frequent breaks. SAWS warnings should be part of daily planning. These heat controls must sit on top of - not replace - South African driving-time and operator-safety requirements. The purpose is to keep the driver within a safe physiological and fatigue margin throughout the shift.

17. How important is regular maintenance of cab air-conditioning systems?

Very important. In extreme heat, air-conditioning is a driver-welfare and concentration system, not merely a comfort feature. A weak system forces the driver to work in a hotter environment and can accelerate fatigue and dehydration. Before summer, check cooling performance, blower output, condenser cleanliness and cabin-filter condition and have refrigerant charge, compressor operation and any leaks assessed by a trained technician. A clogged cabin filter can significantly reduce airflow even when the refrigeration circuit itself is functioning. Any model-

specific service interval or refrigerant specification should be followed exactly.

18. What additional precautions should refrigerated fleet operators take during extreme temperatures?

Extreme heat leaves less refrigeration reserve, so operating discipline becomes critical. Carry out a full pre-trip unit check, make sure the body is clean and in good condition, pre-cool the body before loading, and load product that is already at the correct transport temperature. Check door seals and strip curtains, keep air-return and discharge paths clear, minimise door-open time and sequence deliveries to reduce repeated heat ingress. Temperature logging and alarms should be active and operators should have a contingency plan for unit faults or long delays. Carrier's cold-chain guidance stresses the same fundamentals: pre-cooling, correct product temperature, unobstructed airflow and strict control of door openings.

19. Does prolonged extreme heat affect refrigeration performance or maintenance intervals?

Yes, because the unit must reject more heat to a hotter environment and will normally run longer or



PRECAUTIONS FOR REFRIGERATION

◀ Extreme heat leaves less refrigeration reserve, so operating discipline becomes critical. Carry out a full pre-trip unit check, make sure the body is clean and in good condition, pre-cool the body before loading, and load product that is already at the correct transport temperature.

TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT



SERVICING OF TRUCKS

► Isuzu's guidance is to service trucks according to the prescribed service schedule, and warranty validity depends on proper maintenance at those intervals. What should change in extreme heat is inspection frequency and condition awareness.

at higher capacity to maintain the same box temperature. Modern high-ambient refrigeration systems are specifically designed for this challenge. Carrier, for example, produces reefer units designed for ambient temperatures above 50°C and Thermo King has demonstrated constant cooling on a South African application above 40°C. Even so, sustained heat makes condenser cleanliness, refrigerant condition, belts, fans, batteries, electrical connections and door seals more critical. Maintenance intervals should remain manufacturer-led, but inspection frequency should increase when duty cycle and run hours rise materially.

20. How can telematics help identify heat-related problems before they become breakdowns?

Telematics is valuable because heat-related failures often develop as trends before they become roadside events. Isuzu Insight is a

factory-fitted, end-to-end fleet-management solution on trucks built from April 2022 onwards, providing tracking, reporting and proactive monitoring. Fleets can use telematics to identify repeated high-temperature events, excessive idling, harsh operation, abnormal fuel use, recurring warnings and route segments that consistently place a vehicle under high thermal load. The important step is to set exception-based alerts and act on them: a pattern of rising coolant temperature on the same climb, for example, is far more useful if maintenance sees it before the driver experiences an overheat warning.

21. Which vehicle parameters should fleet managers monitor most closely?

For heat risk, the most useful parameters are engine-coolant temperature and warning status, engine speed and load, idle time, vehicle speed, fuel consumption trends, fault or diagnostic events and - where available - battery or charging-system data. Tyre pressure and tyre temperature are also valuable through a dedicated tyre-monitoring solution. For refrigerated fleets, cargo and return-air temperature, set point, unit run status and alarm history should be integrated where possible. Exact parameters available through Isuzu Insight depend on vehicle configuration and subscribed services, so the final published list should be confirmed against the current South African platform specification.

22. Is extreme heat now becoming a permanent engineering consideration for future truck design?

Yes, extreme ambient temperature should increasingly be treated as a normal design input rather than an occasional exception in many markets. Future truck engineering must consider cooling-system capacity, airflow

management, materials, electronics, battery and charging performance, braking and tyre temperature, cab thermal comfort and on electrified vehicles battery and power-electronics thermal management. For Isuzu, the practical principle remains the same: vehicles must be matched to the real duty cycle and operating environment. We would avoid making claims about future product specifications until they are formally announced but the industry direction is clearly toward stronger thermal resilience and better real-time monitoring.

South Africa Weather Services warnings should be a part of daily planning

23. If you could give fleet operators just three priorities before this summer, what would they be?

1. First, restore the vehicle's cooling margin: correct coolant, no leaks, clean cooling pack, service hoses, fan, belts and pressure control.
2. Second, protect the contact points with the road: check every tyre cold at the correct pressure and inspect brakes and wheel hubs for wear or heat.
3. Third, protect the driver and the operation: make sure cab air-conditioning works, plan hydration and rest, watch SAWS heat alerts, and use telematics and route planning to identify high-risk duty cycles before they become breakdowns.

If fleets do those three things consistently, they will address the biggest heat-related risks to uptime, safety and operating cost. □

UD TRUCKS

UD Trucks Southern Africa had adopted a different course to giving tips. In doing so, it has expressed confidence in its products - on many fronts - of being able to withstand consistent high temperatures. Although reference is made to UD Truck products, this article is not a free advertisement or a punt for UD Trucks. Rather we have chosen to feature it as an indication of how truck OEMs design their products and service offerings to embrace all circumstances - including extreme temperatures. As stated in the article, thermal management is increasingly becoming a key consideration in commercial vehicle engineering and as such, this article serves to give some reassurance to operators who are facing hot times ahead.

One of the most critical systems during extreme heat is engine cooling.



As South Africa braces for what could be one of its hottest summers on record, fleet operators are rightly asking whether their trucks are equipped to cope with prolonged temperatures above 40°C. Commercial vehicles operating in extreme heat face far more than driver discomfort. High ambient temperatures place additional demands on engine cooling systems, drivetrains, tyres, braking systems, electrical components and refrigeration equipment. They can also affect fuel efficiency, vehicle uptime and ultimately, profitability.

At UD Trucks, reliability is engineered into every vehicle from the outset with decades of engineering experience, continuous product development and a deep understanding of African operating conditions. Each model is designed to deliver dependable performance in some of the toughest operating environments in the world - including the demanding climates of Southern Africa.

Designed for African operating conditions

Africa has always presented unique challenges for commercial vehicles. Long distances, steep

CRONER

▲ As climate patterns become more extreme, engineering features are becoming increasingly important.

mountain passes, heavy payloads, dusty conditions and high ambient temperatures require trucks that are engineered for durability rather than simply adapted for local markets. This philosophy is reflected throughout the UD Trucks range. Every vehicle is developed with robust cooling capacity, durable driveline components and efficient powertrain management systems that allow engines to maintain optimum operating temperatures under sustained heavy loads. Advanced electronic engine management continuously monitors operating conditions, adjusting engine performance to maximise efficiency while protecting critical components. Large-capacity cooling systems, carefully engineered airflow management and high-performance lubricants all work together to ensure consistent performance even when temperatures soar.

As climate patterns become more extreme, these engineering features are becoming increasingly important - not simply for reliability, but for protecting customer productivity.

TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT

Cooling systems

One of the most critical systems during extreme heat is engine cooling. UD Trucks' cooling systems are designed with generous thermal capacity to cope with demanding duty cycles, whether vehicles are climbing steep gradients, operating in stop-start urban traffic or transporting heavy loads over long distances. Efficient radiator design, optimised airflow and intelligent engine management help maintain stable operating temperatures without compromising performance.

Equally important is the use of manufacturer-approved coolant. UD Trucks specifies coolant formulations that not only provide excellent heat transfer but also protect against corrosion, cavitation and internal deposits that can reduce cooling efficiency over time. This integrated approach helps maximise engine durability while reducing the risk of unexpected downtime during peak summer operations.

Modern powertrains that work smarter

Today's UD engines are significantly more sophisticated than previous generations.

Electronic engine management systems constantly monitor coolant temperatures, engine load, fuel delivery and numerous other operating parameters to optimise performance while safeguarding the powertrain.

These intelligent systems make modern UD trucks considerably less susceptible to overheating than older mechanical engines, while simultaneously delivering improved fuel efficiency and lower emissions. Combined with automated manual transmission options on selected models, the drivetrain operates efficiently across a wide range of operating conditions, reducing unnecessary engine stress and improving overall vehicle productivity.

Safety and control in challenging conditions

High ambient temperatures also affect braking performance, particularly on long descents where excessive brake application can generate significant heat. UD Trucks addresses this through integrated engine braking systems and advanced driveline technologies that reduce reliance on service brakes while improving vehicle control.

A great advantage of modern commercial vehicles is their ability to communicate their own health before problems become failures

The result is improved brake durability, reduced maintenance requirements and enhanced safety for both drivers and other road users.

Similarly, vehicle suspension, chassis design and axle configurations are engineered to maintain stability and durability even when road surface temperatures are exceptionally high.

Driver-focused by design

At UD Trucks, vehicle performance is closely linked to driver wellbeing. Efficient climate control systems help maintain comfortable cabin temperatures, reducing fatigue and improving driver alertness during prolonged

LONGHAUL

▲ Cooling systems are designed with generous thermal capacity to cope with demanding duty cycles whether in stop-start urban traffic or over long distances.

DRIVER FOCUSED DESIGN

► Efficient climate control systems help maintain comfortable cabin temperatures, reducing fatigue and improving driver alertness during prolonged periods of extreme heat





As climate patterns become more extreme, engineering features are increasingly important

CONNECTED TECHNOLOGIES

▲ Connected technologies allow operators to monitor critical vehicle parameters to avoid roadside breakdowns during the hottest periods of the year.

► 29 periods of extreme heat. Ergonomic seating, intuitive controls, low interior noise levels and excellent visibility all contribute to a working environment that allows drivers to remain focused regardless of outside conditions. Because a comfortable driver is ultimately a safer and more productive driver.

Connected technology prevents downtime

One of the greatest advantages of modern commercial vehicles is their ability to communicate their own health before problems become failures. Our connected vehicle technologies allow operators to monitor critical vehicle parameters, including engine performance, coolant temperature, fuel consumption, fault codes and vehicle utilisation. This enables fleet managers to identify emerging issues early, schedule maintenance proactively and reduce the likelihood of costly roadside breakdowns during the hottest periods of the year. Rather than reacting to failures, customers can increasingly predict and prevent them.

After-sales support that keeps fleets moving

Engineering excellence is only one part of the solution. UD Trucks supports customers through an extensive dealer and service network across Southern Africa. Routine inspections of cooling systems, air-conditioning, belts, hoses, tyres and braking components become particularly important during summer and dealers are equipped to help customers prepare their fleets before temperatures peak. Using genuine UD parts also ensures that replacement components meet the original engineering specifications



required for reliable operation under demanding conditions.

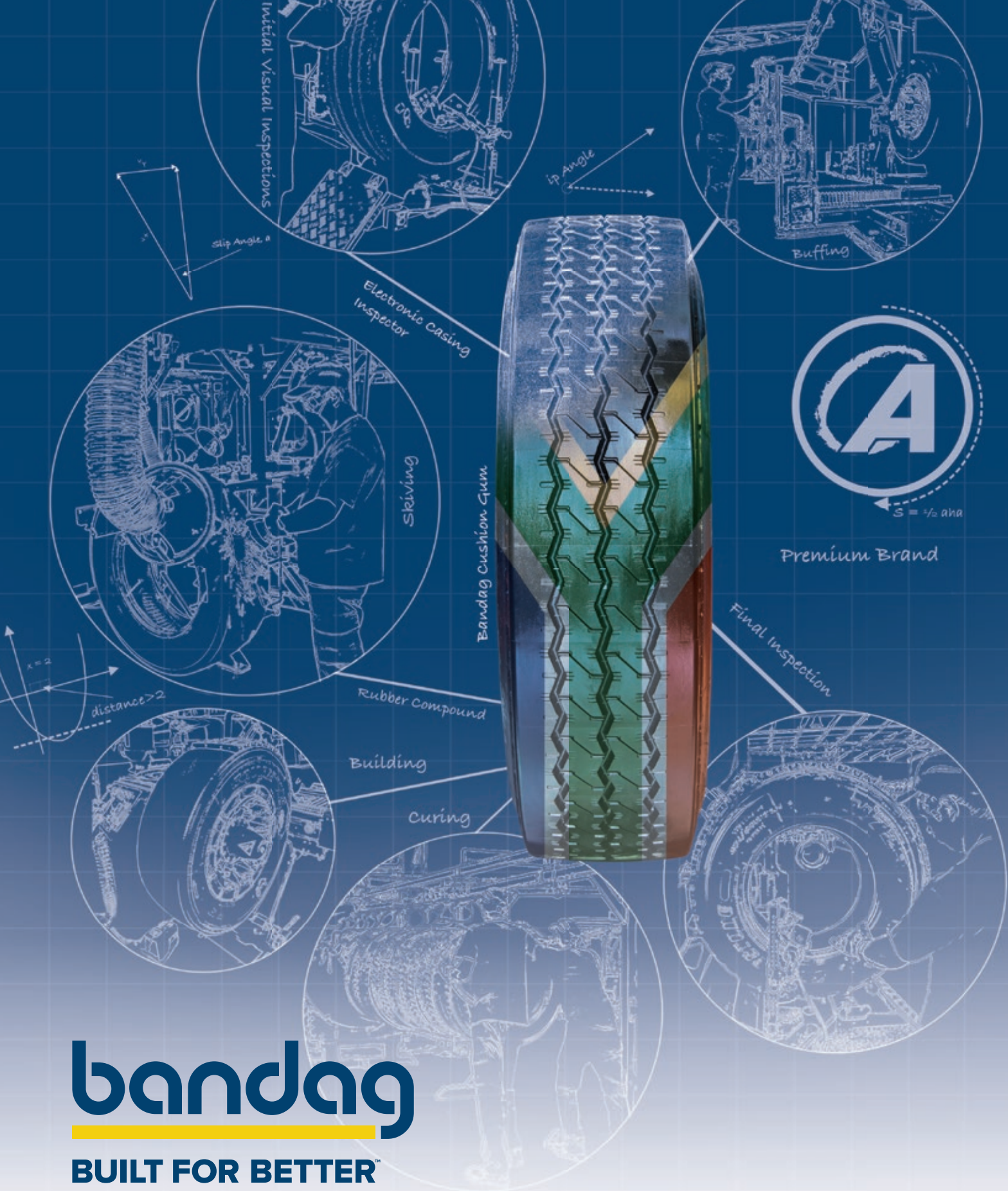
Ready for the future

As extreme weather becomes a more permanent feature of global transport, thermal management is increasingly becoming a key consideration in commercial vehicle engineering. UD Trucks continues to invest in technologies that improve cooling efficiency, fuel economy, connected diagnostics and vehicle durability, ensuring future products remain capable of meeting the evolving demands of African transport.

The objective remains unchanged: maximise customer uptime while reducing total cost of ownership. For fleet operators preparing for another demanding South African summer, confidence begins with choosing a truck engineered for the environment in which it works. □

POWERTRAIN

◀ Combined with the Escot automated manual transmission options on selected models, the overall drivetrain operates efficiently across a wide range of operating conditions, reducing unnecessary engine stress.



SUSTAINABILITY

RELIABILITY

PROFITABILITY

Ongoing investment in processes, rubber compounding, product performance and a global partnership is the blue print of Bandag's Application Specific Range of premium retread products.

Bandag Application Specific Retreads - Built For Better

DRIVERS

Insights from Isuzu

1. Are there driving techniques that improve efficiency during very hot conditions?

Yes. Smooth acceleration, early anticipation, progressive braking and steady road speed reduce fuel usage and reduce heat generation in the powertrain and braking system. Avoid unnecessary idling and aggressive stop-start driving, use the correct gear to avoid engine labouring. Maintain safe momentum on rolling terrain and keep tyres at the correct cold pressure.

Air conditioning should be used to keep the driver safe, comfortable and alert but the cab can be cooled more efficiently by venting extreme heat before setting off and parking in the shade where practical. The goal is efficient, low-stress operation rather than trying to save fuel by compromising driver comfort or safety.

2. Drivers often describe the cab as their “home away from home.” What practical advice do you have for remaining safe and comfortable during prolonged heat?

Treat the cab as part of the safety system. Make sure the air conditioning system is working properly before the heatwave arrives, use sunshades or shaded parking where practical, keep drinking water within easy reach and take recovery breaks in a cool or air-conditioned area. Wear light, breathable clothing when the job permits and do not wait for severe thirst or dizziness before acting. Drivers should also avoid unnecessary physical exertion during the hottest part of the day and report a failing air-conditioning system rather than accepting it as a comfort issue. A hot, dehydrated or fatigued driver has less concentration and a smaller safety margin.



3. What symptoms of heat stress or heat exhaustion should drivers recognise?

Early signs can include heavy sweating, headache, dizziness, weakness or unusual fatigue, nausea, cramps, irritability and a rapid pulse. Heat exhaustion can progress rapidly if the person remains exposed. More serious signs are confusion, loss of coordination, altered behaviour, collapse, seizures or a very high body temperature which may indicate heat stroke, which is a medical emergency. The driver should stop work, move to a cool place and begin cooling and hydration where appropriate; suspected heat stroke requires urgent medical assistance. Fleets should train drivers and supervisors to recognise these signs in themselves and in colleagues, because impaired judgement can be part of the illness.

4. How much water should drivers be drinking during a shift?

There is no single

SAFE CABS

▲ Treat the cab as part of the safety system. A home away from home – check airconditioning is working prior to a long trip.



Water is key – aim for one cup every few hours. Add a balanced electrolyte. Avoid energy drinks for hydration.

TRUCKING IN EXTREME HEAT

litre figure that suits every driver, route and level of physical work. Some guidance for moderate activity in heat lasting less than two hours is about one cup - roughly 250 ml - every 15 to 20 minutes, with balanced electrolyte drinks considered when heavy sweating continues for several hours. It also advises that fluid intake generally should not exceed about six cups per hour.

A driver sitting in an air-conditioned cab may need less than a loader working outside, so the practical rule is regular small amounts before pronounced thirst develops, adjusted for conditions and workload. Anyone with a medical fluid restriction should follow their doctor's advice.

5. Are there particular foods or drinks drivers should avoid?

Avoid alcohol before or during work in heat, and limit drinks that are very high in caffeine or sugar because they are poor substitutes for regular water intake. Energy drinks should not be treated as hydration. For long hot shifts, smaller balanced meals are generally more comfortable than very heavy meals and drivers who are sweating heavily for hours may benefit from appropriate electrolyte replacement rather than salt tablets or excessively salty snacks. The emphasis should be on water, normal balanced food and planned hydration - not waiting until the driver feels unwell.

6. How important is sleep quality before operating in extreme heat?

It is critical. Heat already increases physiological strain and can contribute to fatigue; sleep deprivation further reduces concentration, reaction time and the body's ability to cope with stress. NIOSH identifies sleep deprivation and fatigue as risk factors in hot work, while commercial-driver safety guidance consistently stresses adequate rest before driving. Operators should

therefore treat poor sleep, heat exposure and long duty periods as compounding risks rather than separate issues. A driver who has not slept adequately should not be expected to compensate with caffeine, energy drinks or stronger air conditioning.

7. What advice do you have regarding idling, stop-start traffic and steep climbs during extremely hot weather?

All three can increase thermal stress. Extended idling and stop-start traffic reduce ram-air flow through the cooling pack while the engine and air-conditioning system continue to generate heat. On steep climbs, heavy throttle at low engine speed can also place unnecessary load on the engine. Drivers should avoid unnecessary idling, leave adequate following distance to smooth out stop-start operation, use the appropriate gear on climbs and avoid lugging the engine. Temperature gauges and warnings should be watched more closely in these conditions. If a vehicle has just completed an unusually severe climb or high-load cycle, any cool-down procedure should follow the model-specific Isuzu operating instructions rather than a generic rule.

8. What simple checks can drivers perform if cooling performance deteriorates?

First confirm the controls are set correctly, the blower operates at all speeds and the vents are not closed or obstructed. Check whether switching between fresh-air and recirculation modes changes airflow, and note any unusual noise, smell or intermittent cooling. Where it can be done safely, inspect the front grille and condenser area for obvious debris that may be blocking airflow and report a visibly dirty cabin filter if the vehicle allows easy inspection. Drivers should not open or recharge the refrigerant circuit themselves. Persistent poor cooling should be booked with an authorised workshop, because low



MONITOR TEMPERATURE

▲ Temperature gauges and warnings should be closely monitored.

Heat exhaustion can escalate rapidly – train drivers to recognise and act on early signs.

refrigerant often indicates a leak rather than normal consumption.

9. What warning signs should drivers look for that could indicate tyre or brake overheating?

For tyres, warning signs include repeated pressure loss, vibration, pulling, a bulge or distortion, visible tread separation, unusual odour, smoke or one tyre being significantly hotter than the others.

For brakes, drivers should watch for a burning smell, smoke, reduced braking response, longer stopping distance, pulling to one side, unusual pedal behaviour, brake or ABS warnings, or a wheel hub that appears excessively hot. If any of these signs appear, the driver should reduce risk immediately: stop in a safe place, keep clear of a potentially damaged tyre or overheated wheel hub and have the vehicle inspected. Drivers should not touch very hot components or attempt to cool an overheated pressurised tyre or brake assembly with water. □

TYRE CARE Insights from Bridgestone



▲ Dries Venter, known as "Mr-Tyre" and our Brake & Tyre Watch expert.

There are a number of misconceptions about the effect of extreme heat on tyres. What are the pertinent points to consider and what actions should truck operators take to mitigate any risks of tyre failure in extreme heat conditions? To get a handle on this. FleetWatch approached Dries Venter, Head of AF Market Technical Team at Bridgestone South Africa, for his advice. Here are his thoughts and recommendations.

Does tyre pressure increase significantly in extreme heat?

- Tyre inflation pressure increases 20kPa for every 10 Deg Celsius increase in temperature.
- Tyres operating in the Northern Cape (during normal summer weather) run at an internal temperature of 70 - 80 Deg Celsius. Tyre wear performance is lower but when inflation pressure is well maintained, these tyres can safely get to their destination.
- It is very important to note that tyre inflation pressure must be checked when the tyres are cold - or when the vehicle has stood idle for three hours.
- Always inflate to recommended inflation pressures. Correct inflation pressure will prolong tyre life.
- Never deflate a tyre that is hot or warm, even if the inflation pressure is high when measured.

How does hot asphalt affect tyre life?

- Heat is a killer for tyres (rubber).
- Hot asphalt will decrease tyre tread life.
- It is best to drive in cooler conditions when possible.

What inspection routine do you recommend during the upcoming summer?

- The frequency of tyre inflation pressure checks must be increased.
- It is normally recommended to check inflation pressures weekly but in the expected warmer conditions, twice a week is recommended.

What are the biggest misconceptions about tyre pressures in hot weather?

- That a tyre will burst due to the heat.
- Tyres with the correct inflation pressure at start will have an increase in inflation pressure during operation. Friction during tyre rotation causes heat.
- Tyres made in South Africa are made for our summer conditions. With proper care and



▲ Underinflation – friction causes heat.

maintenance of these tyres, a safe journey is guaranteed.

Retreaded tyres

- Retreaded tyres follow the same rules as above.
- The vulcanization process occurs between the retread tread rubber and the steel belts of the casing.
- When the tyre runs hot or underinflated, the casing and the steel belts heat up and cause the vulcanisation process to reverse and the tread to separate.

Of critical importance is to keep the internal tyre temperature low. This can only be done by applying the correct tyre maintenance procedures. □

▼ A pre-trip inspection of tyres should be done daily.



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Opening a window to tyre info

So, you've been in the trucking business for close to 40 years and all is under control. It doesn't get better than this. Not quite. There is always room for improvement. Danie van Tonder, director of Van Tonder Transport, believes this and his approach to new ideas has opened up a window on a blind spot many fleets share - a hands-on handle on all things tyre related in his fleet. And it's paying off handsomely, writes Patrick O'Leary.

Sit with Danie in his office in Waltloo, Pretoria and he will tell you he can hear which truck is about to cost him money. His desk faces the road outside the exit gate, where a little bump in the road catches every rig that pulls out. A good driver rolls over it in near silence, just a soft squeak from the suspension. "If I hear the engine rumbling, I need to address that driver." He laughs but it captures how he runs his business: by feel, by ear, by more than three decades of being hands on.

Van Tonder Transport started in 1988 as a family affair with roots in farming. Danie's father sold goats, bought in the Northern Cape and carted to the Indian market in Natal, so there was always a truck on the farm. The eldest of three brothers ran the goats to Ashburton and rather than bringing the truck home empty, began backloading sugar. By cutting out the empty leg, a transport business was born.

Man at the top

▲ Danie van Tonder, director of Van Tonder Transport, has a clear window view into the daily performance and operation of his Michelin tyres.

It wasn't too long before the goats became "a bit of a nuisance" as Danie puts it and the family committed to trucks: lime out of the Northern Cape mines to Natal, sugar on the return.

Those were different days. Tyres were cheap, fuel was cheap and as Danie remembers it, "legislation was something that didn't exist." A typical payload to Natal was 50 tons. Then came the permit wars, long and costly battles to win a road-freight permit but then, in 1991, deregulation swept the permits away and with them, the order.

"It became a total circus," Danie recalls. Everybody with a bakkie upgraded to a truck and undercut the rates. Payloads were cut, rates collapsed and costs went through the roof. His father had signed surety for the business. Despite these challenges, "failure just wasn't an option," he says.

Survival came through a niche. In the late 1990s, the family moved into grain, inland, away from the crowd and closer to the client, hauling maize as the backup for an unreliable railway. When a mill running 1 000 tons a day faced a stoppage because the train had not arrived, Van Tonder trucks moved the grain, immediately. The brothers drove, serviced, scheduled and sold - all from the cab. By 2002, they had 15

"I don't want another little light on the dash that the driver can ignore."

Danie Van Tonder

trucks and had climbed out of the driver's seat.

By then Danie had decided that industry-wide overloading was not the future. His white trucks were getting known and he would rather lead on legal payload. A FleetWatch advertisement pointed him to trailer builder Roy Da Silva and after a period of development, their first self-offloading "bottom dumper" hit the road at 38 tons legal, a full five tons above the market and no labour needed to tip it.

Because they never had the capital to patent it, others copied it and the design reshaped grain transport. Refined year on year, the corrugated sides thinned from 2mm to 0.8mm and the same concept runs today at close to 39 tons.

Everything is built to the same philosophy: buy quality, spec it to the hilt and run it, properly maintained, for as long as it will go. The fleet is MAN only, ordered to spec and built

in Germany, with 2011 models still working and closing on two million kilometres.

Danie's loyalty to the marque is a relationship story, not a product one, forged the day MAN's people stood by him over a self-inflicted engine failure. "I've always said trucking is about relationships," he says. Coming from a man who has done every job in the business, this maxim lands well and it is the same instinct that now shapes how he uses data.

Which brings us to the newest tool in that box: MICHELIN Connected Fleet. For years Danie waved away tyre-pressure sales pitches with one line: "I don't want another little light on the dash that the driver can ignore." What changed his mind was escalation of the warnings. With MICHELIN Connected Fleet's Trailer Premium, if the driver ignores the warning, Danie does not.

It also answered a blind spot most fleet systems share. Telematics has always watched the truck; the trailer is left in the dark. MICHELIN Connected Fleet's Trailer Premium turns that around, reading tyre pressures and temperatures, axle loads, braking performance and driving events straight off the trailer.

He tested it the way he tests everything. In 2024 he fitted five ► 38

Good lookers

▼ The fleet is MAN only, ordered to spec and built in Germany, with 2011 models still working and closing on two million kilometres.



► 37 combinations and ran them blind, drivers none the wiser. What he saw alarmed him: in a fleet he thought he had under control, tyres were being run under pressure and temperature alarms past 130 degrees were being ignored. The tests proved that with MICHELIN Connected Fleet's Trailer Premium Solution, he now had a new a window into the operation. "I could see what's actually happening out there." He rolled it out across the fleet in 2025.

Now a colour-coded cold-pressure report comes in on his phone every morning - one page, a block per wheel, red for trouble. Pressures are set between six and seven bar; drivers are alerted at 5.5, Danie at 5.3 with steps available to immobilise the truck.

Workshops

▼ On-site skilled workshop staff ensure that the fleet is kept in tip-top condition.

Because they never had the capital to patent their self-offloading bottom dumper, others copied it and the design reshaped grain transport.

Temperature alarms trip at 70 degrees, flagging a binding brake or a failing bearing long before it becomes a fire. And because the system reads the trailer's braking data, MICHELIN Connected Fleet's Theo Pretorius, Customer Success Manager, visits the premises every week to interrogate the data: brake applications per 100 kilometres,

harsh-braking, axle loads for weighbridge and PBS compliance and to discuss with Danie whatever the numbers throw up. Danie does not treat Michelin as a supplier. "We are a partnership," he says, the same word he uses for MAN.

And the maths runs in his favour. A single roadside dual-wheel blowout costs around R25 000. "If I can prevent one of those, I'm almost paying for two years of the system. Prevent a steering-tyre blowout which can result in a rollover and I can pay for the fleet for a decade," he says.

He also, of course, fits Michelin tyres. Where a cheaper casing might match his cost-per-kilometre on paper, he reckons his Michelins run close to 270 000 kilometres against 70 000 or 80 000 for the alternatives - three replacements for every one before you count the downtime and the labour.

Premium tyres, premium data. For a man who already knew his trucks by the squeak on the bump, it is simply one more way to listen. □





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The sharp eyes that protect cash-in-transit

You've all seen the IZI Cash armoured vehicles out there on the road, moving the money that keeps the country ticking. You see them alongside ATMs, outside supermarkets - everywhere that cash needs to be collected or delivered. It's a high-risk job so, while they are looking out for our cash, who's looking out for their armoured trucks and their staff. I went to find out and came away with a story that starts in a mechanised infantry unit and ends with seven cameras watching every cent along the way writes Patrick O'Leary.

You never really understand a business until you understand the person who built it. So let me start not with a truck but with a soldier. Albert Erasmus, the man behind IZI Cash, joined the mechanised infantry in the old SADF back in the early 1990s where he learnt about armoured fleets. This was a good grounding - perhaps a stepping stone - into the cash-in-

transit business he runs today for, as he says: "The military gave me an understanding of armoured vehicles - the tactics and how to manage massive fleets and the logistics behind it."

Having operated in that world for some six years, he decided to leave but he never left it behind. He simply swapped it for the cash-in-transit sector. And it was not only his knowledge he took with him. It



Protecting the cash

▲ Albert Erasmus, Group CEO of IZI - protecting the cash that plays a critical role in South Africa's economy.

was also the strict discipline instilled in him in the military. In the cash-in-transit business, discipline is the operating manual.

He entered the cash-in-transit game in 1996 by joining the then Coin Security eventually ending up as managing executive of the cash-in-transit business. After some 15 years, he joined G4S as managing director of the cash solutions business - the same business he would later acquire - where he remained until 2015, ending up as CEO of the South African operation.

He then decided to do what

the good ones always do - to back himself. In January 2016 he bought a small family-owned cash-in-transit business in Brits called Rens Cash and Transit - and started trading.

"The humble beginnings," he calls those days. Even though up against the "big guys" he still managed to grow the business and over the next eight years, opened branches in Silverton, Kempton Park, Cape Town, Durban, Polokwane, Rustenburg and Witbank, among others.

While recording good growth, there was one thing holding him back - a national footprint. The big retailers and banks want a national partner or they are not interested. Well, that changed when, after negotiations which started in 2024, he bought the very company he had once run for someone else - the South African cash business of the multinational giant G4S. A small operator swallowing a large one and his fleet went from around 160 vehicles to roughly 1 100 overnight. The deal was concluded last year and *FleetWatch* reported on it at the time.

Where others saw a problem, Albert Erasmus saw a platform

But why would a global player let its South African arm go? That is the uncomfortable heart of this story. This is a dangerous business. G4S lost its appetite to operate in South Africa. Erasmus did not. He saw infrastructure, a national footprint and bank accreditation he would otherwise have spent years chasing. Where others saw a problem, he saw a platform.

Built to last, looked after in-house

With the fleet expanded to 1 100, the disciplines involved not only in maintaining the vehicles but also keeping an eye on them while out on the road in high-risk operations became paramount. For the maintenance side, the company runs



Control Room

▲ Above and right: The control room can pull up any vehicle in the country and watch it live in real time: front, rear, both sides, the cab, the crew compartment and on the armoured trucks, inside the vault, with speed and location running alongside the picture.



its own internal workshops - IZI Fleet. But that's another story - a fascinating one.

In short, it's as Erasmus says: "We can't afford a vehicle to stand as you can't hire a spare armoured truck for the day. Also, we don't want to give everybody access to our type of locks and our type of technology. We keep it all in-house". In an industry where syndicates have historically paid fitment-centre staff to leak information, that instinct is survival: trust your own vetted people and control everything yourself.

So who in the end, keeps an eye on the vehicles and the staff inside them when out on the road? The answer keeps coming back to technology - and specifically the FleetCam vehicle video telematics systems which Albert fitted to every single vehicle from day one of starting his own business, putting IZI, he says, a year or two ahead of the industry.

When IZI absorbed G4S, it inherited a patchwork: one contract for vehicle tracking, another for monitoring and an older camera setup bolted on top. Erasmus wanted none of that fragmentation. On the IZI Cash side, he had insisted from the start on one all-in-one platform that pulls tracking, engine telematics and live security into a single feed. He found that in the FleetCam vehicle video telematics system.

He is now standardising the combined fleet on FleetCam - the 'soft skins' and the armoured trucks alike. It is a national rollout still in progress with some 400 to 450 vehicles still running on the G4S vehicle system until the changeover catches up with them. When it is done, every vehicle IZI owns, from an admin runabout to a seven-and-a-half-ton armoured truck, will be watched exactly the same way by FleetCam systems.

In this line of business, the word that matters is *live*. At a ▶ 42



► 41 double-click, the control room can pull up any vehicle in the country and watch it in real time: front, rear, both sides, the cab, the crew compartment and on the armoured trucks, right inside the vault, with speed and location running alongside the picture.

The big trucks carry seven cameras, the bakkies four, down to two on the ordinary soft skins, and tracking alone on the admin cars. The same feed flags a fatigued driver through AI - as it does harsh braking or overspeeding. And when a camera or a tracker does play up, the fix comes back fast through a single point of contact with FleetCam to resolve any issues promptly.

What struck me was the distinction the risk team made between accident management and crime incident management, both handled by the same FleetCam systems. Erasmus says that on the accident side, the days of "he said, she said" are gone. "A bumper-bashing in a car park is settled by a 360-degree view in full colour and audio," he says.

On the incident side, the attacks we all picture when we think of cash-in-transit are starker still. They described an attempted robbery in Pretoria the weekend before my visit: the cameras caught the attackers' vehicle and number plates. The plates came back as a clone and by the next night, the police had hit a safe house two kilometres away, recovering explosives and firearms. In the old days, that would have been hearsay

Live views

▲ **Top and top right:** The FleetCam vehicle video telematic system gives live views through cameras mounted in numerous places depending on the type of vehicle. A total of seven cameras are fitted to the armoured vehicles - inside and all-round.

from a shaken driver. Now FleetCam gives the evidence. And, unlike general trucking, IZI's drivers welcome the lens, because it protects them.

Billions of Rands a day

They took me down to the national control room and that is where the scale finally landed. On one wall, the whole country-wide operations can be seen, live, from the FleetCam video telematics systems fitted to the vehicles; every vehicle, every branch, tactical teams in red, the live feed from inside a Durban vault as the canisters are loaded. Around 25 000 pick-ups and deliveries a day. Billions of Rand are moved daily - all of it off the streets and banked.

Those same systems now help to protect more than cash: IZI moves what it calls Valuable and Vulnerable Cargo - cellphones, gold and diamonds - things the ordinary courier world can no longer insure. When you see all that, seven FleetCam cameras stop looking like luxury and start looking like the bare minimum.

What stayed with me, though, was not only the technology. It was a



Never alone

▲ The IZI armoured vehicles are never alone while out on the road. They are always in view from the control room via the FleetCam vehicle video telematics system.

word Erasmus kept using: "humble". Thirty years in, he still knows every nut and bolt of his own business and he plays what he calls the long game, investing, not stripping.

"Today you're on a high and tomorrow you can get a hiding." That is not corporate talk. That is a man who has been humbled by this industry and respects it. It is also why he treats his suppliers like partners - and FleetCam reciprocates that partnership relationship.

So, who looks after the money movers? A soldier's discipline, a workshop full of vetted hands, FleetCam vehicle video telematics systems on the vehicles that never blink, and an owner who still cares about every cent and every crew member. You have all seen the IZI armoured vehicles out there. Now you know a little of what it takes to get your money to you safely while also bringing the good folk from IZI home safely, every single day. □



Beyond the Next Level.





Extreme exposure. Exemplary leadership

by Paul Collings
FleetWatch Correspondent

There is an image in Mpho Matseba's mind that persists to this day – it's her as a small child living in a rural town in Limpopo surrounded by her five siblings, her parents, and her mother's conviction that austere circumstances should never compromise her children's future.

Mpho's mother was a nurse who, at age 40, made the extraordinary decision to leave the security of what she knew and move to Pretoria alone to study medicine at Medunsa. She qualified as a doctor and in 1992, brought the family to Pretoria.

For Mpho, the move and her mother's courage sparked the beginning of an extraordinary journey where many times she

would place herself in unfamiliar waters and always navigate her way through successfully.

Today, she is Head of FUSO Trucks Southern Africa, the first Black woman to lead a division within Daimler Truck Southern Africa. But the executive sitting at that desk was forged long before she entered the commercial vehicle industry.

Education breeds ambition

Leaving Limpopo and arriving in the relative metropolis of Pretoria, Mpho suddenly found herself in a much larger, more diverse school environment. There was another world to discover – and other languages. She only learned to speak English at the age of 12 and although city schooling was daunting, it did open a window. She began seeing what other people's parents did, the professions they occupied, and the possibilities that existed beyond the world she had known before. Exposure became education – and education became ambition.

After matriculating, Mpho earned a Diploma in Marketing and Business Administration before completing a BCom in Financial Accounting. Although accounting gave her a strong commercial foundation, marketing remained her passion. That

Executive boardrooms are under-represented and they are waiting for you – be brave and say yes to what scares you.

Mpho Matseba
Head, Fuso Trucks
Southern Africa

combination – financial discipline, commercial curiosity and an instinct for people and communication – would become a powerful foundation for the career ahead.

The corporation calls

Mpho's professional journey began in 2004, the year after she graduated – a position within Daimler Chrysler Financial Services in a relatively modest role as a Data Capturer and Credit Assistant in passenger car finance. But Mpho had already learned something important: never underestimate the value of 'being in the room'.



Recognising her potential, her manager encouraged her to move beyond simply capturing information towards analysing it. Within nine months she became a full-time trainee Credit Analyst. From there she progressed to Dealer Wholesale Credit Analyst, assessing dealer financials and market conditions.

Her next opportunity came when she became Executive Assistant to the CEO of Daimler Chrysler Financial Services. It was another form of exposure – this time to strategy, leadership, and the workings of a boardroom.

She was watching senior executives make decisions – she was beginning to understand that leadership was not some distant concept reserved for other people. It was something she could aspire to.

Learning the truck

Moving from finance to become the Head of Marketing for Mercedes-Benz South Africa Commercial Vehicles division in 2013 heralded Mpho's introduction to the world of trucks and buses, where she was responsible for Mercedes-Benz Trucks & Buses, FUSO Trucks, Freightliner, and Western Star. "It was completely different from what I had been used to. I just fell in love with these trucks – and I never, ever thought that I would," she reflects.

In 2017, Mpho assumed the role of Head of Product & Marketing within the FUSO Trucks division. Initially responsible for purely marketing, moving to FUSO exposed her to the product management domain – a decision that would fundamentally change her understanding of the business. "I needed to really understand the FUSO truck," she says.

Her colleague, Duncan Prince, became her teacher. "He taught me everything that I needed to know about trucks. He was one of the best teachers that I've ever had. Together, we 'unpacked' the entire FUSO truck portfolio," Mpho says.

She learned the technical side of the product while simultaneously broadening her exposure to customers, dealers, body builders



The combination of financial discipline commercial curiosity and an instinct for people and communication became a powerful combination for her career ahead

and manufacturing operations. She became involved in new-model introductions, trial assembly, and homologation, working with source plants in Japan and India as well as the local operation.

The little girl who had once been learning English only at 12 years old, was now discussing trucks with engineers, dealers, and customers across an international commercial vehicle operation.

Trusting the process

In 2020, another career turn took Mpho back into the wider Daimler Truck marketing portfolio, where she reassumed her role as Head of Marketing, including Mercedes-Benz Trucks & Buses. She had become accustomed to moving before she necessarily knew exactly where the road was leading.

She has a philosophy that has followed her throughout her career: "Whatever is presented to you at a certain time is presented to you for a reason – it's preparing you for where you're going next, and you never know where that is."

In 2024, the next opportunity arrived – heading up sales for FUSO Trucks. It was arguably the final piece of the leadership puzzle. Sales forced her to connect all the dots: product, supply chain, parts, service, finance, marketing, dealers, and customers.

"I was always looking for solutions to eliminate any roadblocks or obstacles to selling for our dealerships," she says.

But the most important lesson came from sitting across the table from customers:

"Personal relationship-building with our customers is very important within the commercial vehicle space. It's constant engagement because customers need to know that you care that you're walking the journey with them and that you're finding solutions."

The truck portfolio becomes your "baby", she says, and "when customers and dealers begin seeing its potential, there is a particular satisfaction in knowing that you helped usher in something better." ▶ 46



Leading FUSO into a new era

In April 2026, Mpho assumed the helm at FUSO Trucks SA at a pivotal moment. Globally, FUSO and Hino have merged under the new Archion Group structure, creating potential product-development synergies and opportunities to broaden the FUSO offering.

"The Archion, Hino/FUSO merger really excites me because it speaks about expansion of product portfolio, giving us options that we currently do not have," Mpho explains.

But she is under no illusion about the market. "Customers rightfully seek efficiency, comfort, and reliability, now at a fraction of the cost, and they know that they can get it," she says.

Her answer is not to prescribe one technology or one solution. FUSO's customers are diverse, she points out: "Some want electric vehicles. Some do not. Some want sophisticated technology. Others simply want a reliable truck that does the job without unnecessary complexity.

"I think every OEM has to have a place for almost every option simply because our customer base is so varied."

That pragmatism extends to new-energy vehicles sold in South Africa alongside mounting ESG (environment, social, governance) considerations: "The price of electric trucks remains difficult to justify for many South African operators," she says. "And as far as ESG compliance is concerned, it will remain somewhat of a challenge to impose deliverables that are deemed to be unreasonable from a financial perspective. I think a lot of things will have to be reviewed to ensure practical and economically viable solutions."

Earning the seat

There is another dimension to Mpho's leadership journey. She has spent much of her career in rooms dominated by men. Occasionally, she says, customers still look at her as if to ask what a woman could possibly tell them about trucks – until she starts talking trucking:

"They loosen up. They're like, oh, okay, she knows what she's talking about."



The takeaway for young women should be 'if those successful women can do it, I can do it.'

Her biggest concern regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion is not getting women into the industry – it is getting them into leadership roles: "You'll see a lot of female representation in your entry level jobs, in your middle-management specialist roles. But once you go to leadership positions, you don't see them at all. Daimler Truck Southern Africa President & Group CEO, Maretha Gerber is one exception, alongside Karin Rådström Global President & CEO of Daimler Truck AG."

Women's Month and the mirror

For Mpho, the real significance of Women's Month lies beyond the speeches, the photographs, and the pageantry. "The message, the takeaway for young women should be, 'if those women can do it, I can do it'. Those successful women are shining a mirror for you to see yourself," she says.

That was her nudge. "Girl, it's really possible," said the mirror, and today, she wants to provide that same nudge to others. "Nobody's expecting you to be perfect. Just go for it, just step into it. Trust that you have everything needed to figure it out. You're going to make it work."

Mpho's career path has been one long lesson in exposure, a voyage of discovery. Every unfamiliar room taught her something. Every mentor opened another door. Every doubter gave her another reason to prove herself, and every opportunity demanded that she step forward, as her mother did, before she knew exactly how she was going to make it work.

Perhaps that is why her final message is so powerful: "To all the aspirational women out there – the trucking executive boardrooms are chronically underrepresented, and they're waiting for you. Be brave! Say 'yes' to what scares you!" □

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Breaking barriers in the fuel industry

Bulk fuel distribution is a risky business and only the most professional personnel get to manage the tanks and tankers that feed the petrochemical supply chain. Traditionally a male vocation, the fuels industry is breaking barriers by promoting women to senior positions. Women's Month provided an opportunity to look beyond gender statistics and focus on individual success stories like that of Engen Langlaagte Terminal's Lerato Ntuli, its first woman Terminal Manager.

In 2021, Ntuli became the first woman to lead the Johannesburg terminal - a milestone that, for her, was less about the title than about proving what is possible when women are given the opportunity to compete, lead and succeed in traditionally male-dominated environments.

Now 44, Ntuli has spent 15 years at Engen, building a career across five different roles. With more than 22 years' working experience and a Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice from Henley Business School, she attributes much of her progression to adaptability, perseverance, integrity and continuous learning.

Leading where few women have gone before

Ntuli joined Engen in May 2011 as a Dispatch Supervisor in Lubricants and Chemicals at Isando DC. Two years later, she moved into the role of Relief Depot Manager for Fuels in Inland East.



In 2014, following an organisational restructuring, she accepted a Plant Supervisor position in Chemicals. Although the move represented a step back in her career progression at the time, Ntuli says the experience reinforced the importance of adapting to change rather than allowing it to derail her ambitions.

In 2018, she returned to the Fuels business as Depot Manager for Alrode, a joint venture tenant operation. Three years later, she applied for the position at Langlaagte Terminal - a role she had once regarded as the "giant" of the business. The response to her application only strengthened her resolve.

"Several people told me it was a dream that was unlikely to become a reality because a woman had never led Langlaagte before," she says.

Rather than allowing those comments to deter her, Ntuli used them as motivation and made a promise to herself that she would become the first woman to lead the Langlaagte Terminal.

"When my appointment was announced, one colleague called and jokingly asked whether I had already bought a bulletproof vest. It was a reminder of the challenges that lay ahead, but I was ready for the journey," she says.

TERMINAL MANAGER

▲ Lerato Ntuli, a lady in every sense of the word, swaps her smart 'going out' gear for her terminal manager gear where she succeeds in a traditionally male-dominated environment as Engen Langlaagte Terminal's first woman Terminal Manager.

For Ntuli, working in a traditionally male-dominated environment means recognising that women may sometimes have to work harder to prove themselves, while remaining confident in the strengths they bring to the workplace.

"One of my greatest sources of inspiration is the opportunity to succeed in an industry where women remain underrepresented," she says. "I firmly believe that women bring unique strengths to the workplace."

Safety and people at the heart of leadership

Safety is central to Ntuli's approach to leadership. Having managed serious HSEQ incidents during her career, she says these experiences have strengthened her leadership and crisis-management capabilities.

WOMEN IN TRANSPORT ENGEN



“Safety, in particular, is very close to my heart. Ensuring a safe operation is not just a business priority for me, it is a personal commitment that guides my decisions and actions every day.”

Her leadership extends beyond operational performance. Ntuli is passionate about developing people and has mentored and coached numerous individuals during her career, several of whom have gone on to lead terminals and take on greater responsibilities.

“I genuinely believe in people and their ability to achieve great things when given the right support, encouragement and opportunities,” she says. “I make it a point to look beyond where people are today and focus on what they can become.”

That emphasis on developing people is particularly relevant to an industry that needs to attract and retain the next generation of operational, engineering, logistics and energy-sector talent.

Get in early and keep learning

For women considering careers in operations, engineering or the energy sector, Ntuli’s advice is unequivocal: invest in yourself and never stop learning.

“If your circumstances allow, strive to make an NQF Level 8 qualification your minimum academic achievement, even for an entry-level position. Never stop learning. The world is constantly evolving and continuous development will always set you apart.”

She also encourages women to develop a strong sense of purpose and belief in their capabilities, particularly when confronted by doubt from others. “There will be moments when others doubt you but you should never allow those doubts to define your potential.”

For Ntuli, career progression should never come at the expense of personal values.

“Never be apologetic for standing up for what is right. Your integrity will be tested throughout your career - but do not succumb to pressure.”

She believes women should remain

adaptable and flexible while refusing to compromise their principles: “The moment you compromise your principles, you risk losing your credibility, authority and authenticity.”

From depot commissioning to operational leadership

Looking back, Ntuli says the commissioning and operationalisation of the Lesedi Depot stands out as one of her most significant leadership achievements. She led the project from infrastructure commissioning and product sourcing through to operational readiness and Go-Live, coordinating multidisciplinary teams, ensuring HSSEQ compliance and aligning key operational processes.

Ensuring a safe operation is not just a business priority, but a personal commitment that guides my decisions and actions daily

The project demonstrated her ability to lead complex operations, manage multiple stakeholders and deliver a safe, efficient and fully integrated depot.

Her record at Langlaagte has also been a team achievement. Under her leadership, the terminal received the Terminal of the Year award in the Category 1 division in both 2023 and 2024. It also received the Sustainability Award in 2024 and 2025 and was recognised as the most improved terminal on the Net Promoter Survey (NPS) - Retail in 2023 and 2024.

For Ntuli, however, the recognition belongs to the people around her: “The great team in Langlaagte. We did this!”

Looking ahead, she intends to continue investing in her own professional development, with a Master’s degree as her next academic milestone.

Mentors can help open the next door

Ntuli’s final piece of advice is not to try to navigate a career alone. “Find a coach and a mentor who can guide and challenge you. Learn from those who have gone before you, draw from their experiences and use their wisdom to help navigate your own path to success.”

She is also inspired by women within Engen who have progressed into General Manager roles.

“I admire their leadership and the path they have forged for others to follow,” she says. “Looking at their journeys gives me confidence that such a goal is within reach, and I remain focused on preparing myself for the opportunities that lie ahead.”

Engen Skills Development Facilitator Pontsho Matshediso says: “Lerato’s career journey is an inspiring example of how determination, continuous development and perseverance can help women progress and thrive in traditionally male-dominated industries.”

Andiswa Mkhize, Engen Talent and Development Manager, adds: “When women rise into operational leadership positions, they do more than achieve personal success, they create opportunities for others to follow.”

During Women’s Month, Engen celebrated women across its operations whose expertise, resilience and leadership are transforming the petrochemical industry.

“Their journeys serve as an inspiration to young women, showing that the industry offers exciting opportunities to grow, make an impact and build rewarding careers as future leaders,” concludes Mkhize. □

WOMEN IN TRUCKING BABCOCK DAF



The Workforce challenge that cannot be ignored

Women's Month provided a timely opportunity for South Africa's trucking and logistics industry to look beyond traditional talent pools. As the sector faces ongoing shortages of skilled drivers, technicians, artisans, engineers, managers and other operational specialists, women represent a significant and increasingly important source of talent. The opportunity is not simply about improving representation - it is about strengthening the industry's ability to attract the skills it needs to remain productive, competitive and resilient.

The challenge is therefore not

People challenges

◀ Kereshma Naidoo, chief of staff and HR director: Africa – Babcock. "One of the most significant challenges facing organisations today is not technological. It is people."

At all levels

◀ Across transport, engineering, mining, manufacturing and energy, women are leading projects, operating equipment, managing operations, developing engineering solutions and shaping strategy at every level of business.

whether women can contribute to the future of trucking - they already are - but whether the industry can do enough to attract, develop and retain the female talent it needs.

In this opinion piece, Kereshma Naidoo, chief of staff and HR director: Africa at Babcock, explores this broader workforce challenge - one that applies directly to the road freight industry where access to talent increasingly determines winning performance. Over to Ms. Naidoo...

Across industry, conversations about competitiveness often focus on technology, infrastructure, investment and innovation. These are all important drivers of growth and performance. Yet one of the most significant challenges facing organisations today is not technological. It is people. The ability to attract, develop and retain the people who will drive future performance.

Across sectors such as transport, engineering, manufacturing, mining, energy and construction, organisations are navigating increasingly complex operating environments. New technologies are changing the way work is performed. Skills requirements are evolving. Experienced professionals are retiring. Competition for technical talent continues to intensify.

At the same time, businesses are under pressure to improve productivity, strengthen resilience and remain competitive in rapidly changing markets. The common denominator in all of these challenges is people.

While discussions about the future of work often focus on automation, artificial intelligence and digital transformation, the reality is that technology alone will not solve industry's workforce challenges. People will.



WOMEN IN TRUCKING BABCOCK DAF



Women represent an untapped talent pool

The organisations that succeed in the future are unlikely to be those with access to the most technology. They will be the organisations with access to the strongest talent pools, the most capable leaders and the cultures that enable people to perform at their best. This is why workforce capability is increasingly becoming a strategic business issue rather than simply a human resources priority.

For many organisations, the challenge is no longer finding jobs for people. It is finding enough people with the right skills, experience and potential to meet future demand.

As workforce pressures continue to grow, organisations are being challenged to think differently about how they attract and develop talent. Increasingly, this means broadening access to opportunity and ensuring that talented individuals are able to contribute and progress regardless of traditional industry assumptions or historical barriers.

Despite significant progress over many years, women remain underrepresented across a number of technical, operational and leadership roles in sectors such as engineering, mining, manufacturing, transport, energy and construction. Yet these are also the industries facing some of the greatest skills and capability shortages.

At a time when organisations are competing for increasingly scarce talent, the question is no longer whether industry should create opportunities for women. The question is whether it can afford not to. This is not simply a conversation about representation. It is a conversation about capability.

The conversation is also no longer about whether women belong in industry. That question has already been answered. Across transport, engineering, mining, manufacturing and energy, women are leading projects, operating equipment, managing operations, developing engineering solutions and shaping strategy at every level of business.

The focus today must be on ensuring that talented people have access to opportunities that allow them to grow, contribute and build meaningful careers. This is where the discussion around inclusion has evolved significantly.

From recruitment to retention

Leading organisations increasingly recognise that attracting talent is only part of the equation. Retaining talent, developing talent and creating pathways for growth are equally important.

The challenge is to find the people with the right skills, experience and potential to meet future demand

People are more likely to build long-term careers where they feel valued, supported and connected to the organisation around them. In other words, where they feel they belong. Belonging has become one of the most important yet often overlooked elements of workforce strategy.

Creating a sense of belonging does not mean lowering standards or treating people differently. It means creating environments where individuals are respected, supported and given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully. It means ensuring that capability, performance and potential can be recognised wherever they exist. This is where mentorship plays a critical role.

Mentorship provides guidance,

support and perspective, helping individuals navigate challenges, build confidence and develop the skills needed to progress. It creates opportunities to learn from experience, expand professional networks and gain the insight that often makes the difference between potential and progress.

Leadership development programmes, employee networks and professional communities further strengthen this journey by creating connections, increasing visibility and encouraging continuous growth.

At Babcock, initiatives such as *Illuminate*, our women's development programme, are designed to fuel confidence, spotlight potential and support progression across our organisation. They recognise that creating meaningful opportunities requires more than recruitment alone. It requires a long-term commitment to developing capability, building confidence and unlocking potential. That commitment is becoming a defining characteristic of successful organisations.

Building the next generation of industry talent

The industries that will lead in the future will not necessarily be those with the largest budgets, the newest technology or the biggest facilities. They will be the organisations that recognise potential, invest in capability and create environments where talented people can succeed.

Women's Month reminds us how far industry has progressed in broadening access to opportunity. It should also challenge us to consider how much more can be achieved when every talented individual has the opportunity to contribute, grow and lead.

Because the organisations that will be best equipped to solve tomorrow's challenges are those drawing on the broadest possible range of skills, perspectives and experiences. That is not simply an inclusion objective. It is a business imperative. □



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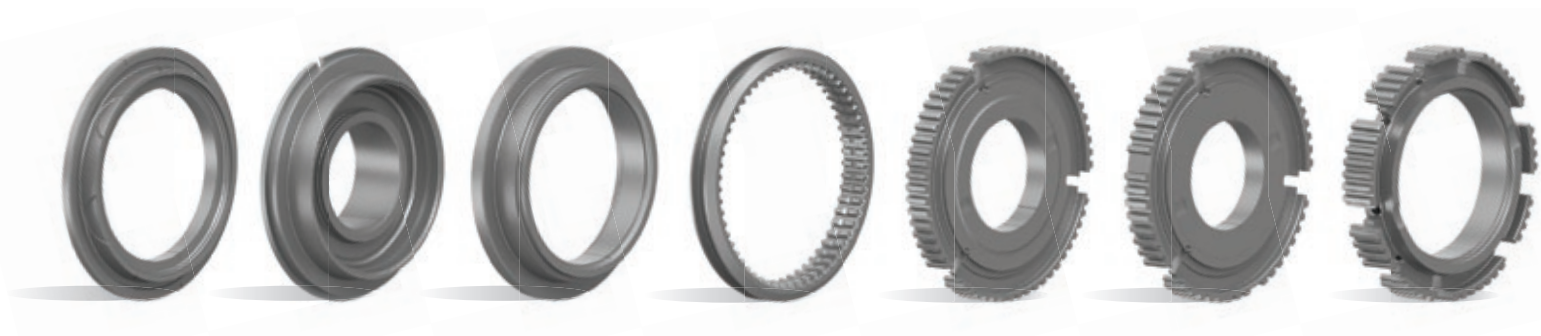
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▲ Another *FleetWatch Brake & Tyre Watch* event is concluded and this picture of camaraderie between the partners and the cops says it all. A resounding success.

Brake & Tyre Watch event Donkerhoek – Gauteng

The latest *FleetWatch Brake & Tyre* event held at Donkerhoek marked the 58th event since we started this initiative back in 2006.

Over this period, it has been lauded as one of the most impactful road safety events for the trucking industry. It's all about making a difference where the 'Power of One' reigns supreme. *FleetWatch* and our much-valued partners all believe that if it helps to save just one life, it will have all been worthwhile. That life could be yours, writes *Patrick O'Leary*.

As with all other events, we came away from this event with the deep satisfaction that the training was highly appreciated by the Traffic Officials adding value, as they told us, to their ability to do their jobs more professionally - not only for

the sake of keeping our roads safer, but also for keeping themselves safe while doing that job. *Brake & Tyre Watch* is, indeed, for all South Africans.

The event has a double-whammy intention. The first is to empower traffic officials with practical hands-on knowledge to identify signs of unroadworthiness on trucks using no equipment. On this front, our expert trainers from our partner companies take their teams around the trucks on the practical day explaining the functioning of things like Suzi hoses, slack adjusters, brake boosters, tyres and other critical safety items - how they should look if compliant and identifying faults that deem them to be uncompliant.

The training is divided into five different stations - Conspicuity and External Station; Tyre Station, Brake

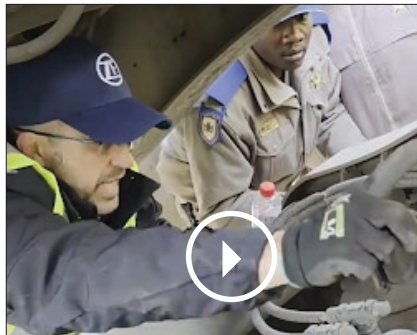
Station, Fifth Wheel Station and the Pit Station. At the pit station, apart from undercarriage inspections, a brake roller test will be done if necessary to validate any visual observations of braking faults.

The second part of the 'double-whammy' is for the project to highlight to operators the absolute necessity of conducting regular and meticulous maintenance on their rigs. On this front, there is a long way to go for we are still getting results that show many operators are not paying attention to the roadworthiness of their rigs. At Donkerhoek, a total of six rigs were inspected. Of these, four were served with Discontinuation Notices and were parked off, one was fined and instructed to replace a number of tyres - and one passed.

So that's only one out of six that



WATCH THE VIDEO



Action at Donkerhoek BTW Event

got a clean bill of health.

Some time ago, a leading figure in the industry called me to dispute the results we were getting from the various projects. I invited him to attend one of the exercises - which he did. After spending a day on our practical training, he retracted his critical scepticism. "I never realised it was that bad. Some of the faults I saw are totally unacceptable. I apologise for being a sceptic" he said.

Brake & Tyre Watch has never been intended as a name and shame exercise. It is an educational project to empower cops and raise awareness among operators. But I do have a plea to the operators. Take note of what we find and interact with your workshops to ensure they are doing the work they are entrusted to do. On this point, I compliment the director of one company - a well known company - whose truck was discontinued on this day. He arrived and went to the

holding yard where his truck was parked. I walked over to meet him and instead of bemoaning the cops or us, he thanked us. "We have an image to uphold and this is not how we operate. I've already scheduled a meeting with our workshop staff first thing tomorrow morning to find out who is responsible for this. This truck is unsafe and someone in our organisation has dropped the ball. That person will be held accountable." I was taken by surprise. "So, you're not upset with the Traffic Officials or with us?" I asked. "Not at all," he replied. "I'm grateful."

AI is the new 'wow' trend of the world but what *Brake & Tyre Watch* clearly demonstrates is that no algorithm will tighten a wheel nut, adjust a slack adjuster or replace a worn or cracked top plate on a fifth wheel. Until that day arrives - and in my opinion it never will - road safety will continue to depend on competent technicians, properly

WATCH THE VIDEO



Cops rate *Brake & Tyre Watch* training tops

managed workshops and leaders who are prepared to lead on the ground not just in the boardrooms. Sometimes the most valuable management report isn't displayed on a computer screen. It's waiting underneath a truck. The *FleetWatch Brake & Tyre Watch* project proves this quite clearly. The cops are learning but are operators learning the lessons. ☐



▲ Day Two – Practical Training

Traffic officials getting ready to put their knowledge into action.

◀ Day One – Theory Day

Traffic officials are given a full day's insights into what they need to know to be able to inspect and identify faults on trucks... expert trainers share their knowledge

Making a difference on the roads – safety matters.



The trainers who make it all happen

It's an early start as traffic officials sign in for the two-day *Brake & Tyre Watch* training. The first day comprises an informative day of lectures followed by a second day of practical training at a vehicle test centre. Tremendous camaraderie is built up under the overall maxim that 'Knowledge is Power'. On this page, *FleetWatch* salutes our partner trainers.



▲ Patrick O'Leary, Managing Editor of **FleetWatch** gets the ball rolling.



▲ Manie Roux of **Jost** presents a prize.



▲ Principal Provincial Inspector Bezuidenhout thanks all partners on behalf of the delegates.



▲ Dlrk Koekemoer of **JC Auditors** congratulates an excited officer.



▲ Kathy Bell of **Standard Bank** - always motivational.



▲ Dries Venter of **Bridgestone** - known as 'Mr Tyre'.



▲ Clive Versfeld of **Orafol** - talking visibility.



▲ Johan van der Merwe of **ZF Aftermarket** - a veteran trainer.

◀ Sean Annandale of **BPW Axles** - another veteran trainer.

▼ **Powerfleet Africa** team with officials - Ivy Mokgopo, Customer Success Manager (l), and Kay Dawood, Senior Manager Customer Success (r).





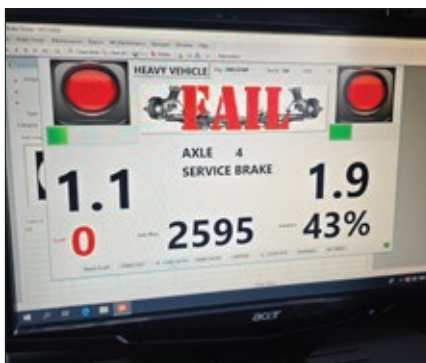
▲ **Brakes** – Down and under with Johan van der Merwe of **ZF Aftermarket** as he explains the working components of braking systems.



▲ **5th Wheel** – Manie Roux of **JOST** shows the intricacies of the 5th Wheel. Amazing how many faults are spotted. An ignored component.



▲ **Clive Versfeld** of **Orafol** leads a team through the external checks such as conspicuity tape, lights and other vital features.



▲ **Fail** – Total fail on the brake roller tester: Licence disc off and truck discontinued.



▲ Tim Hendon of Isuzu Trucks gave a fascinating insight into the safety features built into modern day trucks.

Thanks to Isuzu

Salute to Isuzu Trucks South Africa for once again joining *FleetWatch Brake & Tyre Watch* as our OEM partner for this event. For each event we invite a different OEM so as to rotate participation. It is only with the solid commitment of our partners to making a difference to road safety that these training events can be held. Salute!

VALUED BRAKE & TYRE WATCH PARTNERS





Common faults on tyres

Roadworthy tyres are critical for safe travel yet we often find that clearly visible signs of faults are ignored by maintenance staff - some really bad and others left to “just get in one more trip” perhaps. Don't take chances with tyres - what may seem like a small fault can lead to a devastating consequence. There is also the fact that going beyond the legal tread depth not only compromises safety but also makes the tyre less suitable for retreading. It's false economy.



▲ Tread depth has reached the Tread Wear indicator (TWI). These tyres are smooth and illegal - (Reg 212 J)



▲ Again, the tread depth has gone beyond the Tread Wear Indicator making this tyre illegal. - (Reg 212 J)



▲ This tyre has a massive cut/break on the outside of the tyre measuring more than 25 mm and the cords are exposed. Take it off - Reg 212 (L)



▲ Another tyre with a huge cut on the outside of the tyre measuring more than 25 mm. This is obvious for goodness sake. Get it off. - Reg 212 (L)



▲ A metal object in the tread may damage the road surface or be a danger. Remove the object. - Reg 212 (E)



▲ Condition of tyres can be inspected closely in the pit. Often the inner tyre on a set of twins has faults that the cops won't spot on the road.



▲ Our tyre expert Dries Venter of Bridgestone imparts valuable information on all things related to tyres.



In the pit



Brake & Tyre Watch CAMPAIGN

FleetWatch magazine, along with its traditional partners in this project stage the highly successful **Brake & Tyre Watch** road safety initiative on a quarterly basis nationwide.

Background

Brake & Tyre Watch is a groundbreaking initiative designed to heighten awareness among transport operators about efficient braking and tyre checks, linked to comprehensive preventative maintenance on trucks. This includes critical safety elements such as lighting and reflectives. The project goes beyond awareness, aiming to empower Traffic Officials with specialised knowledge, enhancing their ability to intervene more effectively and remove unroadworthy heavy vehicles from our roads.

DATE	LOCATION	INSPECTED	FAILED	%
Feb 2006	Gauteng-City Deep	24	21	88%
Feb 2007	Middleburg	35	24	69%
May 2007	Centurion	41	17	41%
March 2008	Midway KZN	26	10	38%
June 2008	Kroonstad	8	7	88%
Feb 2009	Western Cape	25	25	100%
June 2009	Bloemfontein	54	26	48%
Nov 2009	Pietermaritzburg	12	11	92%
March 2010	Port Elizabeth	16	6	38%
July 2010	Rustenburg	7	5	71%
Dec 2010	Limpopo	11	10	91%
Feb 2011	Estcourt	24	20	83%
June 2011	Nothorn Cape	24	20	83%
Sept 2011	JHB - Langlaagte	24	18	75%
Feb 2012	Midway KZN	12	11	92%
May 2012	Klerksdorp	16	14	88%
Aug 2012	Tshwane	25	17	68%
Nov 2012	Krugersdorp	13	11	85%
Feb 2013	Port Shepstone	9	6	67%
May 2013	Donkerhoek	19	14	74%
Aug 2013	Western Cape	41	19	46%
Nov 2013	Marian Hill	41	29	71%
Feb 2014	Tshwane	12	4	33%
May 2014	Mpumalanga	13	12	92%
August 2014	Ekurhuleni	32	19	59%
Nov 2014	Heidelberg	10	8	80%
March 2015	Potchefstroom	30	21	70%
May 2015	Ermelo	11	7	64%
Aug 2015	Durban	14	11	79%
Nov 2015	Langlaagte	15	11	73%
March 2016	Estcourt	10	8	80%
May 2016	Ekurhuleni	12	10	83%
Aug 2016	Brackenfell	13	11	85%
Nov 2016	Kimberley	10	7	70%
Mar 2017	Mokopane - Polokwane	12	8	67%
May 2017	Pinetown	6	4	67%
Aug 2017	Bloemfontein	5	4	80%
Nov 2017	Maropeng	8	6	75%
Feb 2018	Beaufort West	5	2	40%
May 2018	Musina	8	7	88%
Sept 2018	Nelson Mandela Bay	6	5	83%
Nov 2018	Western Cape	6	5	83%
Feb 2019	Bapong	13	11	85%
Mar 2019	Donkerhoek	4	3	75%
May 2019	Windhoek, Namibia	6	4	67%
Aug 2019	Harrismith	7	6	86%
April 2023	Bapong	6	5	83%
Jun 2023	Springs	6	5	83%
Oct 2023	Donkerhoek	6	5	83%
March 2024	Walvis Bay, Namibia	5	1	20%
May 2024	eThekweni, KZN	4	3	75%
July 2024	Gqeberha, Eastern Cape	5	5	100%
Nov 2024	Bloemfontein	4	4	100%
March 2025	Heidelberg	2	1	50%
May 2025	Harrismith	6	2	25%
Sept 2025	Potchefstroom	4	1	25%
Nov 2025	Krugersdorp	6	4	67%
April 2026	Malelane	4	4	100%
June 2026	Donkerhoek	6	5	83%
TOTALS		839	579	69%

Training Day

Prior to the hands-on testing day, Traffic Officials undergo crucial training. This free-of-charge training, facilitated by industry partners, focuses on the quality of brake maintenance, determining braking efficiency, identifying tyre faults, and addressing general issues. Each full-day session includes practical checks with roadworthy trucks and trailers, ensuring officials are well-equipped for their vital roles in maintaining road safety.

Practical Test Day Event

The hands-on test day unfolds at a selected Vehicle Testing station within the chosen province. Randomly selecting trucks from main routes and urban centers, the inspection pits and Brake Roller Test ascertain the state of brakes and braking systems. Close collaboration with Provincial Traffic Officials and SAPS enables a comprehensive check for trailer defects and other faults. The rationale is to challenge common accident attributions, emphasising that proper brake maintenance is pivotal in preventing failures.

Practical Test Day FleetWatch's Concerns

FleetWatch addresses a worrying trend in operators skipping maintenance intervals due to economic pressures. Published results serve as a stark reminder that brakes and tyres, despite being hidden components, are paramount safety items demanding meticulous upkeep. The initiative aims to curb this trend by shedding light on actual findings, advocating for the highest maintenance standards.

Gratitude to Partners

FleetWatch extends sincere thanks to its dedicated partners. Their unwavering passion and commitment significantly contribute to the project's success, reinforcing the ethos that if **Brake & Tyre Watch** helps save just one life, it will have all been worthwhile. **Join us in making a difference on the roads – because safety matters.**

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OPINION PIECE

PRODUCTIVITY PARADOX



SA trucking is becoming smarter

but not necessarily more productive

Risk mitigation

▲ Security concerns, congestion, infrastructure deterioration, road closures and operational uncertainty increasingly require planners to focus on risk mitigation.



South Africa's trucking industry has never had more technology, more data or greater operational visibility at its disposal. From telematics and route optimisation to sophisticated risk management and fleet monitoring systems, road freight operators have invested heavily in improving their capabilities.

However, according to Wesley Niemann, educator, researcher and consultant in Supply Chain Management and Logistics in the Department of Business Management at the University of Pretoria, many of those gains are being consumed by the realities of operating in an increasingly complex environment.

Instead of using technology to drive new efficiencies and productivity, freight operators are often deploying it simply to maintain service levels and keep trucks moving. In this opinion piece written for *FleetWatch*, Niemann argues that South Africa's logistics sector is confronting a productivity paradox - one with implications not only for transport operators but also for the broader economy. Here's what he has to say. There's a lot of food for thought in his views.

The productivity paradox facing South African freight operators

Conventional wisdom suggests ► 62



we think transport

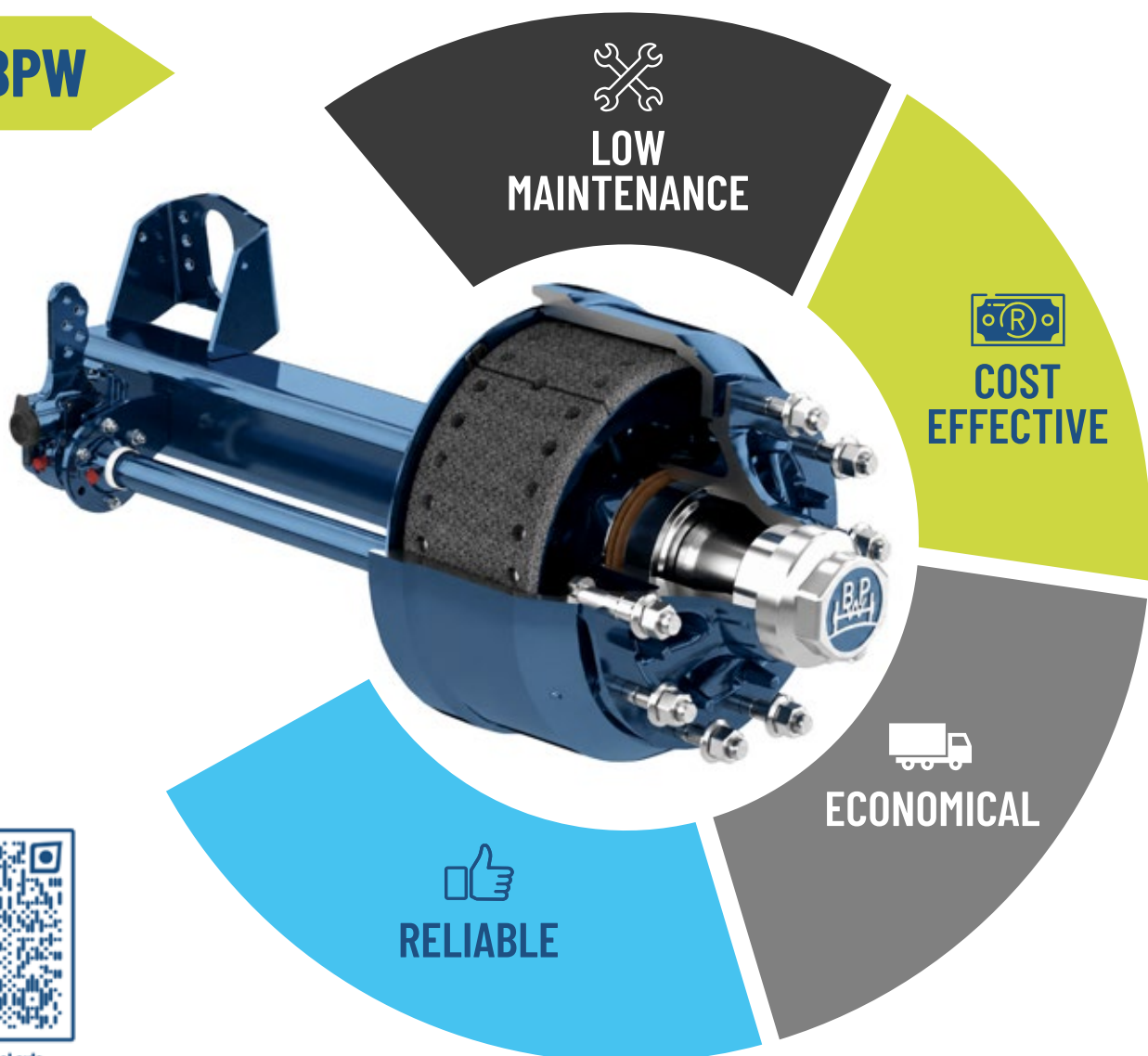
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OPINION PIECE

PRODUCTIVITY PARADOX

► 60 that improved capability should lead to improved productivity.

In most industries, organisations that invest in better technology, stronger management practices, more sophisticated planning systems and enhanced operational visibility should be able to deliver better outcomes over time. Greater capability should translate into higher efficiency, lower costs, improved service levels and stronger competitiveness. Yet many South African freight operators find themselves confronting a paradox.

The logistics sector has become significantly more capable over the past decade but the productivity gains that should have accompanied these improvements have often remained elusive.

This is not because logistics companies have failed to innovate. On the contrary, many operators have invested heavily in telematics, route optimisation systems, fleet visibility technologies, risk management capabilities, compliance systems and operational planning processes.

Fleet managers today possess access to levels of operational intelligence that would have been unimaginable twenty years ago. Driver monitoring systems have become more sophisticated. Maintenance planning has improved. Customer visibility has increased. Transport planning has become increasingly data driven.

When capability becomes compensation

Under normal operating conditions, these developments should have generated substantial productivity improvements. The problem is that much of this capability is increasingly being consumed by the operating environment itself. Instead of using enhanced capabilities to create new efficiencies, logistics firms are often deploying them merely to maintain acceptable levels of performance. This distinction is critical because it reveals a largely overlooked dimension of South Africa's economic challenge.

Consider the evolution of route



planning. Advances in technology have provided transport operators with unprecedented visibility into vehicle locations, route performance and delivery schedules. In many markets, such capabilities enable operators to improve vehicle utilisation, reduce fuel consumption and optimise network efficiency.

In South Africa, however, a growing proportion of route planning effort is directed towards avoiding disruption rather than enhancing productivity. Congestion, infrastructure deterioration, security concerns, road closures and operational uncertainty increasingly require planners to focus on risk mitigation. The technology remains valuable, but its primary function shifts from optimisation to compensation. The same pattern can be observed in fleet management.

Modern telematics systems provide operators with powerful tools to improve asset utilisation and reduce operating costs. Yet many organisations increasingly rely on these systems to manage risks associated with vehicle security, route deviations and operational unpredictability. Again, capability is not being used primarily to generate new value. It is being used to protect existing value.

Productive versus defensive investment

The distinction may appear subtle

Avoid disruption

▲ A growing proportion of route planning effort is directed towards avoiding disruption rather than enhancing productivity.

but its economic implications are significant.

Productive investment is generally expected to expand capacity, improve efficiency or increase output. Defensive investment, by contrast, is intended to preserve continuity amid uncertainty. While both forms of investment may be necessary, they produce very different outcomes.

Across large parts of the logistics sector, investment increasingly appears to be shifting from productive to defensive purposes. This trend becomes particularly evident when examining how transport operators allocate managerial attention.

In a stable operating environment, managers would be expected to focus primarily on network design, customer service innovation, asset productivity and long-term competitiveness. Increasingly, however, substantial management effort is devoted to contingency planning, risk assessment, disruption management and operational workarounds.

These activities are essential. But they rarely generate competitive advantage in the traditional sense. Instead, they enable firms to ► 64

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OPINION PIECE

PRODUCTIVITY PARADOX



The infamous pothole

◀ Fleet productivity gains generated through innovation, technology and improved management are increasingly offset by the costs of navigating a complex and uncertain operating environment.



continue operating despite instability elsewhere in the system.

The impact beyond transport

The consequences extend beyond the freight industry itself. Agricultural supply chains provide a useful example. South African farmers operate within highly sophisticated production systems and compete in demanding international markets. Yet growing amounts of investment are directed towards maintaining continuity rather than improving productivity. Backup power systems, security measures, alternative logistics arrangements and infrastructure workarounds all consume resources that might otherwise have supported expansion, innovation or efficiency improvements.

The same dynamic is increasingly visible within manufacturing. Larger inventories are often maintained not because demand requires them, but because supply chain uncertainty necessitates additional buffers. Warehousing capacity expands to accommodate risk. Working capital becomes tied up in contingency stock. Operational resilience improves, but productivity gains are diluted.

A broader economic concern

From a supply chain perspective, these developments point towards a broader economic concern.

An economy's long-term competitiveness depends not only on its ability to function, but on its ability to improve. Growth requires that talent, capital and managerial attention be directed towards activities that generate additional value. As a greater proportion of those resources is consumed maintaining continuity, the economy may remain operational while gradually becoming less productive.

This is the essence of the productivity paradox confronting South African freight operators. The sector continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience. Goods continue to move. Supply chains continue to function. Customers continue to be served. In many respects, the logistics industry has become more sophisticated, more adaptive and more capable than ever before.

Yet much of that capability is being deployed to address systemic challenges rather than market opportunities. The danger is not that the freight sector becomes less competent. The danger is that ever-greater competence is required

Technology

Fleet managers today have access to levels of operational intelligence not found twenty years ago.



simply to achieve the same outcomes. That is a fundamentally different problem.

It means that productivity gains generated through innovation, technology and improved management are increasingly offset by the costs of navigating a complex and uncertain operating environment. The industry works harder, invests more and develops greater capability, yet too much of that effort is absorbed by preserving performance rather than advancing it.

For freight operators, this is an operational challenge. For South Africa, it is an economic one. Because no economy can sustainably improve its competitiveness if its most capable sectors are forced to devote an increasing share of their resources to overcoming obstacles rather than creating value. □

A close-up, low-angle shot of a Volvo steering wheel and dashboard. The steering wheel is dark and has a Volvo logo on the center. The dashboard is visible in the background, with a green indicator light glowing. The overall lighting is dim and warm, suggesting an interior view at dusk or dawn.

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Strong Workforce

◀ The Volvo Trucks SA Durban Plant team celebrates 20 years of automotive engineering excellence.

Team Pride

▼ Pride in the team: (from left) Vuyo Sabata - Volvo Trucks Plant Director, Per-Erik Lindström - Senior Vice President of Volvo Trucks International and Stuart Potter, MD of Volvo Trucks South Africa.



20th Anniversary for Volvo Assembly Plant

South Africa's automotive and manufacturing sectors have played a huge role in building the technical skills, industrial capability and employment opportunities needed to support long-term economic growth. Local vehicle assembly plays an important role in that equation, creating opportunities not only on the production line but across engineering, logistics, quality, maintenance and management. Volvo Trucks South Africa's Durban assembly plant offers a practical example of how sustained local manufacturing can develop people and capability alongside

production, as it celebrates 20 years of operations.

From four trucks a day to 12

Volvo Trucks South Africa recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of its Durban truck assembly plant, marking a significant milestone in the company's history in the country.

From a humble start assembling around four units a day, to the 12 now rolling off the shop floor every day, the facility - and especially its employees - have grown from strength to strength.

The event was attended by eThekweni Mayor Cyril Xaba, who remarked that the Volvo Trucks facility has been a cornerstone of the city's industrial capabilities.

"To witness your evolution from a modest operation to a substantial plant that can produce an excess of 2 000 units a year, is a powerful statement of confidence in the future of our city," said Xaba. "This growth has contributed to increased job opportunities and further strengthened the local economy."

The Durban assembly plant

currently employs 142 people and forms part of Volvo Group Southern Africa, headquartered in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng. Volvo Trucks assembles trucks in 12 countries across the globe as part of the broader Volvo Group industrial network.

Per-Erik Lindström, Senior Vice President of Volvo Trucks International, said the company strongly believes in contributing to the societies where it operates by advancing economic growth and sustainable progress.

“Over the past 20 years the growth of our workforce has been about far more than numbers. We have focused on developing skills, leadership capability, technical expertise and a culture of continuous improvement,” said Lindström.

“The team is agile, highly skilled and able to effectively adapt to advanced technologies, new product variants and changing customer expectations. Today, we have a workforce that combines years of experience with fresh ideas and new talent, creating a strong foundation for the future.”

Vuyo Sabata, Volvo Trucks Plant Director, believes that beyond the economic contribution, the team is proud to be part of the KwaZulu-Natal and Amantzimtoti community.

“Every employee who comes through our gates represents a family, a community and a future. The impact of our manufacturing operations extends far beyond the plant itself through the opportunities it creates and the livelihoods it supports,” said Sabata.

The Durban plant is also one of the leading plants within the global company in terms of female representation on the assembly line.

“Women currently represent 40% of the workforce at the plant, and make up 23% of the assembly line team,” added Sabata. “While we are proud of this achievement, we also recognise that there is still room for improvement. Increasing female representation remains an important focus area and we are



Women rule!

▲ “Women currently represent 40% of the workforce at the plant and make up 23% of the assembly line team.” - Vuyo Sabata, Volvo Trucks Plant Director.



Assembly line

▲ The Volvo Durban Plant team is agile, highly skilled and able to effectively adapt to advanced technologies, new product variants and changing customer expectations.

committed to driving continuous progress to build a more diverse and inclusive workplace.”

Building local capability

Stuart Potter, MD of Volvo Trucks South Africa, said that 20 years ago Volvo Trucks recognised the strategic importance of South Africa as the gateway to Southern Africa and a key market for commercial transport.

“Establishing local assembly operations was about much more than building trucks locally. It was about investing in the country, building industrial capability, creating jobs, developing skills and as a result, being closer to our customers,” explained Potter.

“That decision laid the foundation for what has become a highly capable and skilled manufacturing operation that continues to

► 68

► 67 support customers across the region today.”

Over the past 20 years, customer demand has also evolved significantly. While reliability, durability and quality remain fundamental expectations, customers today are looking for far more than just a truck. Fleets require complete transport solutions that improve productivity, maximise uptime, reduce fuel consumption, enhance driver safety and support sustainability.

“The local assembly of Volvo trucks has enabled us to respond more effectively to our customers’ evolving expectations. By building world class products locally, we give customers the opportunity to support local industry while benefiting from vehicles that are designed and assembled to the exacting global Volvo Trucks standards they trust,” said Potter.

“Local manufacturing also creates a stronger connection between our customers and the product, reinforcing confidence in the quality, capability and support behind every vehicle. As well as the added benefit of buying a product built in South Africa for local operating conditions.”

The evolution of the plant

Today, the Durban plant is a far more mature and sophisticated operation than it was 20 years ago. The team has built strong capabilities across quality, safety, production planning, logistics, engineering and continuous improvement, ensuring they remain competitive and responsive to customers’ needs.

One of the plant’s major milestones has been establishing and sustaining a local assembly operation capable of meeting Volvo Trucks’ global quality standards.

“From the first Volvo FH8x4 model that rolled off the floor to the advanced Euro 6 and FH Aero trucks that we are assembling today, achieving advanced international quality and safety requirements within the facilities has been the team’s driving force throughout the years,” said Sabata.



To witness the evolution from a modest operation to a plant producing in excess of 2000 units is a powerful statement of confidence in the future of our city

**Cyril Xaba,
eThekweni Mayor**

“Being entrusted with advanced models is a strong acknowledgement of the capability and maturity of our local manufacturing operations and reflects the confidence Volvo Trucks has in the quality, discipline and expertise of our people.”

The plant’s manufacturing systems have also evolved.

“We have embraced more standardised processes, digital technologies, enhanced quality controls and a far stronger focus on safety. In fact, one of the most significant changes over the past 20 years has been the continuous strengthening of our safety culture. Today, safety is not simply a requirement but a core value that guides every activity in our plant,” explained Sabata.

Sustainability is also a strong focus for the Volvo Trucks plant. These include investments in solar energy generation, water harvesting systems, energy-efficient LED lighting, waste reduction programmes and initiatives to optimise resource consumption across the plant.

“We continuously evaluate opportunities to improve our environmental performance while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety,” said Sabata.

Skills that build careers

Since its establishment in 2006, many of the plant’s employees have progressed through different roles within the business, growing from operators to specialists, supervisors and leaders.

That progression highlights one of the less visible but potentially most important benefits of local manufacturing: the opportunity to build careers around increasingly sophisticated technical and operational skills. As vehicle technology, production systems and quality requirements evolve, so too does the need for people capable of working with advanced manufacturing processes.

“We are fortunate to have a good number of employees who have been part of this journey from the very beginning. Their experience, knowledge and dedication are part of the plant’s DNA. What makes this especially meaningful is that they have not only witnessed the evolution of the plant but have actively helped shape it. They have trained new generations of employees, contributed to improvements and helped build the culture that defines the Durban Plant today,” stated Sabata.

The combination of experienced employees and new talent is increasingly important as South Africa seeks to strengthen its automotive manufacturing base and create meaningful pathways into skilled employment.

Sabata concluded: “Every truck assembled, every improvement implemented and every success achieved over the past 20 years has been made possible by the hard work and professionalism of our employees. For this wonderful achievement, we thank you and salute you. This milestone belongs to you!” □



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For global truck OEMs, the ability to combine proven engineering with vehicles developed for local conditions has become a prerequisite for market success. Proving this fact is Isuzu Motors South Africa which is currently preparing to launch its all-New Generation Truck - the latest chapter in a commercial vehicle story that stretches back more than 60 years in South Africa and over a century globally.

While the new model will introduce the latest technologies and refinements, Isuzu says its development philosophy remains unchanged: build trucks around the needs of the people who operate them.

For a company that has led South Africa's combined medium and heavy truck market, excluding vans and buses, for 13 consecutive years, the forthcoming launch represents an evolution rather than a reinvention.

Engineering shaped by South African operators

The first Isuzu Elfin TKG10 1.5-ton truck arrived in South Africa in 1964, long before localisation and "built for Africa" became standard marketing language.

Since then, successive generations of J-Series, N-Series, F-Series, G-Series and FX/FY heavy-duty trucks have reflected changing customer requirements rather than changing fashions. Greater payloads, lower fuel consumption, improved driver comfort, enhanced safety systems and reduced operating costs have all been introduced in response to how trucks are actually used in Southern Africa.

Today the range serves sectors as diverse as municipal services, agriculture, mining, construction, distribution and long-haul logistics.

"Every truck we have introduced over the past six decades has been shaped by the people who rely on them every day," says Billy Tom, president of Isuzu Motors South Africa. "Our customers have been instrumental in our journey. They have challenged us to continuously improve, to innovate and to build trucks that are not only dependable



but also deliver real value to their businesses. That customer-first philosophy remains at the heart of everything we do."

A commercial vehicle specialist

Isuzu has remained focused almost exclusively on commercial vehicles for more than 100 years.

That singular focus has helped establish the brand's reputation among fleet operators, municipalities, owner-drivers and logistics companies looking for dependable vehicles capable of withstanding demanding operating environments while keeping downtime and lifecycle costs under control.

South Africa has also become an important part of the company's global manufacturing footprint. Vehicles assembled at Isuzu's Gqeberha plant serve both the local market and export

Value offerings

▲ Greater payloads, lower fuel consumption, improved driver comfort, enhanced safety systems and reduced operating costs have defined Isuzu trucks in South Africa and the OEMs New Generation Truck will extend these value offerings.

customers across Sub-Saharan Africa, reinforcing the company's long-term commitment to local manufacturing following Isuzu Motors Limited's acquisition of the South African operation in 2018.

Preparing for the next generation

As transport technologies continue to evolve, Isuzu has broadened its development programmes to include Euro 5 engines that do not require AdBlue, Dual Fuel diesel-gas hybrids, compressed natural gas

(CNG) trucks and battery-electric vehicles.

Rather than pursuing technology for its own sake, the company says its objective remains practical solutions that deliver measurable operational benefits under Southern African conditions.

"Customers' businesses continue to evolve, and so do their expectations," says Tom. "They need vehicles that are more productive, more efficient, safer and easier to operate than ever before. Our responsibility is to continue listening, continue innovating and continue delivering transport solutions that help our customers succeed."

Building on a proven formula

The arrival of the all-New Generation Truck is essentially an extension of a philosophy that has underpinned Isuzu's success for decades - applying proven engineering to vehicles developed around local operating realities.

"Our heritage gives us confidence but it does not define our future," concludes Tom.

"The next generation of Isuzu trucks builds on everything we have learnt over the past 60 years while embracing the technologies and innovations that will shape the future of transport. We are proud of where we have come from but we are even more excited about where we are going." □



Walk down history lane

► A walk down history lane. Various milestones in Isuzu's 60-year history are displayed lining the walls of a corridor at the Isuzu plant head-office. It tells a fascinating story of progress and commitment to South Africa.

Our heritage
gives us
confidence but
does not define
our future

Trucks for the people

◀ Billy Tom, president of Isuzu Motors South Africa: "Every truck we have introduced over the past six decades has been shaped by the people who rely on them every day,"



Editor's Comment: Many manufacturers talk about building trucks for Africa. Isuzu's advantage is that it has spent more than six decades doing exactly that. The forthcoming all-New Generation Truck will ultimately be judged by how well it delivers on the fundamentals that are crucial for operators - reliability, durability, efficiency and total cost of ownership. If history is any guide, those remain the benchmarks against which the market will measure it.



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Connected vehicle data from Hino and Fuso

Commercial vehicle manufacturers have traditionally competed on vehicle performance, reliability and aftersales support. However, the formation of Archion - the Hino-Fuso merger - is beginning to demonstrate how collaboration can create value beyond individual fleets. Its latest initiative combines connected vehicle data from the two OEMs to support smarter logistics, better infrastructure planning and improved societal mobility through what is believed to be the first cross-manufacturer data analytics service of its kind in Japan's commercial vehicle industry.

The service combines data from about 500 000 commercial connected vehicles, which will be provided by Hino Computer System Co. (HCS), and is designed to help address logistics, transport infrastructure and urban planning challenges.

The initiative represents another tangible synergy within the Archion

Merger

▲ The ARCHION initiative marks the first time connected vehicle data from two OEMs - approximately 500 000 Hino and Fuso trucks - will provide data for fleets and wider societal and industrial applications in Japan.

Group's CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared and Electric) strategy and marks the first time connected vehicle data from two commercial vehicle manufacturers will provide data for wider societal and industrial applications in Japan.

Enhancing the Logita platform

Under the new service, HCS will incorporate Mitsubishi Fuso connected vehicle data into its Logita logistics big data platform, which has until now primarily utilised data from Hino's medium and heavy-duty truck fleet.

The addition of Mitsubishi Fuso's connected urban vehicle data broadens the platform's analytical

capabilities, improving both the coverage and quality of transport insights.

The expanded dataset enables more comprehensive analysis of traffic volumes, vehicle movement patterns and road usage conditions, with insights tailored to the needs of customers in both the public and private sectors.

Supporting logistics and infrastructure planning

The analytics platform is intended to support local governments, public agencies and private companies in a wide range of applications, including road infrastructure maintenance, transportation policy planning, disaster prevention and mitigation, hydrogen refueling station location analysis and carbon neutrality initiatives.

The service combines data from about 500 000 connected commercial vehicles.

Examples include the early detection of vehicle immobilisation during heavy snowfall, evaluating evacuation and alternative routes during natural disasters and enabling more proactive road maintenance planning.

Because the platform captures data at intervals of up to one second, it can provide highly detailed analysis of traffic patterns and road infrastructure conditions that were previously difficult to identify.

Expanding visibility across the transport network

Historically, Logita has focused largely on Hino's medium and heavy-duty truck fleet operating on expressways and major arterial roads. The addition of Mitsubishi Fuso's vehicle data, including its light-duty truck fleet, extends visibility across regional roads and urban delivery networks, providing a more complete understanding of freight movements from long-haul transport through to route-based and last-mile delivery operations.

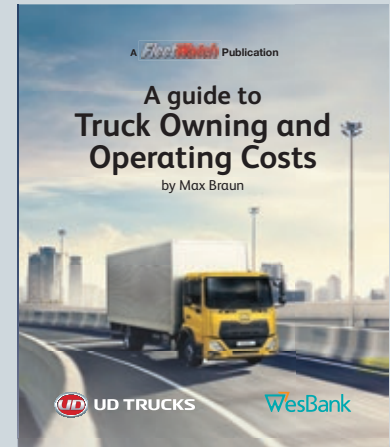
This broader dataset enables year-round, 24-hour analysis of logistics activity across a wider range of road networks, generating new insights into traffic flows and road conditions that were previously beyond the platform's reach.

Privacy and governance

ARCHION says all vehicle data used by the platform is anonymised and aggregated before analysis and managed under strict data governance policies to protect vehicle operator privacy.

By combining the strengths of Hino and Mitsubishi Fuso, the company says it aims to make previously unseen logistics flows visible while contributing to more efficient transport systems, improved infrastructure planning and the continued advancement of social infrastructure. □

Editor's Comment: The significance of ARCHION's announcement extends beyond technology. It demonstrates how connected commercial vehicles can become mobile sensors, generating real-time intelligence that benefits not only fleet operators but also road authorities, infrastructure planners and society as a whole. As countries grapple with ageing infrastructure and growing freight demand, data partnerships such as this may become as strategically important as the trucks themselves.



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A collective 250 000 kms + for Volvo eTrucks

South Africa's transition to zero-emission freight transport continues to gather momentum as more fleet operators gain real-world experience with battery electric trucks. While long-haul electrification remains an emerging opportunity, urban and regional distribution applications are proving that the technology is already commercially viable. Volvo Trucks South Africa's latest milestone highlights how local operators are steadily building confidence in electric mobility while generating valuable operational data under South African conditions.

Volvo Trucks South Africa's growing fleet of battery electric trucks has collectively travelled more than 250 000km in commercial

service since the vehicles were first introduced locally in 2023.

"While a quarter of a million kilometres may seem modest compared with the more than 400 million already accumulated by Volvo electric trucks globally, it represents a significant achievement in the South African context, where the majority of Volvo electric trucks are operating on shorter-route and urban distribution applications," says Eric Parry, senior manager sustainable solutions at Volvo Trucks South Africa.

The current fleet covers a broad range of applications, from 8-tonne 4x2 distribution trucks carrying payloads of five to seven tonnes through to 6x4 tractor units hauling interlink trailers with payloads exceeding 32 tonnes.

Across the fleet, vehicles average approximately 2 000km per month, while the highest-utilisation units consistently cover around 10 000km each month. Average energy consumption stands at 1.77kWh/km across all applications.

"The milestone reflects the confidence customers have placed in Volvo Trucks' electric transport solutions and demonstrates that battery-electric trucks are successfully meeting the demands of daily commercial operations," states Parry.

Operational lessons shaping future adoption

Beyond the headline distance travelled, Volvo says the vehicles have provided valuable operational insight into charging strategies, vehicle utilisation, uptime requirements and driver experience under local operating conditions.

All customer fleets currently recharge their trucks at depots or loading and off-loading facilities using privately owned charging infrastructure. Charging strategies vary according to operational requirements, combining overnight AC charging with fast charging top-ups where required.

Parry believes the biggest success has been the industry's willingness

to embrace a new technology. “Our customers have embraced this technology with a willingness to learn, adapt and pioneer new ways of operating. Reaching a quarter of a million kilometres is not only a testament to the capability of the trucks, but also to the commitment of the customers and drivers who are making this achievement possible,” he says.

He adds that battery electric trucks are steadily moving beyond demonstration projects.

later this year with the introduction of a new generation of battery electric trucks offering greater operating range and additional power options.

“The trucks currently operating in South Africa are laying an important foundation for what comes next. With increased range and capability on the horizon, we are excited about the opportunities the next generation of electric trucks will bring,” explains Parry.

As more operators begin

Editor’s Comment: The significance of this milestone extends beyond the distance travelled. South Africa’s road freight industry needs local operating data, practical experience and proven business cases before electric trucks can scale meaningfully. Volvo’s early adopters are providing exactly that, demonstrating that battery electric trucks already have a place in urban and regional distribution while helping shape the roadmap for wider fleet electrification.



“One of the most satisfying aspects of this journey has been seeing electric trucks move from being a future concept to becoming part of everyday transport operations. Every kilometre travelled helps build confidence in the technology and strengthens the business case for broader adoption.”

Volvo supports its electric fleet customers through dedicated dealer and workshop capabilities, including real-time battery monitoring, specialised 24/7 roadside assistance and range prediction tools.

Next-generation electric trucks on the horizon

Volvo Trucks South Africa says the next phase of its local electromobility strategy will begin

► Volvo Trucks South Africa’s customer fleet of e-trucks boasts an average energy consumption of 1.77kWh/km across all applications.

incorporating electric vehicles into their fleets, Volvo views the 250 000km milestone as an early indicator of broader market adoption rather than a destination in itself.

“While a quarter of a million kilometres is an important milestone, it is what those kilometres represent that

▲ Long-haul distribution with DHL and a 6x4 Volvo battery-electric truck.

matters most: growing customer confidence, valuable operational experience, and a foundation for the next generation of electric transport,” Parry concludes. □



South Africa's trucking industry relies on more than world-class vehicles - it depends on local manufacturing capability, skilled jobs and the ability to build vehicles designed for African operating conditions. With growing pressure on global supply chains, Daimler Truck Southern Africa's latest production milestone highlights the enduring value of local assembly and long-term investment in South African industry.

Daimler Truck Southern Africa (DTSA) proved this recently by celebrating the production and handover of its 150 000th locally assembled truck at its East London assembly plant - a Mercedes-Benz Actros 2645LS/33 delivered to longstanding customer TT Group Holding.

More than six decades of local manufacturing

The milestone marks another chapter in a manufacturing story that began in 1962 when the first L-Type Mercedes-Benz truck rolled off the East London production line. More than 60 years later, the same facility continues to play a central role in supplying Mercedes-Benz Trucks to customers across Southern Africa while supporting localisation, employment and skills development.

According to DTSA, the plant's growth reflects ongoing advances in manufacturing quality, efficiency, safety and sustainability, while reinforcing the company's long-term commitment to South Africa and the broader region.

"The production of our 150 000th truck at the DTSA assembly plant represents far more than a number. It is a testament to the dedication, craftsmanship and passion of our people," says Gladstone Mtyoko, Vice President: Manufacturing at Daimler Truck Southern Africa.

"It reflects the strength of our production capabilities and our relentless focus on quality, efficiency

150 000 locally built trucks for Daimler



▲ The DTSA East London assembly plant team celebrates the handover of its 150 000th locally assembled truck to TT Group Holding.

and continuous innovation. This milestone demonstrates the important role we play in powering mobility and keeping Africa moving. I am incredibly proud of this achievement and of the outstanding team behind it, who continue to set the standard for excellence in manufacturing. Sibhiyoza kunye – sikunye siqhubekekela phambili ekugqweseni."

A history of milestones

The East London plant has recorded a series of significant milestones over the years, including its 60th anniversary in 2022, the production of the 125 000th truck in 2015 and the assembly of OH bus chassis that supported South Africa's 2010 FIFA World Cup transport requirements.

Other achievements include the production of the 750 000th CKD unit in 2019 and the 800 000th unit supplied from Daimler Truck's Wörth

plant in 2024. In 2023, Mercedes-Benz Trucks also celebrated 25 years of the Actros in South Africa and its assembly in East London.

The latest milestone comes during a landmark year globally for the brand, marking 130 years since the world's first Mercedes-Benz truck, 30 years of the Actros in Europe and 80 years of the Unimog.

DTSA says it remains focused on continued investment in people, products and production processes

as it responds to the evolving needs of the transport industry.

Commenting on the handover of the truck to TT Group Holdings, Olaf Petersen, Vice President: Sales and Marketing at Daimler Truck Southern Africa, said: "It is especially meaningful to deliver our 150 000th locally built truck to TT

Group Holding, a valued customer who shares our commitment to performance and excellence. This milestone is not only a reflection of our product strength but of the trust and collaboration that drives our business and the business of our customers forward. The trucking industry is built on strong, enduring relationships. We don't simply hand over a truck, we partner with our customers and support them throughout their journey." □

Editor's Comment: The significance of 150 000 trucks built in East London extends well beyond a production number - it represents decades of investment in South African skills, industrial capability and supply-chain resilience. For the road freight sector, having trucks built locally by local people remains a strategic advantage that helps keep both the economy and the continent moving.



Rolling out ◀

AARTO Phase 2 started from 1 July 2026 in selected municipalities but the actual demerit points system does not kick in yet.

Prepare ▼

JCA's Road Traffic and AARTO Expert, Reon du Plessis: "There is no need to panic. However, there is a need to prepare."



AARTO Phase 2 but don't panic

You may have heard news about the latest AARTO rollout and wondered what it means for your fleet. The word from JCA Auditors

(JCA) is that fleet owners need not panic. To put things into perspective, JCA's Road Traffic and AARTO Expert, Reon du Plessis, has issued the following as an explanation of what it all means.

By the way, Reon is well qualified in this arena with 46 years of law enforcement experience including service as Chief Provincial Inspector at the KZN Road Traffic Inspectorate and former Station Commander and Head of the KZN Traffic Training College for 27 years. He is also a qualified vehicle and licence examiner, RTMS auditor and PBS vehicle commissioner. So, here's the view from the expert.

According to Du Plessis, the important message for transport operators is this: AARTO Phase 2

started from 1 July 2026 in selected municipalities but the actual demerit points system does not kick in yet.

"This phase is mainly about expanding the AARTO administrative process to more municipalities. It affects how traffic infringements are issued, processed, paid, challenged and managed - but operators still have time to prepare properly before demerit points become fully active. While the regulations have been published, the effective date of implementation has not yet been announced," he says.

What operators should take note of is:

- Under the new AARTO process, fleet operators need to pay close attention to how traffic infringements are managed. This includes:
- Receiving and tracking AARTO notices. ▶ 78

For transport operators the biggest risk is:

- **Missing deadlines**
- **Not taking proper driver records**
- **Failing to manage notices quickly and correctly**



► 77

- Identifying the correct driver at the time of the infringement.
- Nominating drivers where applicable.
- Keeping accurate vehicle and operator records.
- Responding within the required timeframes.
- Managing payments, representations and appeals correctly.

“For transport operators, the biggest risk is not only the fine itself. It is missing deadlines, not having proper driver records, or failing to manage notices quickly and correctly,” says Du Plessis.

What should you do now?

Du Plessis says that now is the ideal time to get your fleet AARTO-ready and recommends that operators start by checking:

- Are all vehicle licence and operator card records up to date?
- Can you prove who was driving each vehicle on a specific date and time?
- Are driver licences and PrDPs valid and properly filed?
- Is there one responsible person or department managing AARTO notices?
- Do you have a register to track notices, due dates, nominations, payments and representations?
- Are trip sheets, telematics, tracking records and route records aligned?

Du Plessis says there is no need to panic. “However,” he adds, “there is a need to prepare. The operators who will manage AARTO best are those with strong fleet records, disciplined driver management,

proper roadworthiness controls and a clear internal process for dealing with infringements.”

AARTO should not be seen only as a fine-management issue. It is also an opportunity to strengthen fleet compliance, improve driver accountability and reduce road safety risk. “Let’s use this time wisely - prepare now, avoid panic later,” says Du Plessis.

Need guidance?

According to Oliver Naidoo, managing director of JC Auditors, the company will continue to keep transport operators updated as the AARTO rollout progresses. “We will also be hosting AARTO training sessions unpacking all the details in specific training sessions for management, fleet administrators and drivers,” he says. □

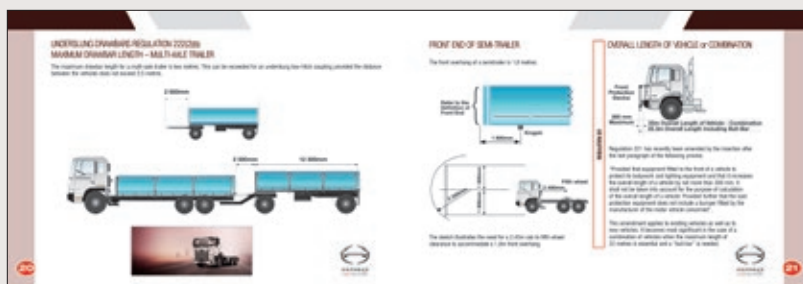


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▲ AARTO's 'impound' rules: Exceeding the total number of demerit points for a particular vehicle results in the suspension/cancellation of the operator card for that vehicle.



Gavin Kelly
CEO, Road Freight
Association

AARTO could become a bureaucratic nightmare

Transport reform is once again under the spotlight as South Africa edges closer to wider implementation of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO) system. While government positions AARTO as a key tool to improve road safety and driver compliance, concerns remain over whether its administrative complexity and operational demands could

undermine its intended benefits. In this opinion piece, Road Freight Association CEO Gavin Kelly argues that meaningful road safety reform requires a far simpler, behaviour-focused system - not one weighed down by bureaucracy.

AARTO: stumbling out of the starting blocks?

The Road Freight Association (RFA) has commented on the

OPINION PIECE

AARTO

structure and nature of AARTO (the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences) since the first iteration of the Act in 1998. The intentions are noble but the scope is too vast and the structure and processes far too intricate.

From the beginning the Association has said - make it simpler (like everywhere else in the world), make it focussed (like everywhere else in the world) and make it accessible (ditto).

Obviously, the RFA - which is serious about improved road safety conditions, better efficient logistics and a reduction in the huge financial strain on the medical infrastructure of the country - supports any and all attempts to improve the state of safety on our roads by reducing the risks and aberrant behaviour that currently exist.

The RFA reiterates that the major contributors to incidents on the roads must be identified and clearly prioritised so that the causes for these incidents (crashes) that result in injuries and death can be addressed through a concerted effort to change behaviour.

The RFA highlights that, throughout the world, successfully targeted actions focussing on demotivational programmes to modify aberrant behaviour are the norm, and have been successful.

However, there are some serious flaws in AARTO which will negatively affect the efficacy of the intended system as well as create huge operational challenges regarding vehicles which will result in negative effects to the financial and operational sustainability of road freight businesses in South Africa.

Appeals Tribunal – administrative burden

The AARTO Act refers to the appointment of a Tribunal - one Tribunal - not one per Province, licensing authority or Metropolitan area.

According to reports, there were 1 823 040 infringements issued during the 2024 calendar year (in Tshwane and Johannesburg alone).

If 10% of these infringements are to be appealed, it will amount to roughly 180 000 appeal cases being heard by the appeal Tribunal consisting of nine people hearing each appeal.

A simple calculation suggests that they will have to hear approximately 850 appeals per day. This will create a bottleneck in the system. What about all infringements issued across the whole country (when in operation)? How will the Tribunal cope?

The appeals process will require documents to be handed in, stamped, signed and a copy be

BOTTLENECK

If 10% of all infringements are to be appealed it will amount to roughly 180 000 appeal cases to be heard by the appeal Tribunal, consisting of nine people hearing each appeal.



handed back to the infringer, all by the local licensing department/ issuing authority which are already overloaded with their current workload in terms of licensing and testing of vehicles and drivers. These additional AARTO responsibilities will create longer queues and more pressure at these centres.

The question to be asked is whether these centres will be able to cope with this additional burden and whether all the local authorities and municipalities are aware of the additional duties that AARTO will require and whether they have budgeted sufficiently for these services.

Furthermore: Tribunal members are appointed on a part-time basis. How will they deal with

the possible workload, given the example of possible volumes of work heading the way of the Tribunal?

Finally: legislation requires the Tribunal to be appointed when the legislation is enacted. Where is the Tribunal?

Demerit points for vehicles

The RFA has always opposed the issuing of demerit points to vehicles.

Nowhere else in the world do vehicles get demerit points to “change behaviour” - a vehicle is either roadworthy and fit to be used on a public road, or not. The objective is to reduce risk and ensure that vehicles being operated on the road are roadworthy - if not then remove from the road, repair, inspect and reissue roadworthy.

Currently a vehicle is suspended from operation on a public road and once repaired and having “passed” a roadworthy test, is again able to operate (and generate income).

Thus the current legislation, when properly and consistently applied by road traffic authorities, will achieve the desired aim far better than vehicles earning points and being barred from being returned to use when repaired.

Furthermore, as regards the resale/trade/cycling of vehicles: the effect of points allocated to vehicles will result in stalling/ refusal of sales (or vastly reduced valuation of vehicles/delay in fleet replacement/ability to trade vehicles). This will impact both private vehicle transactions (from luggage trailers and caravans/ private vehicles to fleet/commercial vehicles).

Vehicle cycle and demand operations of businesses (whether rental/fleet leasing or operational) is huge and cannot be taken lightly. It is important to highlight that in the case of representations, the process to follow is convoluted in being time consuming, hugely administrative and reliant on authorities providing information/ confirmation and feedback within the prescribed time frames. ► 82

OPINION PIECE

AARTO

► **81** The cost element for any company is that if the representation is rejected (on whatever basis) no discount will apply and the full penalty and applicable fees will be payable. Penalty levies are a revenue generation process - nothing more, nothing less.

Exceeding the total number of demerit points for a particular vehicle results in the suspension/ cancellation of the operator card for that vehicle. Further to this, Section 46(1) of the NRTA (the National Road Traffic Act 93 of 1996) notes that a new operator card cannot be issued to an operator where any vehicle operator card has been suspended (for the period of that suspension).

The Association cannot say it loudly enough, or repeat it enough times: "Scrap points on vehicles!"

CHANGING BEHAVIOUR?

While the RFA supports all initiatives to improve road safety, it is not convinced that AARTO will change the current behaviour of road users.



Rehabilitation Programme

Habitual offenders are eligible for a rehabilitation programme (after the second suspension as per definition of a "Habitual Offender").

While the RFA supports all initiatives to improve road safety and the general behaviour of all road users, it is not convinced that AARTO will change the current behaviour of road users.

Finally, the impact a demerit points system will have on drivers in a country where there is no alternative public transport network to speak of, is concerning. In all other countries across the globe where a demerit point system is in

place - and is successful in having a positive impact on driver behaviour - a reliable, efficient and developed public transport service is in place.

Having thousands of infringements/ offences that are to be policed and administratively dealt with is too far a stretch. Most other countries have between 15 and 30 behavioural causes that are focussed on. Results there speak for themselves. They are far simpler systems, with manageable processes and measurable results. But more importantly - they deliver positive change in the identified areas.

It's time to radically rethink the way in which AARTO needs to be focused and applied. □

Editor's Comment: Kelly's critique does not reject the principle of improving road safety - in fact, it strongly endorses it. Instead, he questions whether South Africa's version of AARTO has become an administrative solution to what is fundamentally a behavioural problem. For the trucking industry, the concern is not accountability but practicality. As implementation gathers pace, policymakers will need to convince operators that the system can improve compliance without creating bottlenecks, unnecessary costs and unintended consequences for a sector that keeps the country's economy moving.

If you would like to comment on Kelly's opinions - or add your own opinions on AARTO to the debate - please email The Editor at fleetwatch@pixie.co.za

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OPINION PIECE

GOING ELECTRIC



▲ “Electrification is not a branding exercise. It is a route-level operating decision.” – Paul Plummer, chief commercial officer at Everlectric.

6 questions you need to ask before moving to an electric fleet



by Paul Plummer
CFO, Everelectric

Rising diesel prices, pressure to reduce operating costs and the increasing availability of electric commercial vehicles are prompting fleet operators and Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) to scrutinise the business case for e-trucks more closely. In this opinion piece, Paul Plummer, chief commercial officer at Everlectric, argues that successful electrification starts not with choosing a vehicle, but with

understanding fleet operations and total cost of ownership (TCO). Here's his advice....

For South African fleet operators, diesel volatility has become a boardroom issue. Every fuel price increase affects margins, pricing, route profitability and cash flow. That is changing how CFOs evaluate electric vehicles. CFOs are increasingly asking not whether to move a fleet to electric, but how and where to start. These six questions provide a structured way to work through that decision.

OPINION PIECE

GOING ELECTRIC

Q1: How do I know if EVs make sense for my fleet?

Start with the work, not the vehicle. Look at daily routes, monthly kilometres, payload, dwell time, charging access and whether the vehicle returns to a depot. EVs tend to be strongest where routes are predictable, utilisation is high and vehicles can charge without disrupting operations. Dense urban delivery, retail distribution, courier and last-mile routes are often good starting points. Long, irregular routes with limited access to charging typically take longer to justify.

Q2: Should I electrify the whole fleet?

No. That is usually the wrong way to begin. The better approach is to identify the parts of the fleet where the economics already work. A business may start with one route, one vehicle class or one depot, then build from there once the data is proven. Electrification is not a branding exercise. It is a route-level operating decision.

Q3: How do I choose the right EV?

Do not choose the EV first and force the operation to fit around it. Match the vehicle to the job. That means assessing payload, cargo volume, route length, energy use, charging window, driver behaviour and service expectations. A sales vehicle, a one-ton delivery van, a larger cargo van and a refrigerated distribution vehicle all have different operating profiles. The right EV is the one that can reliably cover the route at a lower total cost of ownership.

Q4: When will I start seeing savings?

Based on Everlectric's fleet modelling, suitable commercial EV routes can deliver 10% to 25% lower total cost of ownership over a five-year holding period, using current tariff assumptions. The outcome depends on mileage, route profile, utilisation and residual value.

Everlectric's modelling shows that an electric one-ton equivalent began



to compete at around 3 000 km per month when diesel was closer to R22/litre. At diesel prices in the high-R20s, that threshold can move closer to 2 000 km per month, depending on the route, payload, charging model and vehicle utilisation. For a CFO, monthly kilometres and fuel exposure are more useful than a universal break-even number. Predictable routes and higher fuel spend generally bring the savings forward.

Q5: What if I cannot afford the upfront cost?

Buying the vehicle is not the only route into EV adoption. Everlectric's EV-as-a-Service model allows operators to access electric vehicles through a managed arrangement that can include the vehicle, charging infrastructure, maintenance, insurance, telematics and operational support. This can reduce the initial cash outlay, simplify implementation and provide the business with clearer visibility into its monthly fleet costs. It also reduces the need to build internal expertise in charging, maintenance and EVs before starting.

For CFOs, the structure still needs to be assessed against the company's cash-flow priorities, risk appetite, fleet term and accounting

▲ EVs tend to be strongest where routes are predictable, utilisation is high and vehicles can charge without disrupting operations.

requirements. The accounting treatment will depend on the specific contract and whether it contains a lease under IFRS 16. The practical advantage is flexibility. A business can begin with the routes where the economics already work while choosing a funding and service structure suited to its own operation.

Q6: What should I do first?

Map the current fleet before looking at brochures. Identify vehicles with predictable routes, high fuel spend, regular return-to-base patterns and enough monthly kilometres to make the energy saving visible. Calculate the current cost per kilometre, assess charging windows and compare the total cost of ownership rather than the purchase price. A sound EV decision begins with the routes, fuel spend and utilisation data already within the business, rather than a vehicle catalogue. That is where the real electrification opportunity usually sits. □

Pangolin Logistics buys 10 new DAF 6x4s



Pangolin Logistics, a leading independent side-tipper operation transporting bulk commodities between mining regions in South Africa and Mozambique, is strengthening its cross-border fleet with ten new DAF trucks from Babcock, comprising five XF 480 and five XF 530 units.

The investment reflects the long-standing confidence the fleet's founder and owner Paul Botha has in the DAF brand, its products, aftersales support and personnel.

In an industry that turns on long-term partnerships between operators and OEMs, the relationship Botha has with DAF has been forged over decades of experience in some of Southern Africa's most demanding freight corridors.

"Truck reliability is the foundational pillar of any successful transport business," says Botha. "It

directly influences profit margins, customer retention and operational continuity. A truck standing idle due to mechanical failure costs money in lost productivity, driver wages and potential penalties. Reliable trucks reduce emergency repair costs and ensure uninterrupted operations.

"Over the years, we have found DAF trucks - especially the XF105 - to be exceptionally reliable, even under the harsh operating conditions in which we deploy them."

Decades of DAF experience

Botha's association with DAF dates back to the early 2000s, when his previous transport company operated a fleet of 250 DAF CF85 trucks across South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

DAF XF105

▲ The new DAF trucks complement an existing fleet of eight older DAF XF105 units still working for Pangolin Logistics and which will be replaced with new DAF models next year.

After returning to the industry in 2018 and establishing Pangolin Logistics, he again turned to DAF, introducing XF105 units into the fleet. The trucks have since been deployed in side-tipper operations transporting bulk commodities including iron ore and chrome from mining regions such as Rustenburg, Brits, Steelpoort and Phalaborwa into Mozambique.

Earlier this year, Pangolin Logistics began replacing some of the XF105 units acquired between 2018 and 2020. The ten new-generation XF trucks complement an existing fleet of eight XF105 units, which Botha says will also be replaced with new DAF models next year. A further five XF 530 units are scheduled to join the fleet in the near future.

Ready to roll

◀ One of the DAF XF truck tractors all decked out on its way to join the Pangolin fleet in cross-border duties.



Fuel savings deliver early results

Alongside reliability, fuel efficiency remains a key factor in Pangolin Logistics' purchasing decisions, particularly in an operating environment where margins are increasingly under pressure and total cost of ownership (TCO) is always top-of-mind.

According to Botha, the new DAF trucks are already demonstrating measurable gains after only a short period in service.

"We are already seeing fuel savings of between 80 and 100 litres of diesel per trip, depending on the route and the driver," he says.

For long-haul operators covering vast distances across Southern Africa, improvements of this magnitude can translate into significant savings over the life of a vehicle.

Comfort supports productivity

Having started his career as an owner-driver in the 1980s, regularly covering between 25 000 km and 30 000 km per month, Botha places considerable emphasis on driver wellbeing.

"In long-haul operations, where drivers spend extended periods on the road and routes often involve unpredictable transit conditions and challenging infrastructure, cab comfort becomes essential for both driver wellbeing and productivity," he says.

"With their spacious cabs and premium comfort features, the new DAF units are extremely comfortable, and our drivers love them."

Beyond the truck

Botha also points to Babcock's finance solutions, repair and maintenance contracts, and guaranteed buy-back and trade-back options as important factors in Pangolin Logistics' fleet planning strategy.

He says these offerings help simplify vehicle acquisition, improve cash-flow planning and minimise operating costs through managed maintenance programmes designed to maximise uptime.

However, it is the relationship behind the transaction that continues to stand out.

"There are several individuals at Babcock whom I have worked with

closely for many years, and they have always supported us every step of the way," says Botha.

"In today's highly competitive trucking market, there is often very little separating one brand from another.

"What truly makes the difference is the people behind the brand. The DAF team at Babcock consistently goes above and beyond to support our business," he concludes. □

Editor's Comment: Pangolin Logistics' continued investment in DAF demonstrates how TCO fundamentals and nuances - reliability, fuel efficiency, driver acceptance and aftermarket support, combined with trusted supplier relationships - all influence long-term profitability and operational performance. In an era defined by disruptive forces, loyalty that endures through multiple fleet generations and some of Southern Africa's toughest operating environments is inspirational. "Good on you all - Pangolin and DAF!"



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SMSA Africa Logistics expands capacity



As regional trade volumes continue to grow across Southern Africa, investment in warehousing, fleet operations and integrated logistics facilities is becoming just as important as investment in roads and border efficiency. Consequently, SMSA Africa Logistics Group has officially broken ground on a major new logistics facility that will expand capacity, improve operational efficiency and reinforce the company's long-term commitment to regional supply chains.

Speaking at the official ground-breaking ceremony, Louis Ungerer, SMSA Africa Logistics Group Managing Director, described the development as both a celebration of the company's journey and a foundation for its future.

"Today marks a significant milestone in the history of our business and one that fills us with immense pride, gratitude and excitement. We have gathered here not only to break ground on a new facility but to celebrate a journey that began more than two decades ago and to look ahead to an even brighter future."

Built on more than two decades of logistics experience

Ungerer reflected on the company's origins, explaining that Namlog was established in 2002 with a simple but ambitious vision of providing reliable, innovative and customer-focused logistics solutions throughout Southern Africa.

"Through hard work, determination and an unwavering commitment to our customers, we built a reputation as one of the region's most trusted supply chain partners."

Since then, the business has grown into a leading regional logistics provider serving customers across South Africa, Eswatini, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Along the way, it has developed long-standing partnerships across the mining, automotive, FMCG, engineering and retail sectors.

Today the company operates as SMSA Africa Logistics Group while retaining the values on which Namlog was founded.

"Today, while we proudly operate as SMSA Africa Logistics Group, we remain deeply rooted in the

Future growth

◀ "We are creating capacity for future growth, investing in future jobs and strengthening our ability to connect businesses, communities and economies across Southern Africa." – Louis Ungerer, SMSA Africa Logistics Group Managing Director.

Warehousing

▼ SMSA Africa Logistics Group employs more than 870 people, operates a fleet of over 470 vehicles and uses its own advanced Transport Management System to provide visibility and performance across customer supply chains.



legacy and values that built Namlog. Strengthened by the global reach and support of SMSA, we continue to provide the same trusted logistics solutions with greater scale, enhanced technology and expanded capabilities.

Investing through changing market conditions

Ungerer acknowledged that the company's growth has come despite significant economic and operational challenges.

"Economic uncertainty, changing markets, evolving customer expectations and the complexities of cross-border logistics have all tested our resilience. Yet through every challenge, our people have demonstrated an extraordinary ability to adapt, innovate, and deliver."

Today SMSA Africa Logistics Group employs more than 870 people, operates a fleet of over 470

vehicles and uses its own advanced Transport Management System to provide visibility and performance across customer supply chains. "These investments have allowed us to continually raise the standard of service we provide to our customers."

Customer-led logistics remains the strategy

Rather than offering standardised logistics products, the company continues to build tailored supply chain solutions around individual customer requirements.

"At SMSA, there are no off-the-shelf solutions because no two businesses are the same. We believe in rolling up our sleeves, listening to our customers' needs and understanding their unique challenges and developing tailor-made, 360-degree logistics solutions that create measurable value."

Ungerer said this philosophy has underpinned the company's growth since inception and explains why many customers have remained with the business for more than two decades.

The group's services today include contract logistics, dedicated fleet distribution, local and cross-border transport, abnormal load handling, supply chain optimisation and warehouse solutions.

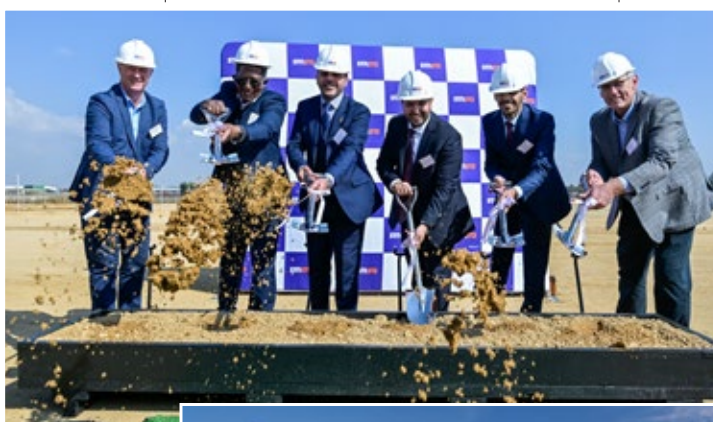
A foundation for future growth

For Ungerer, the new development represents considerably more than additional warehouse space. "This facility is far more than bricks, mortar, steel and concrete. It represents our belief in the future. It represents our confidence in our people, our customers, and the economies of the region we serve."

He said the investment will significantly expand operational capability, increase capacity, improve efficiencies and create additional opportunities through a new third-party logistics warehouse. "It will

Breaking ground

▼ Breaking ground, from left: Louis Ungerer (SMSA managing director), Veli Mokoena (Ninathi Holdings), Slaiman Alhomidan (South-South East Africa commercial Attaché), Naif Al-Athel (chairman of the SMSA Group who also serves as the chairman of the Saudi Arabia South Africa Business Council (SASABC), Mohammed Almatairy (Saudi Arabia head of economic affairs) and Dirk Uys (SMSA).



He highlighted the company's partnership with Ninathi Holdings, its 26% equity ownership by black-owned enterprises, Level 2 B-BBEE status and continued investment in bursaries, learnerships, training and enterprise development initiatives.

He also pointed to the successful completion of the company's ISO 9001:2015 certification audit as further evidence of SMSA's commitment to quality management, continuous improvement and customer satisfaction.

Building the next chapter

Closing the ceremony, Ungerer said the development represents an investment in both the business and the wider Southern African economy.

"As we stand here today, we are not simply breaking ground. We are laying the foundation for future



Expansive Facilities

▲ The new facility includes a 10 000 m² warehouse, 2 790 m² of semi-basement office area, 2 664 m² of offices, a 2 115 m² workshop and a 3 235 m² warehouse extension.

enable us to better support our customers as they expand their own businesses, while positioning SMSA for the next chapter of its journey."

Transformation and quality remain key priorities

Ungerer said the project also reflects SMSA's ongoing commitment to transformation and sustainable growth through enterprise development, skills development and broader economic participation.

opportunities. We are creating capacity for future growth. We are investing in future jobs. And we are strengthening our ability to connect businesses, communities, and economies across Southern Africa."

Thanking customers, employees, shareholders and business partners, he reflected on how far the business has come since its founding in 2002.

"The dream that started in 2002 has grown beyond what many of us could have imagined. Yet today is not the destination. It is the beginning of our next chapter. Together, we look forward to building a facility that will support our ambitions, strengthen our service offering, and enable us to continue delivering logistics solutions built for growth." □



SA needs to accelerate transport reform

While South Africa's rail and port recovery activates, the road freight industry continues to sustain the country's logistics momentum. Trucks remain the backbone of national supply chains, keeping freight moving despite years of infrastructure underperformance. Speaking at the 2026 Southern African Transport Conference (SATC), Transport Minister Barbara Creecy warned that unless South Africa accelerates

transport reform, neighbouring countries stand ready to capitalise on the country's logistics weaknesses.

Adapt or be left behind as neighbours seize opportunities

South Africa's logistics weaknesses have made the country vulnerable - and neighbours are ready to exploit the situation. That was the warning from Transport Minister Barbara Creecy during her opening address at the 2026 Southern

▲ "Years of under-investment in logistics infrastructure and the post-pandemic downturn in rail and port performance have led to increased competition from our neighbours, who threaten to capitalise on our logistics vulnerabilities." – Transport Minister Barbara Creecy.

African Transport Conference, held under the theme "Developing and Sustaining Transport Systems in an Uncertain World."

She said transport failures have moved beyond operational inconvenience and now threaten trade, jobs and national competitiveness.

"These disruptions ripple through passenger journeys, freight movements and the efficiency of supply chains that support our economy. When transport faces disruption, market efficiencies are compromised and the sector's capacity to add value to goods, to jobs and to social well-being is undermined," she said.

Creecy's strongest warning centred on South Africa's declining logistics competitiveness. "In the South African context, years of under-investment in logistics infrastructure and the post-pandemic downturn in rail and port performance have led to increased competition from our neighbours, who threaten to capitalise on our logistics vulnerabilities," she said.

Rail reform takes centre stage

Creecy said rail and port reform now sit "at the centre of government's agenda for the transport sector", with restoring rail freight forming a key objective.

"Our ambitious reforms in the rail space seek to re-establish rail as the backbone of the freight logistics system," she said.

She argued that shifting freight from road to rail would improve safety, reduce congestion and cut emissions. "Increased utilisation of rail transport enhances road safety, decreases congestion on our roads, reduces wear and tear on road surfaces, and, critically, is responsible for lower CO₂ emissions."

A major milestone has been the opening of the national rail network to private operators, with 11 private Train Operating Companies approved earlier this year.

"These TOCs will bring their expertise and capital to rail operations, whilst the network will remain state-owned and belong to the people of South Africa," Creecy said. Operations are expected to begin in April 2027.

"These operators will contribute significantly to government's objective of moving 250 million tonnes of freight on the Transnet rail network by 2030," she added.

Passenger rail recovery continues

Creecy said passenger rail is steadily recovering after the severe decline experienced during the Covid pandemic and following widespread infrastructure vandalism.

She said 35 of 40 priority rail corridors have now been restored.

"In the 2020/21 financial year,



If we do not adapt to the current geopolitical realities, we will be left behind.

Barbara Creecy
Minister of Transport

in the immediate aftermath of the Covid pandemic and widespread vandalism and destruction of rail infrastructure, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) recorded 10 million passenger trips. By the end of the 2025/26 financial year, 101 million passenger trips were recorded." Government's target is to restore passenger volumes to 600 million trips annually by 2030/31.

She also highlighted the introduction of the locally manufactured blue Isitimela Sabantu "People's Train". "The provision of passenger rail to working-class South Africans is a socioeconomic imperative."

Technology, energy and digital transformation

Creecy said future transport planning must also embrace cleaner energy and digital technologies.

"Underpinning our current reform agenda is the notion that we cannot

continue with a business-as-usual approach to the challenges we face. If we do not adapt to the current geopolitical realities with which we are confronted, we will be left behind."

She cited developments including the Ngqura Liquid Gas Terminal, the Boegoebaai Port project, green hydrogen initiatives and sustainable aviation fuels as examples of transport's growing role in South Africa's energy transition.

Government is also working towards a fully digitised transport platform. "At a broader level, the Department and its 20 entities will work together to develop a single digitised transport sector platform that will host all online permitting services through a common citizen interface," she said.

Reform must now become delivery

Creecy concluded by stressing that policy alone will not be enough, calling for sustained cooperation between government, industry and investors.

"I reiterate our collective vision: a transport system that is integrated, sustainable, resilient and inclusive; that strengthens our economy, safeguards our environment, and serves all South Africans with dignity and efficiency. The road ahead will demand steadfast leadership, prudent policy, and sustained investment. With your partnership, we can deliver a transport future that is robust against uncertainty and beneficial to every citizen." □

Editor's Comment: For the road freight industry, the Minister's message reinforces a reality operators have lived with for years. Trucks continue to carry the overwhelming share of South Africa's freight while rail recovery gathers momentum. If the promised reforms materialise, logistics operators stand to benefit from a more balanced freight network. The challenge now shifts from announcing reforms to delivering them.

OPINION PIECE

ALCOHOL LIMITS

Can South Africa really enforce a 0% alcohol limit?

With South Africa moving closer to a 0% alcohol tolerance policy for drivers, the legislative intent is clear: eliminate the dangerous guesswork surrounding current limits and reduce a national road toll that claims around 14 000 lives annually.

However, changing the law will not change driver behaviour on its own. South Africa can have the strictest laws in the world but without a systematic overhaul of how the laws are enforced, drivers simply will not self-enforce.



By Rhys Evans
Managing Director of
ALCO-Safe



Stricter legislation is not a magic fix for road fatalities. That would be like saying that dropping the speed limit from 120 km/h to 100 km/h will immediately stop people speeding; it will not happen without a fundamental shift in enforcement attitude, training, and consistency through roadside testing.

The critical need for operational alignment

The policy intention behind zero tolerance is undeniable but our current roadside infrastructure is simply not equipped for the precision it demands. Enforcing an absolute zero limit removes any margin for error, meaning everyday consumer products or common health conditions like GERD can trigger low-level readings. Handling such edge cases requires a level of procedural clarity and technological accuracy that South African traffic management has yet to establish.

This creates a major operational roadblock. State pathology laboratories view blood tests as

the gold standard for criminal prosecution but these labs typically only report a positive result from 0.010% upwards. Anything below that is reported as a negative test - i.e. a 0.000% Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) level.

If the legal limit is zero but the scientific reporting threshold for blood confirmation is 0.010%, an immediate prosecution gap emerges. The human liver removes alcohol at a rate of approximately 0.020% per hour. If an officer arrests a driver who registers a result of 0.020%, authorities have a maximum window of 30 minutes to transport that driver to a district surgeon, wait for a trained practitioner and draw a blood sample before the trace naturally clears the system.

Practically, the chance of securing a scientifically confirmed positive blood test under these conditions is low. Without addressing this gap, thousands of drivers could screen positive at the roadside but fail to confirm positive in a state lab. This mismatch will lead to a waste

OPINION PIECE

ALCOHOL LIMITS

of state resources, clogged police stations and a total breakdown in public buy-in for the law.

Addressing the training and corruption gap

To prevent this critical policy from failing, we must urgently address the fact that traffic officers are currently ill-prepared for zero-tolerance implementation. Most enforcement officers have not had sufficient breathalyser competency training, alcohol theory training, or education on how alcohol metabolises in the body. Without comprehensive training covering the scientific, practical and procedural legalities of testing, officers will struggle to differentiate true impairment from external variables.

An absolute zero policy that cannot be consistently verified on the ground creates a high-stakes environment ripe for roadside exploitation.

If traffic officers rely on subjective indicators like smell rather than precise, unalterable digital data, the potential for driver intimidation spikes dramatically. Because a 0.00% limit carries immediate criminal

consequences, sober drivers can easily be pressured into paying bribes to avoid wrongful arrest resulting from a false positive. To prevent a spike in corruption, the law must be enforced through objective data, not officer discretion.

The path to credible enforcement

To move beyond symbolism and build a credible system that genuinely protects road users, South Africa must pair strict laws with objective technology and consistent, year-round policing enforcement metrics. True accountability requires technology that extends beyond the breathalyser itself to eliminate roadside corruption. The solution lies in recorded interactions via body cameras worn by officers during roadblocks. When officers know their communication and testing procedures are captured on concrete footage, the opportunity for bribery disappears and public trust in the system is restored.

Additionally, South Africa must shift from reactive, seasonal policing to sustained, everyday

enforcement by introducing data-driven performance indicators. This can be achieved by setting clear performance targets per precinct. If every officer is mandated to conduct a specific, audited number of tests per month, verified by downloading the internal memory of the breathalyser devices, testing becomes a daily operational requirement rather than a holiday novelty.

A zero-tolerance policy - while unrealistic at 0.000% BAC, but realistic at 0.020% BAC - has the potential to save thousands of South African lives but only if the enforcement strategy contains zero ambiguity. Without an immediate investment in officer training, verifiable technology and objective operational targets, this change in the law will fail to change driver behaviour. □

Editor's Comment: In South Africa, the legal alcohol limit for truck drivers - who are classified as professional drivers - is 0.02g per 100ml of blood. This is lower than the limit for regular drivers.



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IMESA calls for young engineering talent

South Africa's infrastructure challenges are often framed in terms of deteriorating roads, failing water systems, unreliable electricity supply and growing maintenance backlogs. Yet one of the root causes receives far less attention: the shortage of engineering skills within local government.

Recently the Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa (IMESA) has called for greater focus on attracting and developing the next generation of municipal engineers, warning that the country's ability to deliver services, support economic growth and build climate resilience will depend heavily on the technical talent entering the profession today.

"Municipal engineering is one of the few sectors where engineers can see the direct impact of their work on people's daily lives," says Bhavna Soni, Operations Director: Young Professionals and Membership at IMESA.

"Every road, water treatment works, pump station, stormwater system and sanitation project contributes directly to economic development and community wellbeing. If we want to improve service delivery and infrastructure performance, we need to inspire

more young people to see municipal engineering as a career of choice."

Indeed, for South Africa's economic bloodstream, the road freight industry, reliable roads and bridges, functional stormwater systems, water networks and municipal services are essential for efficient and safe trucking operations.

Addressing a growing skills shortage

Industry bodies have for years warned of a critical shortage of engineers, engineering technologists and technicians in South Africa. Estimates suggest the country faces a deficit of as many as 60 000 engineering professionals, while universities continue to produce fewer graduates than the economy requires in several scarce-skills disciplines.

Competition for engineering talent has intensified as sectors such as energy, information technology, manufacturing and consulting offer attractive career opportunities and remuneration packages. Municipalities, despite their central role in delivering essential services, often struggle to compete for the same pool of graduates.

To help address this challenge, IMESA is expanding its Young

If we want to improve service delivery and infrastructure we need to inspire our youth to choose municipal engineering as a career choice.

Bhavna Soni
Operations Director
IMESA

Professionals Portfolio, known as YP², a programme aimed at developing young engineering talent through mentorship, leadership development, technical learning and professional networking opportunities. Originally launched in KwaZulu-Natal, the initiative is now being rolled out nationally under Soni's leadership.

Young professionals experiencing the challenge first-hand

Those already working within local government say the shortage of engineering capacity is becoming increasingly evident.

"It often results in increased workloads and the need to manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously," says Dhiveshni Naidu, Chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal YP² Committee and Senior Civil Engineer at eThekweni Water and Sanitation.

"Developing young engineers and investing in mentorship and training is a growing imperative to improve service delivery and ensure the long-term sustainability of our municipalities."

Lenesh Sukhlal, YP² Committee member and Area Manager in the Wastewater Planning Branch at eThekweni Municipality, describes similar experiences. "In many instances, I have had to take on responsibilities that would typically be managed by multiple engineers," he says.

Despite these challenges, both professionals remain convinced that municipal engineering offers one of the most rewarding careers available to young engineers because of its direct impact on communities.

Infrastructure that changes lives

For many young professionals, the attraction of municipal engineering lies in the opportunity to improve people's lives through infrastructure.

Water design technologist Ntokozo Mjwara says the profession creates a direct connection between engineering and community wellbeing.

"Whether it is water, sanitation, roads or stormwater systems, these are services people rely on every single day," she says. "Seeing communities benefit from completed projects reminds you that engineering is not only about technical designs and calculations but about improving people's quality of life."

"Something as simple as people being able to open a tap and have

access to clean running water brings such joy. Moments like that are inspiring and uplifting."

Civil Engineering Technologist at eThekweni Municipality Zlungile Memela says municipal engineering often offers a broader range of experience than many graduates initially expect.

"It is never just laying a pipe and supplying water," she says. "It is reservoirs, pump stations, planning, budgets and stakeholder engagement. Municipal engineering allows young graduates to tackle diverse, community-focused projects while gaining broad experience."

Those already working in local government say the shortage of engineering capacity is becoming increasingly evident.



YP² Committee member Nkanyezi Mdlalose says his interest in civil engineering was sparked by the infrastructure development that preceded the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

"I would advise graduates that municipal engineering is a rewarding path to choose as a civil engineer as you become a vital part of the communities you work in by providing engineering solutions that improve lives," he says.

Strengthening the talent pipeline

Alongside mentorship and professional development, IMESA is also strengthening relationships with universities. In 2025, the organisation's KwaZulu-Natal

branch sponsored the IMESA Floating Trophy and a cash prize for the Best Design Project Award at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Undergraduate Civil Engineering Symposium.

The programme is now being expanded to additional tertiary institutions, with final-year awards being developed to encourage engineering excellence and strengthen links between academia and industry.

"We are committed to building stronger relationships with universities and creating opportunities for students to engage with the profession before they graduate," says Soni.

South Africa's infrastructure future will depend not only on funding and project delivery, but also on the availability of the engineers needed to design, build and maintain the systems that support communities and economic growth.

"The young engineers entering the profession today will shape the future of South Africa's infrastructure for decades to come. That is an extraordinary responsibility, but also an extraordinary opportunity," concludes Soni. □

Editor's Comment: The trucking industry's conversation about roads, logistics corridors and infrastructure investment is important, but perhaps greater attention should be paid to the people who make those assets possible. South Africa's infrastructure challenge is also a talent challenge. Developing a new generation of municipal engineers may not grab attention in the same way as a major road upgrade, but the long-term impact could be even greater. For trucking, logistics and the broader economy, investing in young engineering talent is ultimately an investment in the infrastructure backbone that keeps freight flowing and communities functioning.



Strengthen delivery

◀ The program is designed to help humanitarian organisations strengthen operational readiness, reduce delays and improve the efficiency of aid delivery before emergencies occur.

Operational readiness

▼ DAHL converts DHL's logistics expertise into practical, pro bono training for nonprofit organisations, with a particular focus on local and regional responders.

Humanitarian logistics academy launched by DHL



The humanitarian sector's growing exposure to climate shocks, protracted crises and complex supply chain constraints has placed renewed focus on logistics capability as a critical enabler of effective disaster response. In light of these challenges, DHL Group has launched the DHL Academy of Humanitarian Logistics (DAHL), a global capacity-building programme aimed at strengthening practical logistics skills among humanitarian organisations.

The initiative forms part of DHL Group's wider GoHelp corporate citizenship programme and was officially introduced in Sub-Saharan Africa at a launch event in

Johannesburg. The rollout brings humanitarian organisations together for hands-on training focused on core operational disciplines including customs processes, dangerous goods handling, packaging standards and safety procedures.

Building practical logistics capability before disasters strike

DAHL is designed to convert DHL's global logistics expertise into structured, pro bono training for non-profit organisations, with a particular emphasis on local and regional responders.

The aim is to improve preparedness, reduce operational

delays and strengthen the efficiency of aid delivery before emergencies occur rather than during crisis response.

"Humanitarian needs are becoming more complex and more frequent, driven by a combination of climate-related events, protracted crises and evolving risk environments," said Christoph Selig, Vice President Sustainability Communications and Programs at DHL Group.

"At the same time, the humanitarian system is shifting toward more anticipatory approaches and stronger local ownership. In this context, logistics plays a central role in enabling aid to move efficiently and reach those

who need it most. With the DHL Academy of Humanitarian Logistics, we are building on our experience in disaster response and preparedness to strengthen practical capabilities across the sector and support more effective, locally driven operations.”

Extending a 20-year disaster response framework

DAHL becomes the third pillar of DHL Group’s GoHelp programme, which has been active in disaster response and preparedness for more than two decades. The existing framework includes Disaster Response Teams, which deploy logistics specialists into crisis zones, and the Get Airports Ready for Disaster initiative, which supports airport preparedness in high-risk regions.

The academy builds on this structure by shifting focus further upstream, enabling humanitarian organisations to strengthen their own logistics capability and operate more independently and efficiently in the field.

Strong uptake signals demand for logistics training

The programme has already been

piloted globally, with more than 650 participants from over 80 non-governmental organisations trained across multiple sessions. Feedback indicates that 96% of participants rated the training as valuable, highlighting a clear demand for practical, applied logistics expertise within the humanitarian sector.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the rollout will include training sessions across multiple countries in 2026, including South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Ghana and Nigeria, reflecting the region’s increasing exposure to complex humanitarian logistics challenges.

Strengthening local response capacity

George Wood, Director Customer Operations Sub-Saharan Africa at DHL Express and an active GoHelp volunteer, said the programme is designed to build on the strengths already present within local response ecosystems.

“Sub-Saharan Africa presents both significant logistical challenges and some of the most resourceful and adaptive response environments,” said Wood. “We consistently see how local

humanitarian organisations innovate and respond under pressure, often with limited resources. By further equipping these organisations with practical, hands-on logistics knowledge, we can help strengthen preparedness and improve the efficiency of response operations on the ground.”

Hands-on training model focused on real-world logistics

DAHL offers a flexible delivery model that includes in-person workshops, virtual learning, warehouse assessments and e-learning modules. Training is delivered by experienced DHL logistics professionals and provided free of charge to ensure accessibility for organisations regardless of size or resource constraints.

The Johannesburg launch marks a key milestone in the global expansion of the academy, reinforcing DHL Group’s broader objective of using logistics expertise to support humanitarian systems and improve disaster readiness through practical, scalable capability building. □



GoHelp Team

▲ DHL Group’s wider GoHelp corporate citizenship programme was officially introduced in Sub-Saharan Africa at a launch event in Johannesburg.



Fastway Couriers franchise model tackles jobs crisis

While heavy transport often grabs the headlines, the phenomenal growth in online shopping has seen a boom in courier services and it is this sector that is quietly underpinning thousands of small businesses, owner-drivers and last-mile delivery operators who keep the economy moving every day.

As renewed emphasis is being placed on youth employment and entrepreneurship, scalable franchise models offer one practical route into business ownership - particularly for those without access to significant capital. With South Africa facing a deepening jobs crisis, Fastway Couriers says the courier industry can serve as a practical, scalable pathway into entrepreneurship and employment.

"We see ourselves as part of the solution when it comes to job creation in South Africa,"

says Ivashni Manikkam, General Manager: National Operations at Fastway Couriers. "As a business built on entrepreneurship and local ownership, our franchise model is designed to create opportunities for individuals to own and grow sustainable businesses within their communities."

Fastway currently operates a network of 259 owner-drivers and contractors, almost 500 courier franchisees running approximately 559 vehicles across franchised territories nationwide, supported by 16 regional franchisees and approximately 15 satellite hubs. The company says its network has expanded by 30% over the past 24 months.

Growth extends beyond franchise owners

According to the company, each courier franchise supports additional employment beyond the

We see **ourselves** as part of the solution when it comes to **job creation** in SA.

Ivashni Manikkam
General Manager
National Operations
Fastway Couriers

Job Creation ◀▼

Fastway currently operates a network of 259 owner-drivers and contractors, almost 500 courier franchisees running approximately 559 vehicles across franchised territories nationwide.



owner. Most operations employ at least one authorised driver, while around half employ two or more people to handle growing delivery volumes. At regional franchise level, approximately 390 staff are employed across the depot network.

"Every Regional Franchise and satellite hub supports drivers, administrative staff, suppliers, and service providers. This means that as our network grows, so too does our contribution to local economic activity and employment," says Manikkam.

Lower barriers to business ownership

Fastway says one of the strengths of its model is that prospective franchisees do not require the significant infrastructure investment associated with many traditional franchise businesses.

"The franchise and start-up costs are significantly lower than

many traditional franchise sectors,” explains Manikkam. “Courier franchisees are not expected to build premises or invest in extensive infrastructure. By lowering the capital barrier to entry while providing the backing of a national network, Fastway enables more South Africans to participate in business ownership and job creation.”

Applicants are selected on entrepreneurial potential, customer service commitment and operational capability rather than previous courier industry experience.

Franchisees receive access to operating systems, proprietary technology, national sales and marketing support, training and ongoing business development.

From contractor to franchise owner

Fastway says some of its strongest success stories have come from contractors who initially entered the business with little more than a bakkie before progressing to franchise ownership. As they established reliable delivery operations and consistent revenue, they were able to acquire the territories they serviced through incremental ownership while continuing to operate.

“We have seen some of our greatest success stories from franchisees who have bought territories in high-risk and informal areas. Often areas they either grew up in or still live in, thereby giving them a natural advantage in those communities,” says Manikkam.

She adds that successful franchisees come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including banking, corporate careers and sales but are united by a strong entrepreneurial drive. “Our most successful franchisees share a similar focus: a strong entrepreneurial mindset, a willingness to engage with their local business community and the determination to grow through service excellence.”

Supporting SME growth

The company also believes its impact extends beyond direct



We have seen some of our greatest success stories from franchisees who have bought territories in high-risk and informal areas. They have either grown-up or still live in these areas, giving them a natural advantage.

Ivashni Manikkam
General Manager
National Operations
Fastway Couriers

employment by helping small businesses expand through affordable nationwide delivery.

“For SMEs, logistics can be one of the biggest barriers to growth,” notes Manikkam. “By making nationwide delivery more accessible and cost-effective, Fastway helps entrepreneurs expand their customer base beyond their immediate geographic area, increase sales and scale their operations. As these businesses grow, they create additional jobs in areas such as sales, warehousing, administration, customer service, manufacturing and distribution.”

Looking ahead, Manikkam says greater collaboration between industry, business and government will be needed to maximise the sector’s employment potential.

“The courier industry is far more than a delivery service. It is a platform for entrepreneurship, economic inclusion and job creation. Every franchise opened, every depot expanded and every small business enabled through logistics creates a multiplier effect that supports employment and economic growth.

“The greatest opportunity lies in stronger collaboration between government, the private sector and industry to build pathways from unemployment into meaningful participation in the economy.” □

Editor’s Comment: South Africa’s logistics sector has long been recognised as an economic enabler, but Fastway Couriers’ route to job creation and empowerment highlights another important role - creating pathways into business ownership. While major fleet investments and warehouse developments remain vital, last-mile delivery networks are proving equally important in expanding employment, particularly for young entrepreneurs and SMEs. In an economy where jobs remain scarce, every successful franchise adds capacity not only to the logistics industry but also to the wider supply chain that depends on reliable transport to grow.



The power of one - job

▲ Kwanele Sibisi, one of Hyundai Automotive South Africa's Commercial Assembly Plant top-performing assembly technicians. "I have always been fascinated by the engineering field and wanted to be involved in creating something people depend on every day."

With South Africa's unemployment rate climbing to 32.7% in the first quarter of 2026 - leaving 8.1 million people without work - the pressure on South Africa to move beyond statements and deliver real economic participation has never been greater.

The dire situation of jobless youngsters was spotlighted in many quarters during June's Youth Month and in all honesty, the situation seems daunting. However, to throw some light onto the table, *FleetWatch* is carrying this story of a young lady who joined Hyundai Automotive South Africa's Commercial Assembly Plant in 2024 through the Youth Employment Service (YES) programme and has risen to great heights in the company. It's all about the Power of One.

Behind every Hyundai H100 and EX8 truck that rolls out of Hyundai Automotive South Africa's Commercial Assembly Plant, is a team of skilled technicians dedicated to quality and precision. Among them is Kwanele Sibisi, one of the facility's top-performing assembly technicians.

Since joining the plant in 2024,

the Newcastle-born technician has helped assemble more than 2 000 vehicles while consistently achieving high-level performance ratings. It is an impressive achievement in a field where accuracy and attention to detail are critical to ensuring vehicles meet Hyundai's quality standards before reaching customers.

Sibisi works on the assembly line where semi-knocked-down vehicle kits are transformed into fully assembled commercial vehicles destined for businesses across South Africa. Her responsibilities include fitting, inspecting and verifying components throughout the assembly process.

For someone who has always been fascinated by engineering, working in vehicle manufacturing has proven to be rewarding. "I have always been fascinated by the engineering field and wanted to be involved in creating something people depend on every day," said Sibisi.

"Nothing fulfils me more than seeing Hyundai commercial vehicles on the road and knowing they are helping businesses operate and supporting entrepreneurship. It gives me a real sense of pride because I understand the work, care and attention to detail that goes into assembling each vehicle."

The Benoni-based Plant has assembled more than 22 000 vehicles since commencing operations in 2013. The facility currently produces key commercial models including the Hyundai H100 and EX8, with the Hyundai GT11 6-ton truck set to join the line-up later this year.

For Sibisi, quality remains one

of the most important aspects of her role. "Quality control is not something I compromise on. Every vehicle that leaves the assembly line represents teamwork, pride and responsibility. I always strive to ensure that my work meets the highest standards possible," she said.

According to Murge Mathapershad, General Manager of the Plant, Sibisi's performance reflects the discipline required to maintain quality throughout the production process. "Quality is at the heart of everything we do and the standards required in vehicle assembly are extremely high."

"Kwanele's consistency, focus and attention to detail have made her one of our standout assembly technicians. Her contribution highlights the importance of skilled people in delivering products that customers can depend on."

One job given. One Super Star results. The Power of One. □

Editor's Comment: Statistics can either be encouraging or disheartening. When they are too high, one is left almost in despair thinking there's nothing one can do about it. When they are low, one would perhaps think so what's problem. *FleetWatch* has always acted on the Power of One - one crash is one too many; one hijacking is one too many; one road death is one too many. One job, however, is not one too many. This story proves that to be true.

FUSO expands regional skills development

As truck technology rapidly evolves - particularly in the fields of electrification, diagnostics and connected vehicles - dealer capability is becoming as important as the vehicles themselves. FUSO has strengthened its support for distributors across Africa and the Middle East with the launch of a dedicated regional training centre in Dubai, aimed at improving technical expertise, service quality and vehicle uptime throughout the network.

FUSO Academy Dubai opens its doors

The new FUSO Academy Dubai regional training centre has been established by Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation (MFTBC). The facility will support capability development across the company's distributor and dealer network throughout the Middle East and Africa (MEA).

Operated by FUSO Commercial Vehicles Middle East & Africa FZE, MFTBC's regional office responsible for truck and bus operations across the region, the academy serves as a hub for both technical and non-technical training.

The centre follows globally consistent training standards set by FUSO Academy, MFTBC's global training headquarters, while tailoring programmes to the specific requirements of Middle Eastern and African markets.

Preparing the network for future technologies

Covering approximately 362m², the facility includes two classrooms



▲ The 362 m² facility includes two classrooms equipped for electric vehicle training, a dedicated sales and soft skills training room and an e-Lab focused on diagnostics and electrical systems training.

equipped for electric vehicle training, a dedicated sales and soft skills training room and an E-Lab focused on diagnostics and electrical systems training. The academy combines classroom instruction with practical, hands-on learning.

The launch follows MFTBC's transition to a fully stand-alone regional operating model on 1 April 2026 after separating from Daimler Truck AG and becoming part of the newly formed ARCHION Group. The training centre forms part of the company's strategy to strengthen regional capability development and support future business growth.

Training programmes will cater for technicians, service advisers, sales staff and management teams, helping improve service quality, operational efficiency and technical competence as advanced vehicle technologies - including zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) - become more widely deployed across the region.

According to MFTBC, the academy is expected to contribute to faster vehicle diagnostics, higher repair quality, improved preventive maintenance and stronger support for advanced vehicle technologies, ultimately maximising vehicle uptime and customer satisfaction.

The company says the investment



▲ The new FUSO Academy Dubai will support capability development across the company's distributor and dealer network throughout the Middle East and Africa.

reinforces its commitment to building a capable, future-ready distributor network across the Middle East and Africa while supporting long-term business growth. □

Editor's Comment: South Africa remains one of FUSO's key markets in Africa, making investment in regional technical capability particularly relevant. As commercial vehicles become increasingly software-driven and electrified, access to specialist training will play an increasingly important role in reducing downtime, improving first-time repair rates and ensuring dealer networks are prepared to support the next generation of commercial vehicles.



◀ With lockable tool storage and a spacious rear cargo bed, the Rizon service combo body is a first-of-its-kind configuration on a battery-electric chassis.

▼ "Commercial vehicle customers have been asking for an electric truck that doesn't require them to change how they work. This new combo body delivers the familiar functionality fleets rely on, now on a zero-emission Rizon chassis." - Alex Voets, general manager of Rizon USA.

Rizon expands electric truck capability

The transition to electric trucks is increasingly about practicality rather than propulsion and in this arena, overseas developments are proving this to be true. As fleet operators look for battery-electric vehicles that can perform the same vocational tasks as their diesel counterparts, manufacturers are focusing on application-specific body solutions. US-based Rizon's latest service combo body is aimed squarely at that market, giving utilities, municipalities and service fleets a zero-emission platform without compromising operational functionality.



Secure storage meets versatile load-carrying capability

Rizon has unveiled a new service combo body for its all-electric commercial truck range, combining lockable tool storage with a spacious rear cargo bed in what the manufacturer describes as a first-of-its-kind configuration for its battery-electric chassis.

The body has been designed to support a wide range of vocational applications, offering customers the ability to transport tools, equipment and materials while maintaining the functionality expected from a traditional service vehicle. ▶ 104

Commercial vehicle customers have been asking for an electric truck that doesn't require them to change how they work.



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► 102 According to Alex Voets, general manager of Rizon USA, the objective was to eliminate compromises often associated with electric commercial vehicles.

"Commercial vehicle customers have been asking for an electric truck that doesn't require them to change how they work. This new combo body delivers the familiar functionality fleets rely on, now on a zero-emission Rizon chassis."

The configurable body can accommodate a variety of vocational equipment including cranes, ladder racks, generators, lift gates and work lighting, allowing operators to tailor vehicles to specific applications without sacrificing payload or usability.

Designed for vocational fleets

The new body is expected to appeal to municipalities, utility companies, maintenance contractors, telecommunications providers and infrastructure service businesses seeking to electrify their fleets while retaining the capabilities of conventional service vehicles.

Rizon says the combination body has been engineered to integrate seamlessly with its all-electric chassis, giving operators a practical zero-emission alternative for everyday field operations.

Purchase incentives available

In the United States, eligible Rizon customers can benefit from substantial government incentives. The trucks currently qualify for California's Clean Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) and Washington State's Zero-Emission Incentive Program (WAZIP), with point-of-sale vouchers ranging from US\$60 000 to US\$130 000 depending on programme eligibility. That's huge.

Growing electric truck portfolio

Rizon's Class 4 and Class 5 battery-electric trucks offer gross vehicle weights from 15,995 lb to 18,850 lb (7.3 tons to 8.6 tons).

The M-size variant, equipped

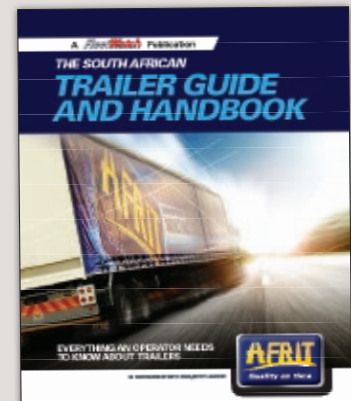
with two battery packs, offers a range of up to 177 km, while the L-size version, fitted with three battery packs, extends range to as much as 257 km under standard test conditions.

The trucks support both DC fast charging via CCS1 connectors and Level 2 AC charging through J1772 connectors, providing fleets with charging flexibility across different operating environments.

Rizon also highlights its proprietary RizonConnect connectivity platform, integrated active safety systems, comprehensive warranty and financing options as part of its overall ownership offering. □

Editor's Comment: While Rizon's new service combo body has been developed for the North American market, it illustrates an important trend for commercial vehicle manufacturers worldwide. Fleet electrification will depend not only on battery technology and charging infrastructure, but on offering vocational bodies that allow operators to transition to zero-emission vehicles without changing established work practices. As South Africa's municipal and utility fleets begin evaluating electric truck options, application-specific body configurations such as these are likely to become increasingly relevant. Perhaps our government can also take note of the incentives being offered to buyers of these trucks in the USA. We need some form of incentives for our local South African operators who want to transition to zero-emission trucks. It's not just about the operator and the OEM benefitting. It's also - perhaps more - about securing a future for our planet and all who live on it.

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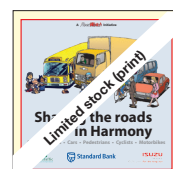
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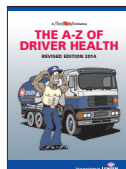
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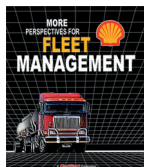


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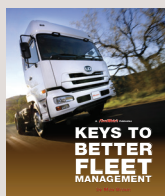
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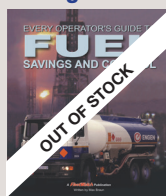
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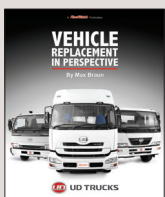


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