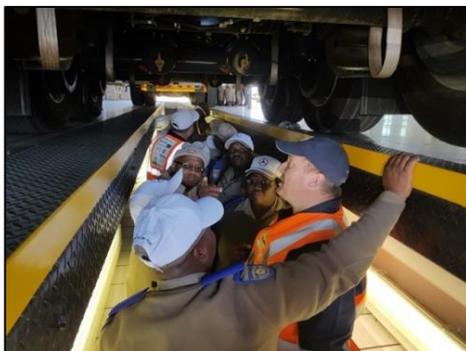
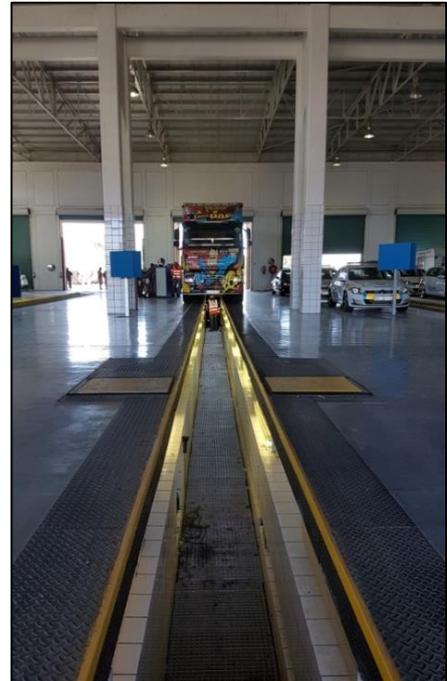




The Lengau vehicle test centre in Bloemfontein providing the venue for the day two practical session. The facilities are quite amazing in respect of the venue being in very good condition and having two brake roller testers available along with multiple linked inspection pit facilities. These serviced by what can only be described as massive parking and holding facilities. This noted, it has to be said that it is hoped that more extensive use of these facilities is made going forward, where the traffic officers trained should be inspecting and testing far more vehicles, in particular heavy vehicles.

Managing a large group of attendees, to ensure that they are all provided with the necessary opportunity to be guided and trained hands on through the various stations, each station manned by the various specialist, is no easy task no matter how co-operative. Splitting the officers into five groups, supported by a guiding team leader ensured that each group is guided through each specialist station. The session starts with the inspection of an exemplar vehicle, with each specialist undertaking a guiding and hands on inspection of “*how it should be*” on the perfect vehicle.

Moving on, one of the officers accompanied by a specialist randomly pulling off a series of vehicles and directing them back to the test centre for complete examination. Although a training session to assist the officers in the learning, the process follows the law, with any transgressions resulting in proper procedure followed by the officers, resulting in vehicles suspended and/or fined accordingly. With so many officers available, assisted and guided by the specialist, it would be fair



to say that the unfortunate vehicles pulled off for inspection were in for a merciless inspection. Each team provided with a comprehensive inspection form that not only highlights a complete inspection list, but provides the associated National Road Traffic Act laws and standards of the inspection. This is a welcome assistance to the officers who, although you may expect to know these, cannot possibly have the combined knowledge and experience of the trainers.



The vehicles having been put through the five different stations, of Lights and external, Tyre station, Brake station, Brake Roller test and pit inspection resulted in an all too common 80% failure rate. This included vehicles of large, well established & run companies.





simply astounds. This is arguably indicative of the general mind set and state of the heavy vehicle transport industry. The usual lunch provided brought about a welcome break for most, allowing a short reflection on the vehicles and problems identified, followed by a last session of completing the inspections.



The range of faults identified was once again wide, with all the usual general issues from cracked windscreens and lights not working. This extended to the catastrophic and downright shocking issues of wholly worn brake shoes, broken brake shoes, incorrect boosters, incorrect slack adjusters, massively cracked chassis and fifth wheels, loose bolts on fifth wheels, illegal tyre conditions, missing landing leg handles and specification tags for the chassis and brake specifications, to mention but a few.

Once again, in conversation with one of the drivers and notably the driver of the vehicle found in the worst condition of all; the suggested “driver abuse” in respect of the hours driven and general lack of backup and general care of the driver, raised its head. With vehicles suspended, impounded and fined, conversation with some of the owners is often an interesting affair. The usual pleading of utter ignorance, or denial of some issue and in some cases abusive commentary to the vehicles being pulled off, tested and facing the law

Reaching the end of the session, one final test consisting of a series of questions and answers to the five selected officers nominated by their peers as the best performing representative of the five teams. Stepping up to face the gauntlet, the prize an Accident Investigation and inspection kit provided by Accident Specialist.





Yet another highly successful Brake and Tyre Watch training session put on by Patrick O'Leary and his team from Fleetwatch along with the various role players, with a further session later in 2017.

As I have mentioned before, this initiative is crucial, how it is not supported even further by critical role is absolutely beyond comprehension. Nonetheless, it is this kind of initiative that provides so much pride and a sense of personal achievement to all involved, and is exactly what is meant when it is said, Make a positive difference in your own way, where you can.

Safe driving.

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