

# Intelligent Transport System makes a difference

Responding to incidents promptly on freeways can save lives.



A variable message sign on the Gauteng Freeway network. *Image supplied*

As road safety remains to be a major challenge globally, South Africa continues to prioritise the safety of all road users throughout the countrywide network. The South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) in partnership with local law enforcement authorities, provincial governments, and various agencies from the department of transport has adopted a sophisticated approach to road safety management.

The Intelligent Transport System (ITS) uses technology to manage traffic and to provide road users with traffic conditions on a real-time basis.

The system employs closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, enhanced communications, traffic detection and traffic information devices to continuously monitor all the freeways.

To further support ITS, SANRAL implemented an On-Road Service (ORS) along its major freeways in Gauteng, approximately 251km.

SANRAL ORS is operated 24-hours a day and are tracked, monitored and dispatched from the road agency's Traffic Management Centre (TMC). The operators are responsible for visual surveillance of the freeway network to detect

incidents, manage traffic flow, report incidents to relevant authorities, dispatch response vehicles and distribute information to the public using Variable Message Signs (VMS) located along the freeways, Twitter and the i-traffic website.

For example, in cases where drivers experience a breakdown on the freeway, the TMC (through CCTV cameras) immediately identifies this as an incident and dispatches an ORS vehicle to help remove the vehicle from the road to the nearest safe spot. This service is provided at no cost to the road user.

This service currently includes 10 Incident Response Units (IRU) and 10 Towing Recovery Units (TRU), eight Heavy Recovery Units (HRU), six Motorcycle Medical Response Units (MMRU) and five Medical Response Units (MRU's) stationed at various strategic points on the freeways.

According to the roads agency, this is only the first of many planned measures to improve road safety management for all road users.

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