

## Media Releases 2007

### Border control measures for the festive season

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**Pretoria , 13 December 2007** - The South African Government is taking important measures to manage possible congestion at the country's busiest land border posts over the festive season.

These steps will be implemented through inter-governmental co-operation between a number of National, Provincial and Local Government Departments and State Agencies in the various provinces and coordinated through the Border Control Operational Coordinating Committee (BCOCC).

The BCOCC is an affiliate structure of the Justice Crime Prevention and Security Cluster and was mandated in 2005 to co-ordinate the management of the South African border environment. The challenges for border control and security increase over the festive season due to the rise in cross border trade and migration of people to and from neighboring states.

The BCOCC is also guided by strategic national objectives to facilitate trade, and promote tourism as important economic drivers in the region.

The following Government Institutions are involved in the Border Control and Security Framework: the National Departments of Home Affairs, Intelligence, Transport, Public Works, Agriculture, Health and Defence, as well as the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the South African Revenue Service (SARS). Officials from these institutions will convene daily planning sessions at a National Joint Operations Centre to monitor the trends in the movement of goods and people and, where necessary, employ contingency plans for the busiest land border posts in the country.

Information services available to travelers and traders

A call centre has been established to provide a real time information service to travelers and traders.

For accurate, timely information on border post operations:

- Contact the Call Centre on 0860 26 73 37 or 0860 BORDER
- SMS facility is available at 083 709 9444. Text the word "border" followed by a space and then the name of the border gate you wish to receive information on. Example: SMS "border" [SPACE] "Lebombo".
- Go to the website on [www.rsaborders.co.za](http://www.rsaborders.co.za)

Information to assist transit across the South African borders included on the website:

Operating hours of the Port of Entry

- Location and contact details for Ports of Entry
- Port of Entry classification in terms of commercial or non-commercial port
- Current queuing/waiting time (to be updated at specified intervals)
- Travel documents required (i.e. passports, vehicle registration papers, etc.)
- Cost of transit through ports to neighboring countries (e.g. third party insurances etc.)
- Passport and visa requirements

The webpage and information database will be updated regularly to ensure that the details provided to the public reflect the current operating scenario at the ports of entry accurately. The call centre will contact the major ports of entry at specified intervals in order to establish current queuing/waiting periods.

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Extended hours of operation:

The busiest border posts will employ additional personnel and will have extended hours of operation. Information on hours of operation will be available on the website, the call centre and through the SMS service.

- Beit Bridge - 24 hours
- Lebombo - 24 hours
- Maseru Bridge - 24 hours
- Kopfontein - 06:00 to 22:00 (06:00 to 24:00 daily effective from 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007).
- Oshoek - 07:00 to 22:00 (07:00 to 24:00 only on 21, 22, 23 & 24 December 2007).
- Ramatlabama - 06:00 to 20:00 (06:00 to 22:00 daily effective from 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007).
- Skilpadshek - 06.00 – 22 (06:00 to 24.00 daily effective from 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2008).

These measures will be maintained between 01 December 2007 and 20 January 2007.

Officials from the Department of Home Affairs and SARS will conduct their respective immigration and customs functions during these times. SAPS has already increased its force levels at the various border posts to ensure orderly cross-border movement. A policy of zero tolerance will be applied by the SAPS and priority given to detecting organized crime, stolen vehicles, illegal firearms and drugs.