

Bus Buzz



Monthly newsletter for Golden Arrow passengers

Road safety and customer care a priority for 2013



Road safety a priority: GABS drivers doing their manouvers in the Driver of the Year competition.

Every day during peak traffic hours' 1043 Golden Arrow buses can be found making their way along the highways and streets of the Cape Metropole. Their purpose is to deliver the 220 000 passengers that make use of our services to their destinations timeously and safely.

You have probably noticed that road safety features heavily in all our communications with passengers and stakeholders. This is because Road safety underscores every aspect of Golden Arrow's operations.

Road safety, at Golden Arrow, means ensuring that our buses undergo rigorous mechanical screening at regular intervals; it is why we sent our buses for roadworthiness testing every six months long before it became mandatory and it is why we have undertaken such an aggressive bus recapitalisation programme over the last decade.

These measures mean very little, however, if the human being behind the steering wheel is not proficient in

defensive driving as his/her decisions could have life-altering consequences for passengers and other road users. We have therefore opted for a multi-pronged approach, which seeks to sensitise drivers in a variety of ways which together form a potent behaviour modification strategy.

Depot-wide poster campaigns, which comprise of hard-hitting and emotive messages are placed in strategic places across all our depots to ensure that each driver is constantly reminded of the precious cargo that he carries aboard his bus. In 2012 we introduced a compulsory two-day safety refresher course that each driver must attend every two years.

The Driver of the Year Competition is also a powerful motivator and because traffic fines or complaints adversely affect eligibility, drivers are less likely to downplay the consequences of such offences. We have also installed on-board monitoring devices, known as Drive-Cam, on all of our new buses.

While we strive to correct bad driving behaviour as early as possible, there are some instances in which a driver simply does not drive as he should, in such cases we have little choice but to take the most serious action possible. We are a caring company but our ultimate responsibility is to our passengers, who have placed their lives in our hands.

It is sadly not possible to monitor all 1450 drivers at all times and our comprehensive formal complaints system has proved essential in covering our blind-spot, for this reason we would encourage anyone who sees any behaviour that they deem unlawful or unprofessional to contact us so that we can ensure that no misconduct goes unnoticed.

It is Golden Arrow's sincere hope that these strategies and on-going feedback from the public will ensure that 2013 is the year in which Golden Arrow becomes synonymous with safety and its open and transparent relationship with passengers and stakeholders.

Golden Arrow celebrates relationship with Passenger Forums

Golden Arrow was once again proud to host a year-end function to thank its passenger forums for the valuable input and assistance that they provide all year. This year saw the Khayelitsha Forum celebrating 10 years of partnering with Golden Arrow to ensure that passengers, as the most vital stakeholder in the company, are able to freely communicate their experiences to management so that the services provided by Golden Arrow are tailored to their needs and that any areas of concern can be addressed timeously. The Company currently hosts monthly formal meetings with passenger forums representing the communities of Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Blue Downs, Delft and Philippi at which frank and honest engagement is encouraged. This function is an opportunity to reflect on the year that was and to celebrate the reciprocally respectful relationship that has been created between the Company and the passengers whom we serve.

The function was held on Saturday November 17th at the St Joseph's Hall in Montana and was thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance. Operations Manager, Alan Burgess, gave an informative presentation touching on the various elements that come together to influence the functioning of a company whose buses traverse some 60 million kilometres annually. Providing perspective on how complex the day-to-day running of a scheduled passenger transport service is, further cemented the transparent relationship that has been created through these forums, to the ultimate benefit of all parties. After twelve months of hard work, this is an opportunity for reflection and kinship, the importance of which cannot be overstated. Ultimately, it is Golden Arrow's sincere hope that the passenger forum initiative can continue to grow from strength to strength, drawing from 10 years of engagement to ensure that the bus for us continues to get its 220 000 daily passengers where they need to be.



Above : Delft Forum



Nyanga Forum (top), Blue Downs Forum (left) and Khayelitsha Forum below



Left: Mitchell's Plain Forum



Dealing with debt:

Helpful tips

Community corner

information .. useful numbers .. first aid .. health

How do I Avoid Becoming Over-Indebted?

- Do not live beyond your means;
- Have a spending plan (budget) and stick to it;
- Cut/reduce spending on the following 'luxury' or unnecessary items in your monthly budget:

* Alcohol;

* Tobacco/cigarettes;

* Entertainment;

* Club membership;

* Pay/satellite TV; and

* Gambling.

- If you drive an expensive car, consider downgrading to a less expensive one. This will reduce your monthly instalment and enable you to pay other debts. Also consider using public transport as a cheaper option or cutting out unnecessary trips;
- If you are no longer able to afford the house you live in, consider selling it and finding accommodation that is more affordable;
- Review your insurance policies – you may find that you do not need some of them. Contact an independent financial advisor to guide you;
- Use savings you made from your adjustment to pay the most expensive loans, such as micro-loans and credit cards; and
- Consider obtaining a second job to supplement your income, if possible.

If you still feel overwhelmed and unable to reduce your monthly expenditure, there is help at hand, via the National Credit Regulator (NCR) and other professional credit authorities.

I am Already Over-Indebted –

What Now?

- The first step is to approach your credit provider, and negotiate lower instalments;

- If this fails, contact a registered debt counsellor;
- If you are not familiar with any debt counsellors, contact the NCR at **0860 627 627** to locate one in your area or visit the NCR's website: www.ncr.org.za

What is Debt Counselling?

The National Credit Act protects consumers who enter into credit agreements by monitoring and regulating their credit transactions. The Act also makes provision for debt counselling, to assist consumers who are unable to meet all their financial obligations by the required payment deadlines.

To learn more about the National Credit Act, visit the NCR's website: www.ncr.org.za

How Can a Debt Counsellor Help?

The Act requires all debt counsellors to be registered with the NCR, in order to assist consumers. Once a debt counsellor has established that you are indeed over-indebted, he/she will be able to:

- Give you budget advice;
- Restructure your debts;
- Negotiate with credit providers, on your behalf, to lower your instalments;
- Reduce your debts to manageable levels with the aim of improving your overall financial situation;
- Provide you with basic information necessary to resolve your day-to-day credit problems, to avoid being caught in the same debt trap;
- Provide you with support and after-care services such as budgeting skills; and
- Monitor your payments to credit providers.

Can I Still Access Credit While Under Debt Counselling?

No. Your name will be listed as a consumer undergoing debt counselling at the credit bureaux, and you will not be able to access credit while under debt counselling.

(Courtesy: National Credit Advisor)

**FOR COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRIES CALL
0800 65 64 63 TOLL FREE**