

Press Release

SATRA can no longer castigate members as it only undermines SATRA and we have therefore adjusted our strategy accordingly. We do not have the required support of the public nor the relevant institutions needed to complete our mission without changing our approach. Although we have a new strategy, our vision and mission remain the same. (*The towing industry as a world class participant in the SA economy.*)

There are several underlying reasons for our revised stance:

a) The Results of Disciplining Members:

- 1) Many of those who have been disciplined or refused membership have simply banded together in their own association or left from SATRA to go it alone.
- 2) Those who have formed their own association, position themselves in this association as SATRA's enemy, bent on the destruction of SATRA, plying fabricated stories, disinformation and attacking SATRA whenever possible.

b) Responsibility of the Corporate and Business Community:

- 1) Certain insurance companies refuse to deal with or through SATRA preferring to cut rates and exploit desperate towers operating in an equally desperate over traded environment and which practice simply forces the tower to in turn rectify this imbalance by exploiting the uninsured motorist.
- 2) Many Call Centers, consumers of towing services, traditionally colonial institutions, middlemen, and other businesses compete, as is acceptable in free market terms, taking their cut from the towing costs and paying the barest of minimum rates to the towers, which again, forces the towers to seek redress to this imbalance by exploiting the uninsured motoring public (75% of all motorists.)
- 3) Should the corporate and general business community take a responsible stance and support SATRA in its endeavour to create a balanced business model fair to all parties and desist from merely focusing on their own profit margins at the exclusion of the most important stake holders, the towers and the motorists they serve, this cascading exploitation and the inherent imbalances it creates would come to an end for the mutual benefit of all.

c) Public Responsibility:

- 1) It is pointless for the public to vilify towing operators after the fact, as is frequently the case. The public needs to take responsibility for their decisions, empowering themselves with the knowledge enabling themselves to make informed and correct decisions to begin with. They frequently do not want to take responsibility for the decisions they made initially in dealing with the towing operators when things go pear shaped because they made the wrong decision to begin with.
- 2) SATRA has spent a huge amount of time, expense and effort in educating the motoring public and providing the information the public needs to make informed decisions before the fact, all of which is largely ignored until they find themselves out of pocket. Better prevention than the cure.

d) Towers Responsibility

- 1) Legitimate towers failing to recognize the power of collective action fail to stand together to rectify that which is wrong and impacts negatively on the towing industry, they choose shortsighted, selfish individual benefit that prevails over the collective health of the industry in which they operate. A healthy industry promotes healthy business and healthy practices for the mutual benefit of all stake holders. This forces them to behave like vultures and pirates, stealing from whomever they can prey upon in order to be able to continue to supply those of the unscrupulous corporate and business community, who then shout foul along with any ravaged motorist, hiding their true culpability and promoting the demonizing of the towing industry.
- 3) Those towing companies who do practice proper business habits and have built themselves into solid businesses are often maligned by covetous towing operators, of lesser skills, wisdom and abilities who are jealous of their success. These whining towers are often first in line to accept the lowest of prices in order to get the tow, to their harm, selling out the whole towing industry.

e) Six of One Half a Dozen of the Other

- 1) Surprisingly, many members of the public have as much responsibility as do the towers in cases where complaints are made. In many cases, the motorist or a member of their family, is abusive, libelous and lies blatantly. When their lies are exposed they retreat into obnoxious threats. In a court of law,

proof must be brought and the case proved. Most complaints are a case of you said, I said, they said. There is no evidence and they would be laughed out of a court of law. A disturbing amount of these people demand that the towers be shut down, proving extreme spite and disregard for the lives and welfare of families, showing the true nature of their character and vindicating the view that they themselves are in the wrong.

- 2) Many complainants put themselves outside the law with derogatory speech and ill advised accusations, which often, when scrutinized are found to be fraudulent.
- 3) Many will use the shock of the accident as their excuse for entering into the contract which is just not acceptable. Road users must take responsibility for the consequences of using public roads.
- 4) There are other minor issues as well. Some users of towing services have un-roadworthy vehicles, and they cannot afford to pay for the tow. If they are the cause of the accident they are unable to recompense those who suffered damage as a result of the accident.

f) The Importance of Towing in the Community.

- 1) Towing is an emergency as well as a business service. When a compromised vehicle needs to get from one point to the other it must be towed or we will have chaos and rusting piles of disused vehicles wherever one looks.
- 2) When an accident occurs the vehicle must be moved as soon as possible, it has become a road hazard, a very real and present danger, not only to all the other road users, but to the occupants of the vehicles involved.
- 3) If there is no tow truck available, after an accident, many roads would grid lock. It is the tower who in such a case is the reason that traffic can continue and people are not stuck with traffic piling up, for hours. Commerce and industry can continue. Parents can collect junior in time from school or nursery school.
- 4) When an accident occurs, particularly at night or in remote locations, it is the tow trucker looking for work, who is usually the first at the scene of an accident on his/her grid, who protects and saves the occupants from robbery, murder, rape. For instance an incident near Knysna where a woman with a broken pelvis was raped at an accident scene. Towers prevent this happening every day. This is a community service, and just because it does not happen to you, does not mean that it is not necessary, we should have community spirit. Not selfish spirit.
- 5) The community should be concerned for the well being and fair play of all it's members. Fair play for tow truckers and motorists. The families of the tow truckers live in the community, they

need shelter, food, clothing, schooling just as much as the rest of the population. Berating and maligning towers causes them to resent the motorist. They remember many times they helped and were abused for their efforts in one way or another.

g) Towing is a dangerous profession

- 1) Towing is a dangerous profession. Towers get killed and maimed at accident scenes, and very often malfeasant people are heard to say "Good, it serves them right." Those very people are the ones who welcome the towers with open arms when it is their turn to be in a predicament. All industry players recognize both the danger at accident scenes and the time it takes, and accident tows are charged on a higher scale than ordinary tows.
- 2) Often the tower's own safety is at risk from lurkers as he/she tends to the vehicle that needs to be towed.
- 3) Very often the tower has to endure verbal abuse from the people at the accident scene, whether or not he/she gets the tow.

SATRA's New Strategy:

- 1) There is a new thought process in European politics that is seeing individualism as part of the problem that is causing violence to spiral world wide. Community spirit is encouraged as a sense of community is what prevents spiralling crime. This would also apply to microcosms like towing. SATRA recommends that everyone stops buying into and bank rolling the individuals and the pirates. Support and strengthen the community of SATRA. Do something about the problem.
- 2) We have, in the interests of all, a solution which we believe and we strongly suggest, which is to use our call centre. Our national Call Centre is manned 24 hours a day, all the calls are recorded, and we facilitate the whole process, from beginning to end. We use our own members and they are happy to comply. Use us and the volume of work will ensure that we can keep the costs down as well as ensure that the towers are satisfied. We will only deal with complaints that concern tows done through our own Call Centre. People are satisfied with our transparent, responsible handling of all tows, and the towers are pleased to be part of the SATRA team. We just ask the motorist to ensure that he or she speaks directly to SATRA themselves, to avoid any dirty tricks, even dialing or redialing SATRA's number to be sure. SATRA has telephonic conference facilities. With Santam and contracted customers, we speak to them and the customer at the same time.

SATRA's Call Centre, **0861 0 SATRA. 0861 0 72872. 011 4540933.**

If you choose another provider as your safety net, that is your choice. We think it is a bad one.