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**To: The News Editor**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Low adult supervision tied to child related road traffic deaths**

*November 7, 2014-* The Road Safety Unit in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing is urging parents and guardians to be more vigilant in supervising their children regularly and effectively while they utilize the traffic environment.

This appeal comes against a background where as at November 6, a total of 19 children have died in traffic crashes. Of the nineteen (19) children who have lost their lives, six (6) were females and thirteen (13) were males, with twenty-one per cent (21%) of the deaths recorded in the parish of St. Ann. To date a total of 270 deaths have been recorded as a result of motor vehicle crashes since January.

Statistics from the Road Safety Unit reveal that of the 19 children, 13 of the children were in the care of an adult, while 6 were left unsupervised to navigate the traffic environment. A total of seven (7) child pedestrians killed, four (4) were left unsupervised in the traffic environment who were under the age of 9 years old. In addition, all accompanied child pedestrian killed were under the age of 7 years old.

Commenting on the statistics, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, Dr. Morais Guy says, *“Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of deaths to children. It is very unfortunate that children have to lose their lives in this manner due to motorists not adhering to the rules of the road coupled with low supervision of children by parents/adults in the traffic environment.”*

Minister Guy notes that through the Road Safety Unit’s Primary and Secondary Schools Education Programme, children from grades 1-12 are being educated about road safety. Road Safety Unit is also active in the community across the island providing road safety information.

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The Ministry is recommending the following steps for parents and guardians to help protect and keep their children safe in the traffic environment:

- A child under 10 years of age should walk with an adult who is capable of navigating the traffic;
- An adult should never allow a child to step in front of him/her when crossing the road, the child should always be kept by the adult's side and be shield from the oncoming traffic;
- When walking with children, adults should demonstrate how to conduct themselves while travelling to and from school;
- The child's hand should be held even when walking in a single file;
- A pedestrian crossing should always be used if one is available;
- Commuters should not exit a motor vehicle on the right side of a motor vehicle, as this puts both adult and child at a greater risk of being hit by a passing motor vehicle;
- If a child is under the age of 12 or cannot be correctly restrained by a seat belt, the child must **not** sit or transported in the passenger seat in the front of the car;
- Young children must be securely seated in the back of the motor vehicle with a child restraint, such as a car seat or booster seat; and
- Children under the age of 10 should not walk alone to and from school or any other destination.

Thirty-seven per cent (37%) of the children killed were pedestrians, while twenty-six (26%) were passengers of public passenger vehicles (PPV); and thirty-nine per cent (39%) were in the 05-09 and 15-17 age groups respectively.

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