

Wide-eyed shockers: 5 things that could happen in the blink of an eye... and how to deal with them

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Research suggests that the average person blinks approximately 15 to 20 times each minute with each blink lasting for about 400 milliseconds. Based on this estimate, the average person blinks for 10% of the time they are awake or between 5.2 and 7.1 million times a year.



That's a lot of blinking, but it does give credibility to the well-known idiom, 'in the blink of an eye' - referring to something that happens so quickly it is almost imperceptible. When you consider how much you're not seeing, it is entirely plausible that things will, inevitably, happen just as you blink.

Here are five things that have a very good chance of happening in the blink of an eye in South Africa.

Water works

It is almost inevitable that, as some point in your adult life, you will have to deal with a burst geyser! This happens when the thermostat fails to control the heat levels and the pressure eventually causes an explosion.



Chris Steyn, head of MiWay Blink

"A faulty geyser is a serious concern as it can cause injury and/or damage to property, which is why it's important to have it serviced by a qualified plumber every three years," Chris Steyn, head of MiWay Blink, advises.

But rather than wait for it to happen, check that it is covered by your household insurance and in the event of it bursting, switch the electricity off at the mains immediately and contact your insurer to set the repair or replacement process in motion.

In a flash

Flash floods are fairly common in parts of South Africa, particularly Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State, and while we're grateful for rain, they can cause severe damage particularly to cars.

“If you can, the best is always to stay off the roads in a flash flood. Many motor vehicle insurance providers have a mobile app that warns you when there are flash floods or hail storms in certain areas, so pay attention to those notifications and plan your travelling accordingly,” Steyn says.

Shed the load

Blink too long and you may find yourself in the dark! The best way to deal with load-shedding is to accept that there is little you can do to solve the problem.

Also make sure to download one of the apps that alert you to when it’s happening in your area. At least then you know to charge your phone and laptop, and have the candles and torches handy. Loadshedding tends to exacerbate traffic jams with the robots being out, particularly in the big metros, which is why it’s best to wait the loadshedding out before travelling, if you can.

“Consider using load-shedding as your legitimate respite from work or other things that require electricity and use the time to connect with loved ones, have a bath by candlelight, or take a nap,” Steyn suggests.

Too hot to handle

A sunny South African day could have you dealing with an overheating car. This is especially common if you drive an older model. If you find yourself in this situation, there are a few things you could do to lighten the load on your engine, such as shutting off the aircon, turning on the heater (ironically this helps to draw excess heat out of the engine) and calling for help as soon as it’s safe to pull over.

Flat and furious

The worst surprise to have on a night or day out is a flat tyre. The good news however, is that changing a flat tyre shouldn’t take longer than 30 minutes. You should already have a spare, a jack, and a wrench in your car.

They say prevention is better than cure, but Steyn reckons preparation is even better than prevention. Make sure to check if your car insurance offers roadside assistance - you might not have to change the tyre yourself after all.

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