

Lift plunge case takes sinister turn

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THE terrifying lift plunge at the Mount Road Police Station which injured seven people has taken a sinister turn, with police now investigating a case of attempted murder after it was found that more than half of the counterweights had been removed.

The lift plummeted four storeys to the ground on March 22.

Four clerks and three police officials – most of them from the Criminal Records Centre – were in the lift.

How and why the counterweights were removed and what became of them are a mystery at this point.

On Thursday, the Department of Public Works laid a complaint of attempted murder.

Provincial police spokeswoman Brigadier Marinda Mills said this followed a report from an independent Johannesburg company which had inspected the lift.

"The indications are, at this stage, that some of the counterweights were removed," she said.

"There should have been 25 and

there were only 11." Each of the 14 missing counterweights weighs about 75kg.

A preliminary check after the incident showed that none of the cables in the lift shaft had snapped and that routine monthly maintenance checks had been done.

All five lifts at the police station

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have been decommissioned by the Department of Labour since then, pending an assessment.

After the lift plunged to the ground, the jaws of life were used to pry open the doors to free those trapped inside.

It is also still not known why the lift's emergency brakes failed.

Mills said three of the injured were still in hospital.

The eight-storey police station houses several departments, including the Mount Road cluster head office and station staff, administration and crime intelligence offices.