

# Smart ID cards to be issued in Mdantsane

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Thousands of Mdantsane residents will be able to get their smart identity cards from the new home affairs offices by early 2019.

This was revealed by the department's Buffalo City stakeholder's forum co-ordinator Mzingisi Nokhele, who told the Daily Dispatch on Wednesday that the new building should be ready for use on March 1.

The department will move to a new building, which it is busy renovating, in the Highway central business district.

Nokhele said thousands of residents who wanted to apply for the smart identity cards had to travel to East London because the Mdantsane office did not offer the service due to the "appalling conditions" of its rented premises.

The department will be moving out of the old Highway Mall to the recently closed Dunlop franchise store in Mdantsane's NU2, close to Sisa Dukashe Sta-

dium. "We had a meeting on Tuesday with public works and they said the estimated date of occupation was March 1.

"Currently, we can't offer Mdantsane residents smart ID cards in Mdantsane because that building is not suitable for our equipment.

"Our current building is small

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**The department plans to run a paperless operation for birth certificates as well, once they are in their new premises**

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and we had challenges with power outages as a result of illegal electricity connections in the building.

"When it rains there are leaks and our equipment would be affected, and that is why we decided to move out.

"Since 2013, when the smart ID's were first offered, we had

never been able to offer them in Mdantsane because of the poor infrastructure.

"We send residents to East London because we can't continue with the green bar-coded documents as they are being phased out, we only issue those to foreigners now in Mdantsane," Nokhele said.

He said the department planned to run a paperless operation for birth certificates as well, once they were in their new premises.

The home affairs district manager for BCM and Amathole District Municipality, Ngenisile Stuurman, said there were constant water cuts at their current offices.

"We have been struggling for years in that building," he said.

"We have had to replace about 20 computers in the past five years because of illegal electricity connections.

"Our printers were damaged too. When there are water cuts we can't service people.

"Workers have to be sent home."