



Umhlali SAPS lines restored

Penny Fourie

The phone lines at Umhlali SAPS are working again.

After a month of the police station being without phones or computers due to repeated cable theft the problem has now been dealt with and the 032 947 9900 number was back up and running as of last week.

Last week the *Courier* reported that the situation at the station was seriously hampering crime prevention and may have caused the death of a pedestrian.

A woman knocked down by a vehicle slipped into a coma and died on the side of the road after paramedics took almost two hours to reach her - because no one could get through to the police station to report the accident.

People calling in to report crimes or lay complaints could also not get through. An alternative mobile number had been provided by the province but this was not a solution as many times the phone did not have data and airtime and SAPS staff were not able to call the public back or send emergency services.

The state of the station also came under the spot light with lack of equipment and inadequate resources putting constraints on the police officers, especially detectives and the crime-prevention units who are overburdened.

As the North Coast continues to expand, especially Ballito which is one of the fastest growing residential nodes in South Africa, additional pressure has been put on the stations' resources which has failed to keep pace with the regions' growth.

Umhlali SAPS spokesperson captain Vinny Pillay said it was the Department of Public Works who were responsible for the upkeep of the station.

Ballito Neighbourhood

Watch (BNW) chairperson Candice Henderson praised the work done by SAPS Umhlali in the challenging circumstances and said the small team of staff were always willing to assist BNW.

"However, Ballito needs more visible policing which SAPS Umhlali cannot always fully provide with their limited staff numbers," said Henderson.

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Candice Henderson