

Public safety

Clr Sizakele Nkosi



Public safety

COUNCILLOR SIZAKELE NKOSI:
MEMBER OF THE MAYORAL COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

One of my responsibilities is to oversee the work of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) and Emergency Management Services (EMS). I also have to collaborate with the SA Police Services (SAPS) and other law enforcement agencies to promote and ensure public safety in the city.



The city confronts considerable challenges relating to crime, disorder, life-threatening emergencies and potential disasters. It is unacceptable that serious and violent crimes persist, that the enforcement of municipal by-laws is sometimes inconsistent, that emergency response time is often tardy and that the risk of disasters is ever-increasing. People who live, work, invest and visit Johannesburg expect a city environment that allows freedom of movement and is safe as well as secure.

Public safety has been accorded a high priority by the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg. This means that resources have been made available and commitment has been strengthened to improve public safety. Over the last two to three years, I believe that the City has made a major contribution to improving public safety in Johannesburg. This contribution includes the establishment of JMPD, visible policing, instalment of surveillance cameras, enhanced law enforcement, improved emergency responses and disaster mitigation.

Major improvements in public safety will result in a significant impact on investor and business confidence, the growth and development of tourism and should enhance the overall quality of life of citizens of the city. Indeed, it is an essential ingredient for creating the “world-class African city” of the future.

ROLE OF PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE CITY

Public safety in the City of Johannesburg encompasses the activities of Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) and Emergency Management Services (EMS).

JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

The JMPD was established in March 2001 under the South African Police Service Amendment Act, No. 83 of 1998. The statutory functions of JMPD are road traffic policing, enforcement of municipal by-laws and regulations and the prevention of crime. Since the Metro Police are precluded from conducting criminal investigations, a person arrested by the JMPD is handed over to the SAPS who ensures that justice prevails. The establishment of the JMPD has consolidated the resources available to the City to combat crime.

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Crime can only be effectively combated through the coordinated efforts of role players who represent citizens locally, provincially and nationally. The support and contribution of business and community groups is a key element of any effective crime reduction strategy. The City's multi-agency approach to crime reduction is therefore to work with, and provide support to, other agencies working to combat crime in Johannesburg.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Emergency Management Services (EMS) was established by consolidating the emergency and disaster management functions of the City. EMS is responsible for the management of available resources to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover from the effects of all life-threatening situations. The objectives of EMS are to save lives, prevent injuries and to protect property and the environment in the event of an emergency in Johannesburg and also to neighbouring areas with whom mutual aid agreements have been negotiated.

JMPD PERFORMANCE 2002/03

JMPD FORCE

JMPD has a staff of 2 697, of which 1 350 are classified as operational staff. It has 610 vehicles in its fleet, which has been carefully structured to ensure that it is able to effectively deploy staff and to cover the wide scope of the department's operations.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

A total of 42 363 calls were received by the JMPD call centre. A total of 76% related to motor vehicle accidents, 4,3% to crime, 9,7% to road traffic matters and 10% to general matters. JMPD also attended to 12 501 accidents. In the light of these statistics, it is clear that the JMPD remains the major road policing service provider.

At the same time, the JMPD effected 3 575 arrests and attended to 1 818 crime-related calls. This clearly shows that the JMPD is playing an important role in crime prevention. In addition to the above, the department also received 511 353 enquiries relating to licensing and prosecutions.

BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RELATED OPERATIONS

The JMPD is a key player in by-law enforcement and works with several departments in the City, which are also responsible for enforcing by-laws, such as building and planning control functions and environmental health. In August 2002 an ongoing campaign, code-named Operation Nude Ants, was initiated to



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address by-law violations throughout the City. The scope of the operation covers outstanding warrants of arrest, illegal trading and dumping, littering, illegal display of signage, posters and transit signs, illegal occupation of land, hazardous buildings, etc. Between October 2002 and the middle of May 2003, 459 people were arrested for by-law violations.

Illegal signage is being addressed in terms of the Advertising Signs and Hoarding by-law. Specific attention is paid to the removal of transit signs and posters that are illegally displayed along the streets. A total of 130 transit signs were impounded and 23 843 illegal posters were removed.

A consolidated set of twelve by-laws has been developed to cover all services provided by the city. All of the utilities, agencies and corporatised entities (UACs) in the city were asked to comment on the draft by-laws. Public hearings were also conducted in this regard.

VISIBLE POLICING

The zonal policing model, introduced in January 2002, is aimed at increasing the visibility of police in the city and increasing their responsiveness. This involves deploying police officers on organised patrols of demarcated zones. It forms part of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and is designed to speed up police response times through the improved coordination of officers in different areas across the city. Priority zones have been identified and targeted for frequent patrols. These priority zones are mainly located in the inner city and Alexandra.

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

The City of Johannesburg introduced a surveillance camera system (also known as the CCTV system) in sections of the city as a way of preventing crime. A single multi-directional CCTV camera can spot a target up to 500 metres, which represents a force multiplier averaging twenty police officers with a direct line of sight of 25 metres. With the current 200 surveillance cameras in operation, it is possible to argue that 4 000 officers are deployed on a 24/7-day period. Officials of the JMPD staff the CCTV command centre that is situated in the Carlton Centre. This ensures a response to incidents within forty seconds.

INTEGRATED INFORMATION

A pilot study on an Integrated Information Management System was completed with a view to extend the system to the rest of the department. Part of this process has included the conversion of manual documents and databases to an electronic system. The implementation of the system will ensure optimal functioning of the department through a Joint Command Centre, which will be



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established during 2003/04 at the new corporate headquarters of the JMPD. The community will benefit from this centre, as it will ensure improved proactive policing, a more rapid response to incidents of crime and other occurrences as a result of the immediate availability of information. This will also assist JMPD management with the effective deployment of its resources.

PROJECT ONE HUNDRED HOTSPOTS

Project One Hundred Hotspots was implemented in collaboration with Pikitup, to combat the problem of illegal dumping. In Soweto alone there are more than one hundred designated illegal dumping spots. The project entailed joint operations between Pikitup, affected communities and JMPD. Once the spots have been cleared, the cleaned sites are handed to JMPD, which will ensure appropriate law enforcement measures to maintain in terms of the cleanliness of the sites.

In Soweto a 76% success rate was achieved. The spots that were cleaned were handed over to the local communities with the aim of permanently retaining these spots in a well-kept condition. Some 196 offenders were prosecuted during the period. During the same period 33 234 households were visited and 147 000 pamphlets distributed as part of a door-to-door education campaign. Twelve environmental forums were also launched and they remain functional under the guidance of the regions.

CITY SAFETY STRATEGY

The department participated in the development of a City Safety Strategy. The strategy is aligned to the Mayoral Priorities and Joburg 2030. The strategy is developed in partnership with all the agencies that are involved in the fight against crime. This will assist in establishing a cooperative system for the prevention of crime.

TRAFFIC LAW ENFORCEMENT

During 2002/03, approximately 434 614 vehicles were stopped for traffic-related matters and a total of 170 roadside checkpoints were conducted. From 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003, 2 451 298 prosecutions were instituted in respect of road traffic offences. Electronic enforcement (speed and robot cameras) and normal speed enforcement accounted for 85,6% of these prosecutions.

CANINE AND EQUESTRIAN UNIT

The Canine (K9) unit is actively involved in crime prevention during joint operations with the SAPS. This unit played a vital role during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the Cricket World Cup and the funeral of



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the late Walter Sisulu. The specific assignment was to assist with the searching of centres and buildings for explosive devices. The Equestrian Unit was also utilised at the above-mentioned events, as well as to patrol parks and open spaces.

AWARENESS/EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

A total of 403 new recruits completed the basic municipal police officer (MPO) course since July 2002 and 38 council employees attended the Peace Officer's course. Thirty-five people from private companies were trained as "points" men/women. Community-based training reached 194 358 people through lectures and talks. The focus of the community-based training programmes was on road safety, crime prevention awareness and the necessity of by-laws. This included 90 985 students who were trained as part of the Arrive Alive campaign and 56 896 primary school learners and 5 410 school patrol learners who attended awareness/educational programmes.

INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY POLICING FORUMS

The JMPD is actively involved in community policing forums at provincial and local levels.

INVESTIGATIONS

The JMPD has three groups of departmental investigators, namely accident investigators, shooting incident investigators and internal affairs investigators. The shooting incident investigators have unique skills and expertise that are normally used in forensic/ballistic investigations. They also assisted the SAPS's Organised Crime Unit in investigating several murder cases involving the use of firearms.

PUBLIC ORDER POLICING

JMPD provided a supportive role to the SAPS and managed 156 political marches during 2002/03.

LICENSING

A total of 53 068 applications for new driver's licences were received and 20 948 were issued. In addition, 200 989 conversions of identity documents to the credit card-type driving licences were processed during the year. Twenty-one staff members were trained as examiners of driver's licences and are currently working at various testing stations throughout the city.



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EMS PERFORMANCE 2002/03

DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Johannesburg is particularly vulnerable to disasters because of the increased number of informal settlements around the city. These communities are at great risk due to a dangerous combination of population growth, unsafe building practices, lack of infrastructure and accessibility. However, it is not only those in informal settlements that are at risk. People who live in close proximity to certain installations or hazards, such as fuel depots and pylons, are also in a vulnerable position. Moreover, the proximity of the city to a busy international airport, a number of smaller runways, a vital rail link and freeways that criss-cross the city, expose people in Johannesburg to a great deal of risk.

EMS has determined that the hazards that pose the highest risk in the city are fire, technological and transportation disasters, environmental threats, natural phenomena, mass events, service disruption, violence and terrorism. The City formulated a Disaster Management Plan to ensure that these disasters are avoided and those that are unavoidable can be dealt with promptly and effectively. To ensure preparedness, twenty simulation exercises were conducted during 2002/03.

RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

The department has been successful in adopting a cooperative approach to address, or respond to, emergencies. The cross-functional approach has been very successful as it ensures that all aspects of emergency situations are included. A baseline of twelve minutes was established as the response time to ambulance and emergency calls – this includes both basic life-support calls and advanced life-support calls. The baseline for fire emergency calls, also twelve minutes, includes both a first-due engine call and a second-due engine call. These response times will in future be monitored to ensure an improvement.

EMS serviced over 120 000 incidents over the last year. The major incidents were as follows:

- In Robertsham, where a fire and subsequent explosion destroyed a chemical factory in January 2003, EMS provided a value-added service to the community by establishing owner/occupant support for more than 72 hours after the fire had been extinguished.
- The Star hailed EMS as Joburg Fire Heroes after the rescue of a mother and baby from the inferno of the Rand Inn Hotel during March 2003. This incident was also successfully contained and more than 200 people were evacuated.
- EMS staff rescued a man from a lift shaft after he had been trapped for more than eighteen hours before his cries for help were heard.
- EMS staff successfully contained a hazardous materials incident when a tanker collided and exploded on the Empire Road Bridge over the M1-highway.



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ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL OPERATIONS RESPONSE TEAM

This team was established in January 2003, after a need had been identified to mitigate special rescue situations, such as structural collapse and special rescues. Since its establishment (the first in the country), the team was called upon by the Executive Mayor to assist in Algiers after a devastating earthquake in May 2003.

The team members that were selected to go to Algiers had all received special training in the disciplines of urban search and rescue. This is part of the City's initiative to build capacity in specialist fields to enhance its ability to deal with such disasters. The City was extremely proud to be included in the South African team, especially so soon after the official launch of the Urban Search and Rescue Team.

BE SAFE CENTRE

The first BE SAFE centre in Africa was opened to provide fire and life safety education for the children of Johannesburg. The centre is situated at the EMS headquarters in Florida Park, and was purpose built for the training and education of high-risk communities in fire and life safety skills. The BE SAFE centre offers a wide variety of learning programmes designed specifically to transfer practical skills to learners, such as "Escape drill in the home", "Learn not to burn" and "Stay alive until we arrive". Specially trained EMS staff, known as public education officers, provide this training in communities where children are unable to travel to the BE SAFE centre.

PUBLIC AWARENESS SESSIONS

Approximately 400 public information and awareness sessions were conducted, reaching out to an audience of over 60 000 community members. These sessions were aimed at marketing EMS to the public and informing the communities about the wide range of services that are available to them. It also includes a media liaison function, which provides vital and relevant information on large incidences to educate the public and warn about any effects on transportation patterns or other hazards.

COMPLETION OF THE DOBSONVILLE AND DIEPKLOOF FIREHOUSES

Two new firehouses were completed and launched in October 2002. Before the opening of the Diepkloof and Dobsonville firehouses, the only EMS base station, servicing the entire Soweto area, was located in Jabulani, established in 1969. The opening of fire houses in this particular area, was the result of fire and life-risk assessments conducted by EMS. This serves as an example of EMS's commitment to bring services to communities who were previously disadvantaged.



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