

City of Cape Town to recruit 100 rail enforcement officers

The City of Cape Town's Mayoral Committee has approved the appointment of 100 law enforcement officers who will serve in the dedicated Rail Enforcement Unit.



Source: Leonard Zhukovsky © <https://www.123rf.com/>

The City of Cape Town's Law Enforcement Department will commence with the recruitment of 100 rail enforcement officers with immediate effect. The officers will be selected from the Law Enforcement Department's database of qualifying personnel.

Time to address safety and security issues

'The Rail Enforcement Unit will focus on the safety and security of Metrorail commuters and infrastructure. This approval by the City's Mayoral Committee cannot have happened soon enough. Our urban rail service is under siege with numerous arson attacks the past few weeks. The Rail Enforcement Unit must be operational as soon as possible, and they must hit the ground running. Metrorail's train fleet in the Western Cape has lost a staggering 149 carriages from May 2015 to date, with the cost of the last two arson attacks alone amounting to R51m. In the meantime, it is our rail commuters who suffer the most with longer travelling times, delays and cancelled trips,' said the city's mayoral committee member for transport and urban development, Councillor Brett Herron.

The City's Safety and Security Directorate has been talking to the various rail entities about placing our law enforcement officers on trains for a number of years.

'The formation of the Rail Enforcement Unit follows on from the commitment that was made during the rail summit convened and attended by the City's Transport and Urban Development Authority (TDA), the Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works, the Passenger Rail Service of South Africa (PRASA), rail experts and business leaders in Woodstock on 9 February 2018. That summit followed years of negotiations and engagements about the loss of rail capacity through the destruction of rolling stock and vandalism; and the role that the City can play. The first collaboration agreement was signed in October 2012. The establishment of this dedicated unit is a major breakthrough, and as far as I am aware it is a first in South Africa,' said Councillor Herron.

Training to commence soonest

‘The officers will receive their training at the City’s Safety and Security Training Academy. In fact, I foresee that the training will commence within a few days, as soon as we have completed the selection process. We hope to have the officers on the job either in September or October at the latest,’ said the city’s mayoral committee member for safety and security; and social services, Alderman JP Smith.

The cost to establish and operate the unit for a period of 12 months is approximately R47,9 million and is jointly funded by the City, the Western Cape Government and PRASA.

Relying on technology for support

‘Apart from commuter safety and vandalism, the unit will focus on the theft of crucial Metrorail infrastructure and assets. The unit’s members will rely on technology and predictive analytics and will support the South African Police Service to identify those who are involved in the illicit metals theft industry. Given the state of the rail network, it goes without saying that this will be a top priority for us. It is something that we have touted for many years and is desperately needed,’ said Alderman Smith.

The ultimate goal is to address the safety and security issues in an effort to stabilise the urban rail service in the short term.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>