

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS



SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

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**DIE AFDELINGSKOMMISSARIS
THE DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONER**

**VISIBLE POLICING
SIGBARE POLISIERING**

**PRETORIA
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All Provincial Commissioners
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

STRUCTURING: PROVINCIAL NON-FERROUS METALS CRIME COMBATTING COMMITTEE (NFMCCC)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The theft of non-ferrous metals in South Africa has become a serious problem that had a detrimental effect on a variety of role players throughout the country in recent years.
- 1.2 The problem with regard to the theft of specifically copper and aluminium has existed for many years and since 1993, it has escalated to such an extent that losses now run into millions of rands annually. Although the incidents and the related costs decreased between 2001 and 2004, the occurrence of this crime increased sharply in 2005 to 2009. This can be attributed to the dramatic increase in the copper and aluminium prices as a result of the growth in international demand for the materials, among other factors.
- 1.3 The victims do not only suffer direct financial losses as a result of having to replace the stolen material, but also other consequential, associated or hidden costs, such as -
- impact on the image of the organization;
 - impact on service delivery;
 - impact on employee morale;
 - loss of revenue or income;
 - labour costs to replace and repair;
 - overtime costs for staff;
 - cost of equipment and vehicles;
 - security costs to protect and safeguard assets and customers; and
 - cost of electronic equipment, alarms and monitoring.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In an effort to jointly address and combat the theft of non-ferrous metals, the Non-Ferrous Theft Combating Committee (NFTCC) was formed in 1993.

2.2 All major role-players, as listed below, are represented on the NFTCC:

- South African Police Service;
- ESKOM;
- TELKOM;
- TRANSNET (including SPOORNET and METRORAIL);
- Chamber of Mines representing several mine groups;
- Recycling industry;
- Manufacturing industry;
- City Power Johannesburg, several metros and municipalities;
- Department of Justice (including the National Prosecuting Authority and Directorate of Special Operations);
- Department of Trade and Industry;
- Customs and Excise;
- SARS; and
- Business Against Crime.

2.3 The structure consists of a national committee with the objective of planning national strategies to address the theft of non-ferrous metals. A total of 22 provincial/regional committees that initiate and coordinate joint ventures and operational activities between the various role players, were also formed.

2.4 As a result of the nature and large variety of services provided and products produced by the different role players, strategies to address incidents of theft differ in each organisation. The NFTCC is therefore required to identify strategies that will benefit all its members.

2.5 At the time of the establishment of the NFTCC in 1993, the police unit established to police non-ferrous metals, was the Transit Theft Unit that became a section of Organised Crime. The National Commander: Transit Theft Unit, represented the police on this committee.

2.6 The purpose of the Transit Theft Unit was to prevent intransit hijacking of cargo before reaching its destination. The Transit Theft Unit's main aim was not to escort trucks, but rather to investigate and arrest syndicates that functioned in this field. Later, the mandate of this unit was broadened to also include the investigation of syndicates/perpetrators of the theft of non-ferrous metals in general.

2.7 The following crime generators has been identified as contributing factors:

- Socio-economic problems - increasing numbers of unemployed people;
- Increasing numbers of illegal immigrants becoming involved in theft;
- Involvement of organised groups/syndicates in these thefts;

- Increasing demand for copper and aluminium locally and internationally;
- Insufficient control/legislation regarding processing, sale, import or export of non-ferrous metals;
- Low risk involved in accessing some of the networks (low voltage); and
- Availability of the market for the sale of stolen material.

2.8 Effective policing of the scrap metal market has been a challenge because of insufficient and outdated legislation, however the Second-Hand Goods Act 2009 (Act No 6 of 2009), specifically designed to regulate the trading of scrap metal, has been promulgated and still has to be operationalized.

2.9 From 1993 to 2008, the NFTCC was chaired by the private sector. In 2008, a decision by the then Deputy Minister for Safety and Security was made that the South African Police Service should take over the chairmanship of the NFTCC because of its direct link with the prevention of crime and that a high-ranking police delegate should chair the NFTCC. Emanating from this decision, the chairmanship was handed to Asst Comm Lebeya from the National Organised Crime component.

2.10 The name of the NFTCC was changed to Non-Ferrous Metals Crime Combating Committee (NFMCCC) in late 2008 and chairmanship was transferred from Asst Comm Lebeya to the Head: Firearms, Liquor and Second-Hand Goods Control, Asst Comm Nkomo.

3. **NFMCCC STRATEGY**

3.1 A mandate (set out below) was developed for the NFMCCC to actively address the theft of non-ferrous metals:

- Establishing and maintaining a NFMCCC to address the theft and related crimes pertaining to non-ferrous metals;
- Implementing a joint venture between the relevant stakeholders to effectively address crime pertaining to non-ferrous metals on national and provincial level;
- Coordinating integrated crime combating operations that focus on the suppliers/dealers and end-users;
- Monitoring the import and export of non-ferrous metals;
- Launching and implementing a non-ferrous metal anti-crime communication plan and strategy, including educational awareness campaigns;
- Monitoring investigations pertaining to non-ferrous metal-related crimes;
- Establishing governance to effectively deal with non-ferrous metals in SAPS 13 stores; and
- Establishing mechanisms (training) for the effective identification of non-ferrous metals by law enforcement officers.

3.2 The NFMCCC identified three distinct areas to address the theft of non-ferrous metals, namely -

3.1.1 perpetrators: thieves, organised groups and gangs that perpetrate theft

3.1.2 product - mostly copper and aluminium in different forms:

- Overhead lines, underground cables, copper earthing (telecoms, transport and electricity);

- Electrical Substations;
- Signal cables;
- Non-ferrous metal in railway carriages (doors, window frames, basins, bearings); and
- Other (aluminium irrigation equipment etc).

3.1.3 Scrap Metal Market

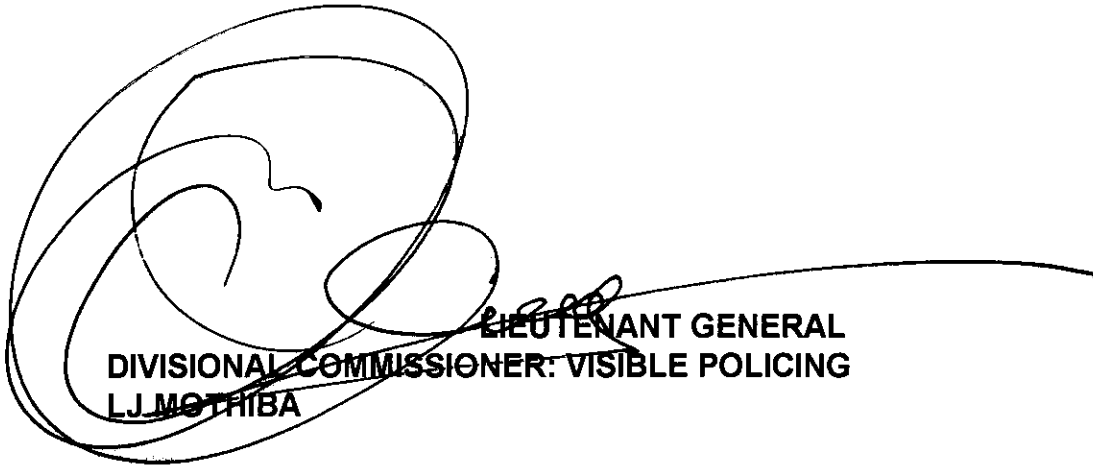
Although this figure varies monthly, there are currently approximately 2 969 registered scrap metal dealers in the country. As theft constitutes a criminal offence, most strategies (proactive and reactive) are aimed at supporting the Criminal Justice System to facilitate the prosecution process. This includes -

- to be able to effectively and efficiently police the scrap market;
- that the material of most of the companies has been marked and can be identified as property of any of the organisations concerned;
- that most networks are fitted with specially-developed alarms;
- that the SAPS, supported by the members of the NFMCCC, conduct regular proactive operations involving specific identified scrap merchants; and
- the launching of several awareness campaigns, as well as obtaining assistance from the general public to address the theft problem.

4. **STRUCTURING: NFMCCC**

- 4.1 Based on the above strategy, it has been decided that in order to vigorously address non-ferrous metal-related crime in South Africa, it is of the utmost importance that the South African Police Service move from a reactive to a proactive policing methodology.
- 4.2 In order to achieve the above, the NFMCCC function was transferred from the Division: Detective Services, to the Division: Visible Policing.
- 4.3 All provinces are requested to re-structure their NFMCCC under the chairmanship of the Provincial Head: Visible Policing (Brigadier level or higher).
- 4.4 NFMCCC meetings should be scheduled with all relevant role players on a monthly basis.
- 4.5 The Detectives will still form an integral part of the NFMCCC within the various levels of the South African Police Service, in order to ensure continuity to effectively address investigations.
- 4.6 Information on organised crime generated from the NFMCCC must be channelled to the Organised Crime Secretariat.

5. Your co-operation in ensuring that non-ferrous metal theft in South Africa is receiving the necessary attention it deserves, is appreciated



**LIEUTENANT GENERAL
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L.J. MOTRABA**