

FAQ ON ATTACKS ON GAUTENG EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

1) What is the health department doing to prevent further attacks on paramedics?

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) is pursuing multiple efforts and strategies on addressing paramedic attacks. These include:

- a. The Emergency Communication Centre (ECC) has profiled areas and calls that may be Hoax calls to advise the crews and security cluster when dispatching EMS resources.
- b. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on Management and Prevention of possible Paramedic Attacks has been developed.
- c. Engaging with Community Policing Forums and SAPS, in districts and sub-districts to escort and accompany ambulances to the scene.
- d. Gauteng EMS has been meeting with Community Safety and Community Leaders (Ward Leaders, to get some mitigation in these attacks, like having pick-up points in formal areas with no house numbers).
- e. Extending the services of the Employee Health Wellness Program (EHWP) to 24 hours for all EMS personnel, for trauma diffusion, counselling and referral to Social Workers.
- f. Use of social media and media houses to engage on why attacks happened and reporting mechanisms
- g. Currently Gauteng EMS is investigation the use and introduction of electronic security systems consulting with experts in the area.

2) Are there any current measures in place for the paramedics to protect themselves when under attack/robbery?

The Gauteng EMS uses SOPs on Management and Prevention of possible Paramedic Attacks and uses police escorts in high-risk areas or potential areas of incidents of EMS attacks. The rollout of safety and security equipment on personnel and vehicles as at final stages. The rollout of panic button devices linked to ECC in all ambulances and response cars linked to security services in identified areas is also being finalised.

3) Is there any psychological assistance that affected paramedics receive after traumatic incidences?

Yes, post-incident there is follow-ups with GDoH service provider. We also have extended the services of the Employee Health Wellness Program (EHWP) to 24 hours for all EMS personnel, for trauma diffusion, counselling and referral to Social Workers, as well as continuous monitoring of officials when they return to normal duties.

3. How many attacks were recorded to date?

In 2022 alone, there has been 12 incidents to date which include amongst others, an attempted sexual assault and high jacking, damage to ambulance after being hit with stones and armed robbery where personal belongings such as cell phones, wallets and bags were taken. This adds to the 12 incidents recorded in 2021.

Despite the attacks the Green Angels continue to respond to an increased volume of calls. Over 490 000 calls were received by the Gauteng EMS communication centre between September 2021 and August 2022.

Last update on 2022/11/22