

# Medics make easy prey for gangsters

Cape Town paramedics are being robbed at gunpoint by criminals who attack them while they work to try and save lives.



The non-profit organisation Refreshing Emergency Services Together (REST) revealed that attacks have escalated this year.

REST founder Lianne Vinello-Lippert said there had been seven incidents in the past two weeks in which paramedics were held at gunpoint and robbed of equipment, medication, jewellery and cellphones.

She said robberies were rife across the city - from Mitchells Plain and Milnerton to Constantia.

"Sadly, these things happen all over, even in so-called safe areas. One paramedic had a gun pointed at his head while going into a patient's house. Another responded to a hoax call only to be robbed at gunpoint," said Vinello-Lippert.

"The problem has become serious over the last six months. Paramedics are scared but they cannot stay away from work. Some have asked for a police escort but that is impossible," she said.

Angelique Jordaan, spokesman for the Western Cape health department, said 10 attacks have been reported in the city this year. Site B in Khayelitsha and suburbs where gang activity is rife have been identified as hot spots.

Health MEC Theuns Botha said his department was considering hiring armed guards to escort ambulances.

Source: The Times via I-Net Bridge