

## **RETAIL CRIME STATISTICS DECREASE**

The Consumer Goods Council of SA is proud to report that the number of armed robbery incidents aimed at its members has decreased substantially to 14 per month since November last year, when the average number of robberies per month was 25.

The number of armed robbery incidents reported by members decreased by 44% in the month of April to 14 from 25 in the same month last year (April 2009).

The financial losses suffered relating to these robberies in April amounted to R391, 993, a significant decrease of 89% when compared to the R3, 53m in April of 2009. This would indicate an average of R28, 000 loss per robbery in April 2009.

According to Michael Broughton, Director of the CGC's Crime Prevention Programme, there was a lot of publicity given to armed robberies last August with the notion that retail crime statistics were on an upward trend.

"Our view at the time was that it was a spike rather than an upward trend, and this has been borne out by the year end statistics."

In spite of the rise in crime during June, July and August retail crime statistics have remained steady since December and are continuing to decrease gradually.

When comparing the months March and April 2010, there were nine robberies in March that took place at shopping centres with a financial loss of R897, 744 and 10 in April with a loss of only R317, 416. Robberies which were targeted at stand alone shops in March were seven with a financial loss of R138, 638 and only four in April with a loss of R74, 532.

"We have focused on a range of measures to make our members' stores less attractive to robbers. This has paid dividends in that not only have the number of incidents decreased, but the average financial loss per incident has dropped dramatically – in some instances 5 or 6 robbers got away with less than R1, 000," Broughton said.

However, burglary incidents reported increased during the month of April. Burglary incidents reported by CGC members increased 37% to 37 in April 2010 from 27 last year. Financially this resulted in losses amounting to R1, 9m from R1, 1m last year, an average of R50, 954 loss per burglary.

The CGC's Crime Prevention Programme continues to study the modus operandi of the robbers and looks for new ways to counteract them. New "Best Practices" are being developed all the time.

Broughton also commended the improvement in the response by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the number of arrests.

"The SAPS have really upped their game," Broughton said.

The SAPS have also formed a partnership with the CGC and its members to tackle crime related issues within the retail industry and develop strategies to reduce crime levels going forward.

When comparing provinces; Gauteng was the high-risk province with a total count of 9 robbery incidents amounting to a loss of R213, 532.

With regard to burglaries, Gauteng had 14 robbery occurrences in April resulting in a financial loss of R675, 499. It was followed closely by the Western Cape with 11 incidents and Eastern and Northern Cape with three respectively.

Losses resulting from cash-in-transit amounted to R231, 000 for the month of April.

Broughton concluded: "Crime Prevention is everyone's responsibility and our members have recognised this, and have come together to combat the scourge.

"We urge all retail businesses, big and small, to get involved. It is only through standing together, sharing information, building on each others' experience and expertise, that we are able to be successful in the fight against Crime."

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