

Suspect arrested for masquerading as labour inspector

An alleged criminal has been spotted and apprehended by the South African Police Services in the Warden (eastern Free State) farming area.



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The individual has been visiting farms in and around the town under the false pretence that he was sent to conduct inspections and offer training on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) by the Department of Labour.

The alleged fraudster's name is Tlalenyane Elias Ramathe. He is currently in police custody and appeared before Warden Magistrates Court on 10 April 2018.

He has been remanded in custody and will be appearing in court for the second time on 19 April 2018 for bail application.

Preliminary investigations conducted by the department revealed that the suspect never worked for the department.

Upon further interrogation by the police, he claimed to be working for the Department of Public Works.

After liaising with the said department, it was discovered that he was a mere intern for the department between the periods

2006 to 2007.

The Department of Labour has learnt that this self-appointed person masquerading as an official contracted by the department is conducting bogus labour inspections and illegal trainings on OHS to employers in the Warden area.

Once these flawed trainings are concluded, he then demands that employers pay him a total of R4,000 for each of those trainings. He even issues unscrupulous competency certificates to attendees of these courses.

“We therefore urge employers and the clients of the department in general to be wary of this individual. He is nothing but a crook trying to milk you of your hard-earned monies.

“We further appeal to the business community and the society at large to verify with the department the legitimacy of anyone with suspicious motives claiming to do business on behalf of the Department,” said Nomfundo Douw-Jack, Chief Director: Provincial Operations in the Free State province.

“We would also like to commend the Warden police for their swift response in arresting this alleged criminal. It is through inter-governmental relations and corporations of this nature that the necessary in-roads will be made in our endeavours to curb lawlessness and acts of criminality perpetuated against employers and workers alike,” Douw-Jack said.

Some of the common factors an employer needs to note to differentiate between a legitimate labour inspector and a fraudster are the following:

- The labour official will always use a departmental email address in his/her correspondence.
- The Department of Labour has its own Inspectors responsible administering compliance to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and will therefore never appoint a private individual to assume the role of any of its inspectors.
- These officials always carry and should, upon request, produce identity cards and/or appointment letters with the Department's letterhead.
- The Department is well aware that this individual, together with other villains like him, can try and manufacture their own identity cards and appointment letters, thus it also encourages employers to contact the Department of Labour HR office should they somehow still suspect foul play. The number to call is as follows: +27 (0)51 505 6230/31.
- Alternatively, they can contact fraud hotline on: 08600 22 194/ fraud@labour.gov.za.

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