

CGCSA: sending a warning

"We always need to stay a few steps ahead of the criminals to avoid becoming yet another statistic," cautions Michael Broughton of the Consumer Goods Council's (CGCSA) Crime Prevention Programme. "Our new 'Amavuso' SMS Instant Alert System is another of our pioneering innovations that is proving to be highly effective in preventing rather than reacting to crime." The service sends out an instant alert to all stakeholders about high level crimes occurring in their vicinity.

"Amavuso" means "warning" and will be an invaluable weapon in the armoury of both the police and business at all levels. "Amavuso is a user-friendly system which can send SMS messages nationwide," continues Broughton.

Alert forwarded

"The crime alert SMS messages will be forwarded to MANCOM Champs, CEOs of major store groups, store managers and area managers, as well as SAPS members and individuals with a vested interest in crime prevention.

When an alert message is received, certain steps should be taken immediately. "If you have large amounts of money on the premises, place them in drop safes immediately," Broughton advises. "Ensure that security guards have been alerted and know exactly what to look out for. Similarly, your branch manager and staff should be warned that criminals could be attempting a robbery. If perpetrators are sighted, don't hesitate to press the panic button and summon the police.

"It is important to be aware of potential threats so that greater measures can be taken to protect against falling victim to the ever-more organised criminals," states Broughton. "The ultimate aim is to create a safer environment which does not encourage any form of criminal activity. This type of alert will act as a significant disincentive."

Contain information

Messages will contain specific information on the methods adopted by criminals, especially with regard to Schedule 1 incidents, which include armed robberies, burglaries, hijackings and cash-in-transit heists. Other warning messages will include details about suspicious vehicles or individuals.

The system enables messages to be sent to targeted geographic areas, thus also enhancing its cost-effectiveness. "Since messages can be incident- or company-specific, or a combination of these, recipients can elect to receive only those messages which they consider as a priority," concludes Broughton. "The recipient database is updated regularly as the Crime Prevention Office is informed of changes."

Information on how to receive Amavuso messages can be obtained from Selma Black at +27 (0)861 101 726.