

MEDIA STATEMENT

CROWN ILLEGAL CONNECTIONS REMOVED AMID CITYWIDE DEBT CRACKDOWN

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Illegal Connections Removed at Crown Informal Settlement as Joburg Intensifies Crackdown on Non-Payment customers in the Inner City

City Power has removed and confiscated more than 10,000 kilograms of illegally connected aluminium cable, valued at approximately R500,000, during a coordinated operation at the Crown informal settlement on Wednesday, 16 July 2025.

The multi-disciplinary operation, led by City Power's Revenue Protection Services, Security Risk, in collaboration with the South African Police Service (SAPS), Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD), targeted illegal electricity connections that continue to cripple the electricity network and threaten the safety of communities. The cables were unlawfully linked to the City Power grid, supplying power to the informal settlement.

This is not the first time illegal connections have been removed in the Crown informal settlement. Previous disconnection efforts over the past year in the same areas have been undermined by repeated illegal reconnections, indicating a persistent and organised effort by criminal syndicates. As a long-term intervention, City Power is now exploring the relocation of the transformer substation in the area to a more secure location where it will not be susceptible to tampering.

Illegal connections have a catastrophic impact on the electricity network, significant damage to infrastructure, lead to widespread outages due to overloading, and cost the utility billions in lost revenue. City Power loses R2 billion annually in non-technical losses, including illegal connections and meter bypasses. Meanwhile, industrial companies located close to informal settlements are directly affected by illegal connections due to the frequent power outages caused by overloading. This results in businesses halting operations, which in extension impacts the economy. These illegal connections deteriorate City Power's infrastructure, compromising the reliability of the electricity network while also endangering the lives of both residents and City Power technicians.

The Crown operation forms part of a broader and intensifying revenue recovery campaign spearheaded by the City of Johannesburg.

Today's Revenue Collection Drive in the Inner City, led by Acting Executive Mayor, Councillor Jack Skwaila, in partnership with City Power, Johannesburg Water, and the City's Public Safety Department, took decisive action to recover outstanding municipal debt by disconnecting water and electricity services to delinquent businesses and residential complexes.

The campaign aims to recover R1 billion in unpaid municipal bills over the next six months. City Power alone is grappling with R10 billion in unpaid electricity bills, of which approximately R3 billion is owed by businesses, particularly large power users in the Inner City Precinct.

Today's operation resulted in the disconnection of six large businesses, including a building housing a higher education institution with arrears of R4.9 million. In total, the campaign by the City of Johannesburg is targeting 1,062 municipal accounts, with a total arrears balance exceeding R1 billion. Key focus areas include Marshalltown, Fordsburg, and Doornfontein.

City Power encourages indigent households, including pensioners, child-headed homes, and those earning R7,503.01 or less per month, to register to qualify for Free Basic Electricity (FBE), which provides 50kWh per month to help meet essential household needs.

Customers on the resident prepaid low tariff (indigent customers) will remain exempt from the R70 service charge and R130 network capacity charge, totaling R200. This ensures continued relief for the most vulnerable customers in the current economic climate.

Registration is available at City Power SDCs, City of Johannesburg regional offices, and through pop-up sites at malls, taxi ranks, via door-to-door campaigns and community imbizos. Customers can also download the FBE registration forms on the City Power website www.citypower.co.za. This initiative forms part of our strategy to ensure equitable access to electricity, protect infrastructure, and maintain financial sustainability.

ISSUED BY CITY POWER

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