JOZibill Newsletter EDITION September 2026

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City of Johannesburg warns residents of sophisticated scams targeting property owners

Written by **Poppy Louw**

The City of Johannesburg has issued an urgent public warning to residents and property owners following an escalation in sophisticated fraudulent schemes targeting municipal account holders.

The scams involve criminals impersonating City officials, Johannesburg Water and City Power employees or contractors through fake emails, SMSs, letters, telephone calls and door-to-door visits.

In an alarming development, criminals are now physically visiting private properties, presenting fraudulent job cards or identification and threatening residents with immediate water or electricity disconnections – including customers whose municipal accounts are fully paid and up to date.

In several reported incidents, individuals have demanded immediate cash payments or electronic transfers to prevent an alleged disconnection. Residents have reportedly suffered financial losses ranging from approximately R3 500 to as much as R120 000, with funds transferred into fraudulent bank accounts.

The City has also identified telephone numbers being used in reported fraudulent activities, including 076 237 2438. Residents are urged to exercise extreme caution when contacted by individuals demanding urgent payment or claiming that a disconnection can be stopped through an immediate payment.

Group Finance Director: Communications and Stakeholder Management, Kgamanyane Maphologela, condemned the criminal exploitation of residents and property owners.

“We are deeply concerned by the increasing sophistication and physical audacity of these scams. Criminals are impersonating Johannesburg Water and City Power officials, arriving at residents’ properties and using the threat of immediate disconnection to extort money.

“Residents must understand that a demand for cash, an EFT or an immediate payment at their property is a major red flag. No City official, technician or authorised contractor is permitted to collect payment from a resident at the property in exchange for preventing or cancelling a municipal disconnection,” said Maphologela.

He urged residents not to allow fear or pressure to override basic verification procedures.

“We want to make this unequivocally clear: do not pay anyone who arrives at your property demanding money to stop a disconnection. Verify your account through official City channels and report suspected fraud immediately.

“Protecting residents from these criminal activities requires vigilance from all of us. Residents should know their rights, understand the legitimate credit-control process and never allow criminals to exploit uncertainty about their municipal accounts,” added Maphologela.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE: LEGITIMATE CREDIT CONTROL VS A SCAM

Residents can use the following principles to distinguish legitimate City credit-control processes from fraudulent activity.

FORMAL WRITTEN WARNING BEFORE DISCONNECTION

- The City follows a formal credit-control process and issues written communication regarding outstanding municipal accounts and potential service restriction or disconnection.
- Residents should verify any alleged disconnection against their official municipal account and statements through authorised City channels.
- Do not rely solely on a WhatsApp message, telephone call, email or document presented by an individual at your property.

ALWAYS VERIFY IDENTIFICATION

- Residents have the right to request identification from individuals claiming to be City officials, Johannesburg Water or City Power employees or authorised contractors.
- Legitimate personnel should be able to produce valid identification and relevant work documentation.
- If you are uncertain, do not simply accept the identification presented. Verify the person's details through official City channels before allowing access to your property.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ON-SITE PAYMENT DEMANDS

Residents must never hand cash to, or make an electronic transfer to, an individual who arrives at their property demanding payment to prevent a disconnection. A demand for:

- cash;
- an EFT;
- payment into a personal or unfamiliar bank account;
- a “cancellation fee”;
- a “reconnection fee”;
- a bribe; or
- an urgent payment made directly to an individual should be treated as a serious warning sign of possible fraud.

Do not pay. Do not negotiate. Verify first.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DEBT

- Residents should use only officially recognised City processes when entering into payment arrangements, acknowledging debt or resolving outstanding municipal accounts.
- Do not conclude financial arrangements with an individual who contacts you by telephone, SMS, email or at your gate and demands immediate payment into a personal or unverified account.
- Where an Acknowledgement of Debt or other formal legal settlement is required, residents must use the City's authorised processes and facilities.

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A message brought to you by:
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BE ALERT TO FAKE EMAILS AND LETTERS

The City has also identified fraudulent correspondence bearing distorted City branding and using email addresses designed to appear legitimate. Examples of fraudulent addresses identified in reported incidents include:

- joshua@joburgcity.co.za
- creditcontrol@joburgcity.co.za
- legal@joburgcity.co.za
- maxinebotha@joburgcity.org.za

Residents should be particularly cautious of email addresses using variations of the City's official domain. The City of Johannesburg's official municipal email domain is: @joburg.org.za. Residents should not respond to suspicious correspondence, click on links, open unexpected attachments or make payments based solely on instructions contained in an unverified email.

USE ONLY APPROVED PAYMENT CHANNELS

Residents are urged to use established City payment channels and to independently verify banking details before making any payment.

PRELOADED BANK BENEFICIARIES

When making payment through supported banking platforms, residents should use the preloaded "City of Johannesburg" beneficiary rather than manually adding banking details supplied by an individual. Residents should exercise caution when presented with instructions to add a new beneficiary or change existing payment details.

STANDARD BANK CIN PAYMENTS

Residents can make payments through Standard Bank using the City's Customer Identification Number (CIN) functionality available through the bank's payment system.

e-JOBURG DIGITAL PORTAL

Residents can access their municipal account information and use the City's authorised digital payment facilities through the official e-Joburg platform: www.e-joburg.org.za.

OFFICIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES

Residents can also make payments and obtain assistance at official City customer service centres.

IF SOMEONE ARRIVES AT YOUR PROPERTY DEMANDING PAYMENT

If an individual claiming to be a City Power or Johannesburg Water official or contractor arrives at your property and demands payment or threatens an immediate disconnection:

DO NOT PAY

Do not hand over cash or make an EFT or digital payment to the individual.

DO NOT BE PRESSURED

Do not allow threats of immediate disconnection to force you into making an unverified payment.

VERIFY

Check your municipal account through an authorised City channel or visit an official customer service centre to establish whether there is a legitimate outstanding amount or service-related instruction.

DO NOT PROVIDE UNAUTHORISED ACCESS

If you are uncertain about the person's identity or authority, do not allow them onto your property until their credentials and the purpose of the visit have been independently verified.

REPORT THE INCIDENT

Suspected fraud, attempted extortion and fraudulent impersonation must be reported to the City's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Hotline: 0800 002 587.

Residents should retain any suspicious letters, SMSs, emails, telephone numbers, banking details, photographs, job cards or other information that may assist investigators.

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