



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION SERVICES

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TO: ALL MEDIA

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EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOAX CALLS

Every year around the holiday and festive season the Emergency Medical Rescue Service call centre gets flooded with hoax calls. Approximately between 2 and 3 percent of calls received by EMRS are hoax calls. Around this time some areas, see a significant increase in the number of hoax calls. These calls do not only waste much valued time and scarce resources. The department can lose thousands of rands from just one hoax call. Hoax calls cause great inconvenience and can put at risk the lives of people really in need of medical assistance. The department is trying very hard to make sure that the limited resources are spread throughout the province and one hoax call is one too many. The bulk of the hoax calls are made by children over the holiday period. Some of the callers can be rude and this can cause a lot of stress for call operators and it wastes a lot of time for them trying to explain to a caller that making a hoax call is not right.

Such calls do not only jam the lines for genuine callers but it also costs the department a lot of money. To dispatch one ambulance with two crew members costs R134 per hour and approximately R 7 500 per hour for a helicopter.

The table below shows the number of hoax calls received in each district over a three-month period.



DISTRICT	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Ugu	30	9	10
UMgungundlovu	38	35	25
UThukela	127	26	64
UMzinyathi	18	16	18
Amajuba	27	16	5
Zululand	32	18	11
Umkhanyakude	6	3	0
UThungulu	6	12	5
Ilembe	0	0	0
Sisonke	76	4	5
Ethekwini	82	63	61

Parents are urged to teach their children about hoax calls and how they can endanger the lives of people who are genuinely in need of swift medical attention.

Making a hoax call is a criminal offence and the department is set on catching the culprits.

In an emergency the public is urged to call: 10177

ENDS

For more information please contact Mr Kholekile Ntsohi (EMRS) on 033-395 3093 or Mrs Lindiwe Khuzwayo on 083 393 9943