

Vandals leave residents in the dark and the municipality out of pocket.

Vandalism of electrical infrastructure is illegal, unsafe and costly. “Obviously there are safety risks to consider when vandalising our electrical equipment,” said Knysna acting municipal manager Dr Michele Gratz. “But it can cost us almost R4 800 to fix a single streetlight, depending on the damage and the type of light.”

The municipality has had to repair more than 15 streetlights in Hornlee alone during the past month. “Vandals usually damage the light fittings, day/night-switch, and cables or remove the covers at the base of the poles, shorting out the circuits.”

“Repairing an older streetlight can cost the municipality up to R1 945.00, while fixing a newer LED-type streetlight can cost as much as R4 795.00. And it’s not a case of simply changing a lightbulb,” she explained. “There are many costs to consider: it costs us money to run the cherry picker; we have to pay an artisan and assistant; and, depending on the damage, various components must be replaced. These include, but are not limited to, light fittings and -bulbs, cables, day/night-switches and LMS- and timer relays.”

The municipal electrical teams’ capacity is limited, which means that other matters are left unattended as the same lights are constantly in need of repairs. “Sometimes the same lights need to be fixed four or five times within a short period of time.”

“The safety and security of our residents and visitors is one of our top priorities. This is why we have streetlights. People who engage in these kind of activities are placing their neighbours – and everyone else - at risk by creating unsafe, unlit areas,” she added. “They are also in effect taking money from their neighbours, as we have to use rate payers’ money to fix this vandalised infrastructure.”

“Vandalism is a crime,” Dr Gratz concluded. “Do not be a party to it and, should you witness an incident of vandalism or be aware of one, please contact our electrical department. We need your help to stop this senseless activity, to stop the additional spend associated with it and to maintain our community and guests’ safety.”

Alert the municipality of acts of vandalism by calling 044 302 6397/399 or sending an SMS to 44453. Alternatively download our mobile app from your app store to report vandalism anonymously.

ENDS
