

Domestic theft on the rise

DOMESTIC theft is on the rise according to Justicia Investigations who said cases in the first half of this year have increased by 70 per cent on the number of cases handled during the first half of last year. Last month the company investigated 10 incidents in the greater Durban area.

Alan Carey, operations director of Justicia, puts the increase in what he formally terms 'domestic dishonesty' down to a combination of factors, including a tight economy, rising food prices and taxi and bus fares. "Although much theft within homes involves opportunistic, petty theft, criminals do use vulnerable people earning low wages to get information," he warns

"A domestic crime is painful and stressful because it has happened so close to home. Small things lead to bigger crimes and, once a trust relationship has been violated, it is gone. Unfortunately, people don't act when they should because they are often afraid that the culprits will come back," he said.

However, Carey stresses that if correct procedures that protect the rights of both employer and employee are followed, and home-owners are aware of and use the expertise available to them, this seldom happens. Most importantly, he said, employers should do a full evaluation and pre-employment check on new employees, especially those in a position of trust or caring for children or the elderly.

Carey also advised that home-owners should prevent unpleasant situations by locking away valuables and not leaving money lying around.

In Durban North, one domestic worker was arrested last month for fabricating a robbery in Forest Drive. Lt Raymond Deokaran, spokesman for the station, said the domestic worker alleged she was tied up by men wearing plastic bags over their heads.

"After our initial investigation, we brought the domestic worker in and she confessed that she had staged the robbery with an accomplice," he said.