

ATMs Across SA Could Be Fitted With Pepper Spray

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Sunday, 12 July 2009 05:53 -



ATMs across the country could be fitted with pepper spray to stop criminals from tampering with the machines, said Absa on Thursday.

"Absa is piloting this initiative and depending on how successful it is, then this will be rolled out around the country," said spokesman Patrick Wadula.

This came after The Star newspaper reported that Absa had fitted 11 ATMs across the Cape Peninsula with pepper spray to deter ATM bombings and card skimming.

Three people doing routine maintenance of the machine were treated after inhaling pepper spray on the weekend in Fish Hoek.

The pepper spray was accidentally emitted from the machine while the workers were inspecting it.

Wadula confirmed the incident but could not divulge details about the introduction of the new technology, citing security reasons.

The technology uses cameras to detect people tampering with the ATM slots. Another machine then ejects pepper spray to stun the culprit while the response teams rush to reach the crime scene.

The FNB and Standard Bank spokesmen declined to say whether their banks had introduced the new technology.

"Even if we were using it [pepper spray technology] we wouldn't want to alert criminals... One has to always keep a step ahead of the criminal," said Erik Larsen of Standard bank.

Comment from Sabric, the company responsible for combatting crime in the banking industry could not readily be obtained.

Source : Sapa /tn/ks
Date : 09 Jul 2009 17:42