



“At the end of the day, by hook or by crook, we’re making it work.”

Cape Town taxi disruptions having “massive impact” on cold stores

Truck drivers are avoiding the areas around a number of container depots and cold stores after a truck approaching a container depot was burnt out last week by protesting taxi drivers, disrupting Cape Town traffic in retaliation for the seizure of unroadworthy vehicles by municipal authorities. Trucks are not moving around at night.



A truck on its way to a reefer container depot in Dunoon, Cape Town, set alight last week. The driver was not injured

All gangs at the port were not working yesterday afternoon as employees were unable to get to work, and after a windbound spell earlier this week the port is closed for reefer containers until tonight.

The taxi industry, which has a history of turf wars and an abominable road safety track record, is holding Cape Town and its residents hostage after talks with the City of Cape Town broke down.

The national highway near Killarney and Dunoon was again closed last night, for the moment it has re-opened.

Steve Oosthuizen, managing director of Cape Fruit Coolers in Killarney, next to the highway connecting Cape Town with Citrusdal and Clanwilliam, says his management team didn't sleep much last night.



Cape Fruit Coolers cold store in Richmond Park, Killarney, Cape Town

"By the end of the day, by hook or by crook, we're making it work, even when it takes making twenty plans to get there. It's been challenging and stressful but it's also been exciting," Steve says.

These areas are still packing a lot of citrus for the European Union which are cooled at the cold stores situated along the highway.

Cold stores in Paarl are also affected.

"It's been really rough. The protests have a massive impact on us. Most of my employees live in the Dunoon area or come from Mitchells Plain, Langa and Gugulethu where people are intimidated not to go to work."

He explains that since public transport was disrupted by the protesting taxi drivers, they had to arrange a fleet of private vehicles to pick up employees at designated points. It worked until protestors got wind and made death threats to those who were attempting to go to work. The alternative of staying home, for many people, means not being paid for that day.

"People are very scared and I've told my employees that if they feel unsafe, they should stay at home. We've had to think outside of the box to get people to work."

They have since changed tactics, of which he doesn't want to reveal too much in the media.

"I am so unbelievably proud of my employees, coming to work despite the situation," Steve adds. "In times like these you see people's attitude, you see that people want to cooperate and they want to make it work. And it also strengthens your relationship with your clients – we are in constant communication about the state of the highway, whether it's open or not, and they understand. They tell me if they need to hold back fruit, they will."

Finding the positives out of the unexpected chaos into which Cape Town has been plunged has, he says, made him realise again why he loves the fruit industry (even if he's getting very little sleep at the moment).

Publication date: Thu 10 Aug 2023

Author: [Carolize Jansen](#)

© [FreshPlaza.com](#)

