

Feedback: Departmental Bargaining Chamber – 4 October 2023

OHS compliance and COVID-19 Regulations

The scheduled OHS meeting did not materialise owing to disruption at the head office premises. The PSA was aware of such disruptions. In the meantime, retired employees from Defence have been called up to assist the Department with compliance with OHS issues. The PSA raised challenges with OHS issues in the Department. Employees were injured on duty and, in most cases, their claims are not processed. The PSA proposed that the emergency gate and roller door be opened in terms of the non-compliance certificate issued by Labour inspectors. The employer is committed to engaging its principals to get a clear mandate.

Policy Task Team

The task team meeting did not materialise as agreed. Parties agreed to convene the policy task team on 13 October 2023 to consult and deliberate on the draft policies due for the review process.

Progress: Implementation of GPSSBC Resolution 5/2014 (Agreement on Recognition of Improved Qualifications in the Public Service)

The employer reported that three employees were paid and three were disapproved as their qualifications did not meet the requirements. The PSA requested to be provided with a comprehensive report by 4 October 2023.

Filling of vacant posts

The employer reported that a moratorium has been imposed on the filling of vacant posts owing to the cost-containment directive issued by Treasury. Critical posts will be identified. A service provider will be appointed to assist with vetting and verification for the recruitment process of critical posts. There is a need for critical posts to be filled to achieve the mandate of the Department. The PSA noted the report and urged the employer to prioritise the absorption of contract employees. The matter was agreed upon at the previous DBC meeting. The PSA indicated that a dispute of unfair labour practice would be lodged should the employer fail to absorb contract workers.

Inconsistent and biased bursary allocation vs value for money

The employer reported that employees who apply for bursaries on time and meet the requirements would

be considered. The PSA urged the employer to refrain from issuing bursaries to contract workers. The PSA further raised concerns that most employees are denied bursaries without valid reasons.

Defence Act employees in Administration and Security positions amounting to desertion of posts

The employer reported that some *Defence Act* employees left the building, and soldiers were brought on board to mitigate the risks owing to the protest by military veterans. Many high-ranking *Defence Act* employees were seconded for administration responsibilities. The PSA raised concern about the cost incurred by the DMV for the services of private security.

Provincial Coordinators/Helpdesk poor working conditions (POSIM)

The employer reported that provincial coordinators and help-desk officers who experienced poor working conditions at their workplace would be accommodated in Defence offices around the country. The PSA requested the employer to accommodate affected employees at military bases. The employer submitted the proposal for approval by management. The employer committed to conduct inspections at affected offices and provide feedback at the next DBC meeting.

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website (www.psa.co.za), send an email to ask@psa.co.za, or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER