

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **GOVERNMENT PRINTING WORKS (GPW)**

09-06-2023

## Update: Members suspended for requesting personal protective equipment (PPE)

The PSA was alerted by angry members that the employer is chasing them out of their workplace after they indicated their unwillingness to work without PPE. Members have been doing so for months with the hope that the matter would be addressed until they realised that the employer was not prepared to do address the matter.

The PSA was extremely disturbed and disappointed to learn that the GPW management has been operating the factory unlawfully by subjecting employees to work in an unsafe environment without the necessary PPE. When some employees confronted this unlawful act by the GPW, they were threatened by the Chief Executive Officer, telling them to go home if they did not want to work. When these employees stood their ground and insisted that they would only work when provided with PPE, the employer's reaction was another abuse of power by placing the employees on suspension, alleging insubordination and failure to obey a lawful instruction. Section 14 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* states that employees should take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of others. It further states that employees should carry out lawful orders relating to their health and safety. In this case, the expectation and instruction to employees to work without the necessary PPE is unlawful and disobeying such an instruction is not insubordination.

The PSA will be taking all necessary steps and measures to expose and challenge this unlawful conduct by the GPW as it places employees' lives at risk. As it stands, several GPW employees lost part of their limbs whilst operating machines and continue to work without the required PPE. Members are advised to report all acts of non-compliance by the employer to the PSA and to take precautions when executing their duties and prioritise their safety.

Members will be updated on developments.

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

GENERAL MANAGER