

Feedback: DPWI Department Bargaining Chamber – 18 November 2024

Non-compliance of DPWI buildings

Members will recall that the PSA tabled the matter following complaints from members that some departmental buildings such as Nelspruit Regional Office, Mthatha Regional Office, and Head Office (CGO Building) are non-compliance in terms of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The matter was reported to the Department of Employment and Labour for an inspection at Nelspruit, which led to the issuance of the Prohibition Notice. Subsequently, a meeting was held at the Nelspruit Regional Office (Nedbank Building) where a walkabout was also conducted. It was reported that owing to minor improvements, the Prohibition Notice for the third to sixth floors was converted to a Contravention Notice, however, the Prohibition Notice will remain for the seventh to tenth floors. Rental payment to *Tails Investment* (landlord) for Nedbank Building has been stopped as of August 2024 owing to the Prohibition Notice. The landlord was informed accordingly. Members are informed that the Nedbank Building remains closed until further instruction from the Department of Employment and Labour.

The Mthatha Regional office remains non-compliant, however, the employer reported that the landlord has submitted all plans to the local municipality for the issuance of an occupational certificate, air conditioners will be installed on all floors, and security upgrades including biometric and cameras catered for in the project plan. Temporary office accommodation will be considered although the plan is to build permanent state-owned offices. The PSA expressed disappointment with the employer about allowing employees to continue working from the same building that does not comply with the *OHSA*. The PSA demanded that employees be allowed to work from home in the meantime. The employer did not agree as it did not have the mandate. The PSA will consider options including engaging the Department of Employment and Labour to enforce compliance.

Waste Watercare facilities

Members are aware that the PSA engaged the employer and even engaged on a national roadshow to assess the conditions of employees at these facilities. The employer provided a progress report as follows: Employees who were stationed at Wartburg Police Station agreed to be relocated to Durban Regional Office; the sexual assault case was resolved; and the KZN Regional Office will deploy all general workers to Magistrates Courts across the province. The PSA noted the report and cautioned the employer to provide resettlement costs where necessary and ensure that terms and conditions of employees remain intact.

State houses

The PSA has tabled the matter following complaints that most departmental buildings are unoccupied, whilst others are illegally occupied. The PSA demanded that all unoccupied buildings should be leased to employees of the Department. Following numerous engagements with the employer, the Department has considered the PSA's demand and indicated that a policy should be developed, which will be signed by the Minister of the DPWI with concurrence by Treasury to govern the letting out of the state-owned buildings. At the recent meeting, the employer reported that the Department is in the process of conducting a workshop for all employees regarding the matter and confirmation details would be communicated to labour at the next meeting. The PSA noted the report.

OHS collective agreement

The employer reported that a draft Occupational Health and Safety Collective Agreement was shared with organised labour to provide input. It further reported that a task team meeting was also held to discuss the agreement at length and the Department is waiting for input from labour. The PSA indicated that it is still observing its internal processes, and further inputs will be communicated in due course.

Salary disparity

The PSA tabled the matter following complaints regarding salary disparities amongst employees known as Region A and B. The employer reported that the Director-General has finally instructed Human Resources Management to begin the process of aligning Regions A and B. The alignment of the positions will not only concentrate on Region A and B but will also focus on capacity in the organisation. During the recent meeting, the employer reported that the consultation process had commenced with the affected Regional Office and a progress report will be provided in the next meeting. The PSA noted the report and will continue to monitor developments.

Conditions of service: Security Officials, Call Centre, and Workshops employees

Members will recall that the employer tabled the agenda to conclude the Collective Agreement to establish a shift system. However, parties could not find each other, particularly on the overlapping of average hours for Security Officers. The employer reported that a letter was written to the Department of Public Service and Administration to seek clarity and advice on the issue of overlapping hours and the response is yet to be received. The PSA demanded that the matter be removed from the agenda until there are developments. Parties resolved to remove the matter from the agenda until the employer was ready to present developments.

Members will be informed of developments.

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

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