



## Load-Shedding: Staff Safety Concerns, PSA Calls For ‘Work-From-Home’

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WORKING IN THE DARK: A Home Affairs official assists clients in a dark room after Eskom implemented load-shedding  
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TelegramEmail Johannesburg – Staff safety concerns during load-shedding have prompted the Public Servants Association (PSA) to ask the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) to bring back the “work-from-home” policy. “It was proven during the Covid-19 lockdown that virtual work is effective and also contributes to cost saving for public service departments,” the PSA said. Eskom has been implementing various stages of load-shedding for weeks owing to inadequate electricity generation largely blamed on rickety power station units. The PSA said: “Apart from the severely negative impact of load-shedding on the country and the economy, public servants who are struggling to make ends meet under the current economic climate and in the absence of real salary increases over the past three years, are also directly affected”. Many workplaces in the public service, including schools, police stations, the Department of Home Affairs, and health facilities, are severely affected by the loadshedding, the PSA said. Most often there are no alternative energy solutions. “Employees are exposed to verbal and physical abuse by clients as they are unable to perform most duties during load-shedding,” the PSA said. “This further creates health and safety risks to employees owing to non-functioning equipment, including air-conditioning in buildings. “The current load-shedding impact has moved the PSA to request the DPSA) to participate in solutions to ease the burden on public servants.” The PSA on Thursday said it has proposed to the DPSA that the public

service must play an active role and contribute to immediate solutions that will alleviate the burden on the Eskom grid. “Measures [suggested] include staff rotation and virtual attendance by employees who are in a position to do so, as was the norm during the Covid-19 lockdown,” the PSA said. “These measures will also assist in workplaces reducing electricity consumption and ease traffic flow to allow essential workers to arrive at work on time. The PSA said it requested the DPSA to, “in the interest of service delivery, issue a directive to allow public servants to work virtually or, alternatively, implement a rotation system until the electricity crisis in the country has been addressed”.

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