

MEDIA RELEASE PSA concerned about Department of Employment and Labour's procedural irregularities in declaring and revoking health hazard status in Free State

DATE 16 April 2026

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the Department of Employment and Labour's procedural irregularities in declaring and revoking health hazard status in the Free State.

The PSA is not pleased with the Department's recent handling of occupational health and safety assessments at multiple government facilities including schools, where buildings were declared by officials as a health hazard and issued prohibition notices restricting access owing to non-compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The placement of these notices indicated that the buildings poses a risk to the safety of employees and members of the public.

After a few days, Inspectors of the Department, lifted the prohibition notices without any corrective measures being done by the employers, without further inspections being conducted by the Inspectors, and without addressing the occupational health and safety issues previously reported. This sudden reversal without transparency or documented procedure steps raises significant concerns regarding compliance with standard health and safety protocols, as well as the integrity and consistency of enforcement processes. It further affects the safety of people who continue to access the buildings.

Occupational health and safety regulations exist to protect employees and members of the public. Any deviation from established processes, particularly regarding the declaration or revocation of hazardous sites, must be thoroughly explained and supported by clear evidence and documentation.

In order to ensure transparency, the PSA urges the Department of Employment and Labour to provide a detailed explanation for the upliftment of prohibition notices at government facilities, the findings of follow-up assessments, inspection reports or compliance verifications conducted, and confirmation of whether previously identified hazards have been rectified.

END