

MEDIA RELEASE	COVID-19: PSA condemns non-compliance by Department of Public Works and Infrastructure
DATE	20 July 2020
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) as the Union that represents the majority of employees at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has noted with dismay that the Department's failed to follow occupational health and safety (OHS) protocols and COVID-19 regulations.

The Department has not decontaminating its head office building after a positive case of COVID-19 was confirmed on 9 July 2020 at the Annex and CGO building. The PSA wrote to the Department, advising to immediately close and decontaminate the offices according to OHS protocols. The Department, however decided to only close the building from 10 to 19 July 2020 without any deep cleaning or fumigating process being undertaken. It also issued a circular to staff, indicating that its opted to close the building for ten days and will not deep clean and fumigate the building.

The PSA was appalled by the unilateral decision taken by the Department's management without the involvement of OHS representatives. In addition, the Department of Employment and Labour was not engaged to issue an incident report. The PSA regards these actions as being reckless and irresponsible by exposing employees to hazardous working conditions. The PSA does not agree with the fact that employees must report back for duty in the absence of all OHS protocols being adhered to. The Department cannot risk employees' safety by prioritising production and service.

The PSA therefore urges the Department to reconsider its decisions and decontaminate the building before any employee can enter the building. The building must continue to be closed until the Department has complied with all OHS protocols. The PSA will also request the Chief Health Inspector in Gauteng to intervene in this matter.

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