

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA forced to act against Government Printing Works to protect employees
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the decision by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) to close the Government Printing Works (GPW) Bosman office in Pretoria owing to occupational health and safety non-compliance.

The PSA, representing the majority of GPW employees, has been vocal regarding the poor state of infrastructure at this office, which impacts to the health and safety of employees. In February 2025, the PSA lodged a formal complaint with the DEL regarding the poor and unsafe condition of the GPW building. Subsequently, a Labour Inspector issued five contravention notices, citing electrical defects, a leaking roof, lack of ventilation, lack of personal protective clothes, and the structural defect of the entire building. The Inspector recommended the appointment of a structural engineer assess the entire building. A structural engineer conducted an assessment and recommended that the building was inhabitable, and all occupants must be vacated.

The Inspector gave the GPW six months to report on progress with repairing identified defects. All employees were relocated to other buildings, except employees at the Manufacturing and Engineering Section. These 122 employees were retained in the hazardous building to continue production and printing of question papers, visas, Aarto papers, and other products.

The PSA was appalled by this decision and lodged a follow-up complaint with the DEL on 7 October 2025. A Labour Inspector conducted a re-inspection at the Bosman building, especially at the Manufacturing and Engineering Section, on 13 October 2025. The Inspector found that the GPW had failed to implement the recommendation by the structural engineer and found it to be in contempt of previous contraventions notices. The Inspector issued prohibition notices on all four areas that were found to be problematic. He instructed the GPW to close the Manufacturing and Engineering Section immediately on 14 October 2025. The Inspector also issued a confirmatory order, which provides for prosecution of the GPW's CEO as accounting officer for failing to put measures in place to remedy the identified defects.

The PSA welcomes the intervention by the DEL to close the unsafe working environment, which posed significant health and safety risks to employees. The PSA has continuously advocated for the protection of the employees' rights and the enforcement of occupational health and safety standards in government buildings. The GPW's management is urged to take immediate remedial actions to bring the building into full compliance before employees return to work.

It is unfortunate that the Manufacturing and Engineering Section is closed during a critical examination period. The Section was finalising the printing of question papers for upcoming examinations. The Section is also responsible for the printing of passports and visas. The PSA is committed to ensuring that employees are not subjected to

hazardous working conditions and will continue to hold employers accountable for non-compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The safety of employees cannot be compromised over production and profit. This matter serves as a stern warning to employers to prioritise the wellbeing of employees by maintaining safety measures at non-compliance with such regulation may result in prosecution.

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