

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA frustrated by Department of Employment and Labour's failure to conduct OHS inspections in Limpopo
DATE	16 April 2025
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) strongly condemns the failure by the Chief Inspector for the Department of Employment and Labour to conduct follow-up inspections in government buildings in Limpopo where non-compliance with occupational health and safety (OHS) were reported.

This dereliction of responsibilities has serious implications for the safety and well-being of employees and visitors. Despite numerous reports and complaints regarding unsafe working conditions, the Department has not taken the necessary steps to ensure that these issues are addressed. The lack of follow-up inspections is a dereliction of duty and a disregard for health and safety regulations.

The PSA reported the following departments and, to date, nothing has happened, leaving employees exposed to hazardous environment: Department of Employment and Labour (Lebowakgomo Labour Centre) at Magistrate Lebowakgomo; the Department of Agriculture in Chloe village Capricorn District; the Department of Education in Phokwane Circuits in Phokwane Village in Sekhukhune District; the Department of Education in Mogalakwena Cluster in Waterberg District, the Department of Health in Vleifontein Clinic in the Vhembe District, Emergency Medical Services in Witpoort in Waterberg District, the Department of Justice in Bela-Bela Magistrate's Office, SASSA in Makhado in the Vhembe District, the Department of Employment and Labour in Lebowakgomo; the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism; and all nature reserves in the province.

Of more concerning is that an inspection was done at the Labour Centre in Lebowakgomo and the report was withheld, with no action being taken. Following enquiry with the Chief Director Operations (CDPO), it was since undertaken to conduct another inspection and provide a report. To date the CDPO has not communicated anything to the PSA.

In addition, despite some inspections having been conducted, there has been no follow-up or enforcement of outcomes implemented. Attempts to obtain reports have been unsuccessful, leaving safety issues unresolved. The PSA has noticed that Department does not have capacity to deal with OHS matters in the province as there is not sufficient inspectors to handle the workload, leading to gaps in safety oversight.

The PSA calls on the Department of Employment and Labour to immediately rectify this situation by conducting thorough inspections and implementing corrective measures. The Department needs to provide clear and accessible reports on inspection findings and actions taken. There is a need to employ more inspectors to ensure thorough and regular inspections to prioritise occupational health and safety in the workplace.

It is imperative that the Department fulfils its mandate to safeguard the working environment in government buildings. In the meantime, the PSA will escalate the matter to the Minister of Employment and Labour to seek solutions.

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