

MEDIA RELEASE

**Another Government Department Building
Condemned**

DATE

5 October 2018

EMBARGO

None

ENQUIRIES

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Yet another Government Department building has been found not to meet the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Occupational Health and Safety inspectors of the Department of Labour, issued 8 notices on the building occupied by the Master of the High Court in Johannesburg. Four of the notices are prohibition notices. The department occupied the Hollard Building, in 66 Marshall Street Johannesburg, for a period of 11 years. The building has failed to meet several safety requirements, including:

- Emergency escape doors are locked.
- Files that staff have to work with daily in the filing room are covered in dangerous mold due to water leakage and damp.
- Storage of dangerous gas bottles in the building.
- Many exposed electrical wires.
- No water in toilets.
- Dirty air conditioners distributing dangerous air, causing respiratory problems.

Members working in this building have been exposed for a while to these dangerous working conditions. The problems were reported to the Justice Departments management on several occasions, however nothing was done. When the prohibition notices were issued the office manager of the Master's Office instructed staff to continue performing their duties. This in direct violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

The PSA has brought this contravention to the attention of the Director General of the Justice Department, requesting the immediate evacuation of the building and adherence to the prohibition notices. Failure to do so will result in the PSA applying to the Labour Court for an interdict.

Monica Venter Provincial Manager PSA Johannesburg said that, "too many government departments are exposing members to dangerous working conditions in buildings that are not maintained for many years. These buildings are in serious contravention of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The PSA will not stop until all government occupied buildings are safe and meet the necessary requirements as specified in the Act.

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