

FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICE

22-05-2020

Update on COVID-19 and the Steering Committee

Members are aware that the employer and labour created national, regional and management area steering committees to address matter raised with regards to COVID-19. During the last National Steering Committee Meeting, the employer emphasized that provinces should follow the escalation approach with matters raised and all matters should first be raised at the management Area Steering Committee then escalated to the Regional Steering Committee and only to the National Steering Committee.

During the last National Steering Committee meeting the following matters were discussed.

Community Corrections

The PSA emphasized again to the employer that it is irresponsible for the employer to request parolees to sign attendance during a monitoring exercise. This practice places officials at risk and this practice should stop immediately. The employer tabled a revised national protocol for community corrections. Parties provided their inputs and the employer has escalated the matter to be signed off after which it will be circulated to all provinces for compliance.

Reduction of Staff

Parties consulted on the possibility to reduce the current staff by 50% per shift. The employer requested time to consult provinces. A full report will be circulated to labour on 25 May 2020.

Payment of Circumstantial Allowance

Members who are not stationed at a correctional centre requested inquired as to why they are excluded from receiving the circumstantial allowance. The PSA raised it with the employer and the employer indicated that they have prepared a memorandum for the payment of specific occupational categories that were required to work every day during the lock down period. According to the employer the report is to be circulated to labour by 25 May 2020 on the additional categories who will receive the allowance.

Re-appointment of Ex-officials

The PSA raised a concern that during the COVID-19 period students are not being trained and it will have a negative effect on the staffing levels at centers soon. The PSA therefore, requested that the re-appointment of ex- officials be prioritized and the matric qualification entry requirement be exempted for ex-officials. The employer indicated that they have commenced with the re-appointments and will consider our position on the qualification requirement. Feedback will be provided in the next meeting.

Provision of Masks

The employer reported that they are looking into procuring new cloth masks for all officials. The masks must be blending with the uniform and possibly have the persons name on the mask. Labour proposed to look into the procuring of face shields and the employer indicated that they will consider this option too.

Returning to Work

The employer indicated that due to the announcement made to release around 19 000 offenders the employer needs to start with certain programs that are essential before offenders can be released. The employer indicated that these employees will therefore be recalled in order to start with the programs to prepare offenders to be released on parole. The employer indicate that all PPE protocols and safety measures will still be observed and strictly adhered too.

Accommodation Policy

The employer tabled the accommodation policy (Attached) for consultation. The policy aims to provide a framework for the allocation and management of official accommodation in the Department of Correctional Services. It consolidates all policy prescripts regarding the provision of official accommodation in the Department. The policy outlines the criteria for allocation and who qualifies to be provided with official accommodation as a work facility, in terms of Correctional Services Regulation 31. This considers aspects such as availability of officials in reaction to emergency situations; standby duty; state and personal security; hostage situations and riots; provision of health and meals; and direct supervision of centres.

Members are requested to peruse the policy and submit their inputs through their PSA Provincial Office or Full-time Office Bearers respectively.

Members will be kept informed of further developments.

GENERAL MANAGER