

Feedback: NDT Departmental Bargaining Chamber

OHS Compliance and COVID-19 Regulation

The employer reported that employees have been recalled in compliance with the DPSA Circular 27 of 2020. The DPSA Circular directs departments to recall employees under the National Lockdown alert level 1 and provides protocols that should be adopted by each department. The Department of Tourism reported that the only employees who have been recalled are those who have offices and whose presence will not cause social distancing challenges. Employees who are stationed at open plan workstations, where social distancing is not possible, have been permitted to continue working from home as well as those who share offices.

It was further reported to the PSA that on some of the floors where air conditioners are not functioning properly, employees have either being released as and when the aircon malfunctions and in some instances allowed to work from home. The PSA enquired about arrangements for employees who have children that are either released from schools early or not attending school every day as they normally would do. The employer indicated that employees are allowed to make arrangements with their supervisors and such requests are accommodated and dealt with on a case by case basis. However, managers have been urged to be understanding and accommodative. In instances where such permission is unreasonably withheld, members may approach the PSA for assistance to escalate the matter.

Employees with comorbidities have also been allowed to work from home and submit medical reports that are compliant with the DPSA Circular in order for them to continue working remotely. The employer has given all employees with comorbidities until 19 October 2020 to submit such reports, failing which they will be required to report at the office.

Policy and Procedures on the Management of Sexual Harassment

As previously submitted to members, the employer has tabled the Policy and Procedure on the Management of Sexual Harassment as a new policy to be adopted and applied in the department. The PSA participated in the submission of inputs where it was proposed to the employer to establish a Sexual Harassment Committee comprising of 5 members two of which will be members of labour. The purpose of such a committee is to ensure that the Sexual Harassment Advisor does not work in isolation but is accountable to the committee. The committee will not look into the merits of cases, but the merits will still be kept confidential and treated with the sensitivity they deserve. However, the committee will ensure that sexual harassment cases are handled appropriately without bias and unreasonable delays.

The policy is now due to be adopted at the Departmental Bargaining Chamber in order for it to be implemented. Members are afforded a final opportunity to raise any concerns regarding the policy or provide inputs to it before the PSA agrees to the adoption of the policy. Such inputs should be submitted to smabele@tourism.gov.za on or before 30 November 2020. Should the PSA not receive further inputs on the matter, the policy will be adopted and approved.

Members will be updated when there are further developments.

GENERAL MANAGER