

## Return to Work: COVID-19 Level 4 Lockdown

The video conference meeting took place on 6 May and the following issues were discussed:

### **Non-compliance of the Offices**

The PSA raised concerns on the failure by the department, in all five districts, in that there is no deep cleaning, screening of employees, no observation of social distancing, no provision of PPE, 100 percent of staff complement in some offices, no demarcation of queues, and determination of distances. The PSA demanded that the offices be closed as members cannot be exposed to the risk of infection by the employer's failure to comply with the safety regulations.

The employer reported compliance, regarding the staggered return of employees, marking of offices, disconnecting of biometrics, and having remote workers. The only problem is the management of long queues. Further, according to the employer, the disinfecting of workplaces was done by the cleaners except where there are no cleaners. The PPE have been provided but cloth masks are yet to be procured. The employer conceded that officials and members of the public are not screened, however are seeking assistance from the Department of Health. No office was provided with temperature monitors, but orders have been placed.

The PSA reiterated that compliance is non-negotiable and demanded that the offices be closed and that workers stay at home until the employer can fully comply. Furthermore, the PSA has engaged the services of the labour inspector to force the employer to comply with the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Since, then, the employer is aware of the matter and disregarded the PSA's call to prepare the workplace prior to recalling the employees. Members are advised to refrain from performing their duties in an unsafe and dangerous workplace.

### **Establishment of Committee**

The PSA further advised the employer to establish COVID-19 Steering Committees at provincial and district levels. It was agreed that all managers of the offices and the Shop Steward be part of the committee in all districts, which will report to the Provincial Committee on a weekly basis.

GENERAL MANAGER