

FOR PSA MEMBERS: LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

07-07-2021

Non-compliance with COVID-19 protocols: Mara Research Station

Members will recall that the PSA was alerted by concerned members regarding the deliberate failure by the employer to comply with decongestion of employees in terms of the COVID-19 regulations. The station was maintaining 100% attendance, contrary to Departmental *Circular 19 of 2021* and DPSA Circulars. The PSA escalated the matter to Head Office, which undertook to urgently investigate. Subsequently, Head Office regarded that it was better for the station to be visited so that the alleged non-compliance could be verified. It must be noted that whilst the said visit was being arranged, the country was moved to adjusted alert-level 4, which necessitated even more stringent compliance.

Subsequently, the PSA and Head Office officially visited the station on 5 July 2021. Upon inspection of the station and engagement with employees, it was found that the rotation system had not been implemented for essential workers whilst administration staff members are spread across their different sections. The arrangement does not in any way contravene the COVID-19 protocols as there is observation of social distance. Further, most essential-service workers were field workers who were not congested in the office but report to the office as and when necessary. The only issue that was a problem was the failure of the employer to ensure that there is soap in the toilets to allow employees to practice good hygiene, which is critical for protection against the virus. The employer undertook to immediately attend to the matter.

The employer is yet to disinfect the office where an employee recently tested positive for COVID-19, although the said office is locked. The PSA urged the employer to facilitate disinfection as required by COVID-19 regulations and ensure that, where applicable, tracking and tracing are implemented to contain the virus. Members are advised to regularly check and report OHS non-compliance and other work-related challenges to the PSA at queen.seema@psa.co.za or call (015) 295 0500.

Members will be informed of developments.

GENERAL MANAGER