

Feedback: Special Departmental Bargaining Chamber (DBC) – 16 September 2022

Hybrid Model Working Policy

The employer tabled the matter in the DBC and requested indulgence from labour to defer the matter to the Task Team for further deliberation. The employer reported that an occupational health and safety (OHS) risk assessment conducted in the DSBD-occupied building, located in the DTIC Campus, yielded several OHS related issues, including:

- Limited office space available to accommodate all employees at the same time.
- Ventilation challenges, which led to compliance deficiencies in respect of the *OHS*.

The Department has been working mainly from home (with a few minor exceptions) since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, as it was categorised as an essential service and has systems in place to monitor performance and expected outputs from employees. The Department has up to now followed a hybrid approach of working remotely whilst some employees, owing to the nature of their work, have been present in offices, when necessary, e.g., to access transversal systems (e.g., BAS, LOGIS, Persal, etc.).

During the lockdown period, the Department entered into a 24-month lease agreement effective 1 June 2022 until 30 May 2023. Owing to the long-standing OHS issues in the building and the noted increased productivity, the DSBD is currently piloting the hybrid model on office accommodation. As a result, the Department seeks to implement a hybrid model to accommodate the three distinct categories of remote, blended, and permanent-in-office working arrangements.

The Department has initiated a consultation process in preparation of acquisition of long-term office accommodation that will be occupied effective from 1 June 2023. Therefore, DSBD employees continue to work in the current arrangements (working from home full-time, except where employees are required in the office) to protect the well-being of employees and avoid service-delivery interruptions given the small number of our employees. Furthermore, the DSBD recognizes the advancement in digital technology in the present era and put in place the working remotely policy to effectively manage employee productivity to achieve its mandate.

Labour noted the tabling of the item and agreed to defer it to the Task Team for further engagement. Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website (www.psa.co.za), send an email to ask@psa.co.za or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

GENERAL MANAGER