

FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION (DWS)

24-11-2024

Update: Special Departmental Bargaining Chamber (DBC) meeting – 23 November 2023

Status of King William's Town office

On 7 November 2023, the PSA received a report from the employer that employees at the King William's Town office were on an illegal or unprotected strike and that it intended to take disciplinary action against them. The PSA gathered facts and found that employees were refusing to enter the building owing to safety concerns. On 13 November 2023, the employer sent two OHS representatives, accompanied by representatives from labour, from national office to conduct an inspection and compile a report on the building. After the inspection was completed, a report was compiled and sent to the employer. The PSA subsequently requested a special DBC to engage on the report and the way forward as employees were still not entering the building.

At the meeting, the PSA raised grave concerns regarding incidences of non-compliance with occupational health and safety (OHS) standards identified in the report. The PSA demanded that employees be allowed to work remotely because the building is unsafe whilst the employer is attending to defects identified in the report (*attached*). The employer conceded that there are areas of non-compliance but disputed that the building is unsafe and rejected the demand by the PSA for employees to work remotely in the meantime. The employer is placing reliance on the reports from the Department of Employment and Labour and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure that the building is safe. Furthermore, the employer indicated that it is attending to defects identified by both Departments and its OHS representatives.

After deliberations, parties agreed to have a meeting on site at the building on 24 November 2023 to discuss the report compiled by the OHS representatives with reference to identified defects or areas of non-compliance. Labour will be represented by local shop stewards who have been vocal about the status of this building. The decision reached by parties will then be brought to the DBC for ratification as to whether or not allow employees to enter the building.

Members will be informed of developments.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER