

FOR PSA MEMBERS: LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

07-11-2023

## Non-compliance with *Occupational Health and Safety Act*

Members are aware that the Department of Employment and Labour closed the unsafe building that housed Moletjie and Mogoshi Circuits after intervention by the PSA upon alert by frustrated employees who were subjected to poor and dangerous working conditions. The building did not have running water, no proper and functional toilets, leaking roofs, broken ceilings with electrical cables exposed, which could have caused fire, and no servicing of fire extinguishers. Sadly, the Department failed to secure alternative accommodation for employees, forcing them to report at the gate of the building since 24 May 2023. Employees had to work in their cars until August 2023 when they moved to a nearby school and were housed in a mobile class.

Moletjie circuit has some ten employees who are sharing two computers amongst them. They have to take turns using the computers, which is further impacted by loadshedding, resulting in a loss of production. Further, owing to the inability to access files and records stored in the closed building, employees are not able to provide reports as and when needed by the Province and District Management. Principals are also under pressure to provide the requested information, which is unfair as they must do the work of circuit offices. There is no filing space and privacy despite working with confidential documents such as question papers. The mobile class is challenging, particularly during loadshedding as it is either extremely hot or cold, depending on the weather, as there is no electricity backup. Circuit employees are temporarily housed at Maditshika Primary School in Ceres, Ga Ngwetšana village.

On the other hand, Mogoshi Circuit employees are worse off as they even do not have a mobile class to work in, they are working in their cars and under trees. They are currently reporting at Sekgwari Primary School, although their working tools such as printers are at Ipopeng and BK Matlala Secondary Schools. It is a major inconvenience for them to efficiently execute their responsibilities. Recently, they were informed that they would be reporting at the local headman's office where nine employees would be sharing one office. The employer does not care about the availability of transport, employees' safety and their cost resulting from the movement to all these temporary venues. The employer is also forcing employees to access a prohibited building to get furniture and other working tools without engaging the Labour Inspector, which is illegal. Employees are not even consulted but instructed by the uncaring employer who rules workers with an iron fist.

The employees took it upon themselves and engaged Aganang Municipality as it has proper buildings and offices that are vacant. The Municipality indicated that the Department could engage it, but this did

not happen. In a meeting on 2 November 2023, the PSA was informed that both the District Director and Infrastructure Unit were aware of the matter and have not been helpful, despite making empty promises.

The employees requested an urgent meeting with the Department of Education's HOD. Should the meeting not materialise, the matter will be escalated to the MEC as it is a crucial matter. Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who wish to join the PSA can contact Lawrence Muvhango at [Lawrence.muvhango@psa.co.za](mailto:Lawrence.muvhango@psa.co.za) / 082 880 8995 or Paulina Moloto at [Paulina.moloto@psa.co.za](mailto:Paulina.moloto@psa.co.za) / 082 880 8957.

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