

FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE (DOD)

08-07-2024

Feedback: Department of Defence Bargaining Chamber – 6 July 2024

Occupational health and safety (OHS) compliance

The employer reported that the OHS committee will be convened on 16 August 2024 to discuss the issue of dilapidated Brown Flats and Sunnyside Flats. The PSA confirmed its availability to attend the scheduled meeting.

Learning pathway: *Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP)*

The employer reported that it was unable to share the presentation regarding the learning pathway for public servants in the Department. Parties agreed to reconvene on 16 August 2024.

National and Provincial Labour Relations Communication Forums

The employer reported that it previously requested guidance from the DPSA about the establishment of workplace forums. The DPSA indicated that it was still drafting a national workplace forum framework in terms of section 78 of the *Labour Relations Act*. Parties agreed to remove the matter from the agenda until the DPSA finalises its processes.

Job evaluation (JE) processes

The employer reported that it intends starting with job evaluation processes for various jobs in the Department. The PSA noted the report and requested the employer to provide a list of jobs to be evaluated. The PSA further requested the employer to include labour in job evaluation committees. The employer requested to consult its principal and revert to the PSA about inclusion in JE committees. Feedback will be provided at the next DBC meeting.

Review: Acting Allowance Policy

The employer previously tabled the draft Acting Allowance Policy with amendments to change the cooling-off period from six months to two months for the same employee to continue acting in the same post. The PSA objected to the proposed change because it would allow the same officials to continue to act in positions continuously without a break. The draft policy was shared with members and inputs were duly received. It was then agreed that the six months cooling-off period would remain, and two months would only be applicable in exceptional circumstances where no other suitable candidates in the same directorates are available to act. The final draft will be shared with members before it can be adopted.

Filling of vacant funded posts: *Public Service Act* Personnel

The PSA previously raised a concern that posts that became vacant owing to natural attrition were not advertised and filled. The PSA complained that existing employees were overloaded with work. The PSA urged the employer to fast-track the process to fill vacant posts. The employer admitted that several posts had been vacated and not filled. The employer indicated that according to the cost containment implemented by National Treasury, only critical posts would be prioritised. It further indicated that only 1 331 posts would be prioritised in the current financial year. A list of all funded vacant posts would be shared in the next DBC meeting.

Demand for PSAP only to act in vacant PSAP posts

The PSA received reports that the *Defence Act* personnel were prioritised to act in vacant *Public Service Act* personnel posts. The PSA maintained that it was unfair for PSAPs to be overlooked to act in senior posts. The PSA demanded that PSAP be given opportunities to act so that they could also gain experience in senior positions. The PSA requested a list of acting positions. In response, the employer shared a Human Resources spreadsheet on employees acting in vacant positions, which reflected that on 32 vacant posts, only PSAP are appointed to act in those positions and further added that the Department is integrated where some uniform and non-uniform members can perform similar functions and that it was not always possible to confine acting appointments to one sector as it may be detrimental to productivity. The PSA welcomed the response and advised that it will monitor the process and report if there are further complaints.

Implementation of grievance procedure for PSAP-related grievances

The PSA raised a concern that the current grievance policy of the Department was contradicting PSCBC Resolution 14/2002. The current grievance policy does not provide clear timelines; hence grievance processes are prolonged unnecessarily. The grievance policy requires the grievance to be finalised within 80 working days instead of 30 working days. The PSA demanded that the employer should implement the provisions of PSCBC Resolution 14/2002 to avoid delays. The employer advised the PSA to escalate the grievances to Labour Relations sections, so that these could receive the necessary attention. The PSA welcomed the response and advised that it would escalate outstanding grievances as and when these are raised.

***Public Servants Act* Personnel (PSAP) to be migrated from Persol to PERSAL to align with other *Public Service* departments**

The PSA had previously raised concerns that whenever public servants received salary increments, these are delayed by three months. Such omission affected PSAP negatively. The PSA demanded that they be migrated from the Defence payroll system (Persol) to the PERSAL system. The employer responded that its records show that PSAPs have always been prioritised and added that the delay is sometimes caused by the Persol system, which is not configured to effect supplementary runs such as the PERSAL system. The employer further indicated that it would engage the DPSA and the State Information Technology Agency to rectify the omission going forward. The PSA welcomed the response, and it was agreed that in future employees will be advised and given reasons for delays.

Reviewed GPSSBC Resolution 3/2014 (appointment and release of full-time shop stewards)

The employer requested that labour should submit the lists of the shop stewards in line with GPSSBC Resolution 3/2014 which deals with organisational rights. The employer wanted the election of shop

stewards to be done according to clause 8.1.4 of the Resolution. The clause provides the exact number of members required in the workplace to elect a shop steward. The PSA interpreted the definition of “workplace” differently from the employer and maintained that shop stewards would be elected from various components of the Department as per clause 12.2 of the Resolution. Parties agreed to discuss the matter at the next DBC meeting.

Attendance of union representatives to observe staffing processes in DOD

The employer reported that it has on various occasions had to deal with several shop stewards who are claimed to be sent by unions to observe shortlisting and interviews in Staffing Boards and requested that labour must only send one representative per Staffing Board. Labour argued that at times Staffing Boards are sometimes convened for five days consecutively, and it becomes impossible to send one shop steward owing to the amount of work involved and other departmental tasks to be addressed and requested that Staffing Boards must not be convened to sit for consecutive days. The employer insisted that its policy provides for a single representative and that this should be complied with. The PSA committed to comply with the policy. It was also agreed that shop steward should be released for all the days the Staffing Board convenes and be not expected to perform any other duties.

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.

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