

FOR PSA MEMBERS: LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

29-11-2024

OHS non-compliance: Rehlahleng Special School, Ngwaabe Circuit, Steelpoort

The PSA witnessed serious health and safety concerns during a recent visit to Rehlahleng Special School in Steelpoort whilst attending to grievances of members. Rehlahleng is classified as a Special-Needs School and caters for children who have special educational needs owing to severe learning and physical disabilities. The PSA witnessed several learners slipping and falling on wet corridors and immediately conducted a further inspection. It was found that roofs were leaking onto the passageways between the recreation hall and classrooms, exposing learners to the risk of serious injury.

As a result of the fact that the employer had previously not dealt with a detailed risk assessment by professional Support Service employees at the School, the PSA requested the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) to conduct an inspection citing, amongst others:

- Leaking roofs and learners slipping and falling on floor tiles that seem to be purposed for indoor use. It had been raining and the floor posed a major safety risk to already vulnerable learners living with disabilities.
- Inadequate sleeping quarters: Matrasses and bedding on the floor in the recreation hall (possible overcrowding).
- Inadequate bathroom and toilet facilities for the almost 150 learners.
- Substandard kitchen and cooking facilities.
- Children having to walk on a public road as part of their daily exercise regime.

The DEL conducted an inspection on 28 November 2024. It was reported that the School was issued with nine Compliance Notices. The employer has been given 60 days in which to comply with the Notices at which time the PSA will be entitled to apply for the details of the Notices, which are currently classified as confidential, in terms of the *Promotion of Access to Information Act*.

The DEL is applauded for the swift, professional response to the PSA's request as this will ensure that the School is safe and does not pose a risk to learners and employees. The PSA will continue address issues where employers are contravening occupational and health standards. Members will be informed of developments.

Shop stewards and members are urged to report any non-compliance to the PSA as the health and safety of employees remain of paramount importance and cannot be left in the hands of uncaring employers. Such non-compliance can be reported to queen.seema@psa.co.za.

Employees who wish to join the PSA can contact Lawrence Muvhango on 082 880 8995, Paulina Moloto on 082 880 8957 or contact the PSA Provincial Office.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER