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## ***Grievance procedures in the Public Service:*** **Critical tool for effective workplace representation**

**T**he grievance procedure remains one of the most critical tools available to PSA shop stewards in ensuring that members' workplace rights and interests of members are protected and promoted. As front-line representatives, shop stewards must have a thorough understanding of the grievance process to uphold procedural fairness, promote labour peace, and secure favourable outcomes for members.

In terms of *Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSC-BC) Resolution 14/2002*, the grievance procedure provides a structured platform through which employees may raise complaints related to unfair treatment, working conditions, or the interpretation and application of policies or agreements. It is a mechanism designed to resolve issues internally and expeditiously, thereby preventing unnecessary escalation or prolonged disputes.

### **Key procedural elements**

The process begins when an aggrieved employee lodges a formal grievance in writing with the immediate supervisor within 90 days of becoming aware of the act or omission. The employer is required to acknowledge the grievance and respond within 30 days. Should the matter remain unresolved, it may be escalated to the Head of Department for further deliberation and, ultimately, to the relevant public service bargaining council or the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration, if not resolved internally. In some instances, certain matters may be referred to the Public Service Commission. It is vitally important to seek advice regarding the most appropriate forum to which refer the dispute.

**NB: Once the 30 days have elapsed, the onus rests on the employee to pursue the matter further. Shop stewards/members should carefully monitor the time frame. Members should also seek advice on when the 90 days commence as this could later pose a jurisdictional challenge. It is important for members to adhere or follow the grievance process as failure to do so may result in their disputes being rejected by Bargaining Councils or Arbitrators for lack of jurisdiction.**

### **Role of shop stewards**

PSA shop stewards play a pivotal role in guiding members through each stage of the grievance procedure. This includes:

- Advising members on their rights and the merits of their grievance;
- Assisting in drafting grievances to ensure clarity and alignment with procedural requirements;
- Monitoring compliance with time frames and employer responsibilities;
- Representing members in meetings and negotiations; and
- Escalating matters appropriately when internal processes are exhausted.

Proactive intervention and consistent application of the grievance process reinforce the PSA's commitment to service excellence, ethical conduct, and member advocacy. Effective use of grievance procedures resolves workplace disputes and strengthens the credibility of PSA representation.

Shop stewards are encouraged to continuously familiarise themselves with updates to relevant resolutions and policies, and to collaborate with PSA Labour Relations Officers for strategic support. The PSA is committed to ensuring that members' voices are heard and grievances are addressed with integrity and urgency.

**For assistance, shop stewards can contact the nearest PSA Provincial Office.**

Sources  
<https://labourguide.co.za/general/effective-management-of-grievances-in-the-workplace>  
<https://pscabc.co.za/index.php/collective-bargaining/collective-bargaining-indaba/2070-dr-dohvani-psc-presentation-to-pscabc-indaba-18-oct-2018/file>  
[https://www.psa.co.za/docs/default-source/psa-documents/newsletters/2019/dti\\_27062019.pdf](https://www.psa.co.za/docs/default-source/psa-documents/newsletters/2019/dti_27062019.pdf)

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**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**