

MAGAZINE

1/2025

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VISION

Enhancing the PSA's position as a politically independent trade union that is recognised and respected in both South Africa and the global labour market for its dominance and professionalism in the broader public sector, distinguished by its organisational agility, innovation, and responsiveness to labour and socio-economic issues.

MISSION

Continue to ensure the sustainability of the PSA as a Union and employer of Choice through ensuring effective member structures, Board, and Administration, expanding value-adding partnerships to protect the rights and to promote the interests of members in the relevant communication platforms.

The following values guide the PSA's conduct aimed at achieving the Union's mission:

Loyalty, transparency, respect, ethical conduct, consistency, and service excellence

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Editorial



Rooted in members

In 2025, the PSA marks the Union's 105th year of delivering professional, reliable service and driving progressive change in South Africa's public sector. The Union of Choice enters the new year reinvigorated and steadfast in its commitment to championing for the rights and interests of its members and, by extension, all public-sector employees.

The PSA's journey has been characterised by sustained efforts to build and expand a sustainable organisation. Transparent, ethical leadership is a vital quality required to ensure that the PSA remains focused on its values and mission. Leaders must remember that true leadership is not a title or a position, but the everyday actions to serve with excellence to uplift and improve conditions for PSA members. **This principle stands at the heart and foundation of the PSA.** The PSA can therefore focus on service delivery where the central goals are to meet the needs of members and enhance public service delivery in South Africa.

Leadership driven by a genuine purpose is what holds the Union together and defines it as the Union of Choice. For the Union to thrive and inspire confidence, it must embody values that go beyond personal ambition. Leaders should aim to build a legacy for inheritance by future generations that will instill their respect. Unchecked ambition, driven by personal gain rather than collective progress, poses a danger to the essence of existence. The PSA emphasises that every action, decision, and initiative must be rooted in the best interest of the Union's members. This was reflected in 2024 by the PSA's commitment to ensure that employees have a safe and conducive work environment. Various employers were held accountable for non-compliance to legislation. **Read more on the PSA's work and vision moving forward on page 11.**

More than 245 000 public-sector employees entered 2025 with their trust and hope placed in the PSA, relying on the Union of Choice to diligently protect and promote their rights and interests.

The PSA regards this trust as a responsibility and privilege, which are carried with respect and gratitude. Moving into this new year, the PSA's focus remains firmly on service delivery to members. By working together with integrity, transparency, and a commitment to service, we can increase the impact of the Union of Choice. In unity, the PSA and its members are capable of fostering change that benefits everyone, embodying leadership not as a single-titled position, but as continuous, dedicated action in all we do.

Thank you for your trust in the PSA. Together, let us further strengthen the foundation for public-sector employees across the country with service excellence for citizens.

Reuben Maleka
**GENERAL
MANAGER**





National Water Week

Water disruptions: Guidelines and protocols

Water shortage is the new reality South Africans are grappling. As the country's water crisis deepens, the lack of water, constant water cuts, and water shedding are directly impacting on public servants' ability to deliver services. Water interruptions at government departments or facilities across the country, often result in a shutdown of such offices or reduced services. Schools, hospitals, traffic departments, and the Department of Home Affairs have, amongst others, been affected. The situation is ascribed to aging and collapsing infrastructure, insufficient maintenance, and financial constraints, which also prevented the construction of sufficient new dams and reservoirs over the last 30 years.

Whilst government is scrambling to mitigate the effects of water disruptions, the PSA has proposed guidelines for government departments to manage water disruptions, which have been tabled at various departmental bargaining chambers. To date, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, the National School of Government, the Department of Defence, and the Office of the Public Service Commission have accepted the PSA's proposals and indicated that they will be working towards developing standard operation procedures or guidelines for discussion.

Employers have a fiduciary duty to put measures in place to mitigate water cuts caused by aging infrastructure or a general lack of water. Employers have a duty to develop policies or guidelines that will enable the release of employees from duty within two to three hours, allow them to work from home, and not recalling employees if the water supply has not been restored.

These measures are required for compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and the *South African Constitution*, which guarantees access to clean drinking water. To date, there is no clear legislation or regulations guiding the management of attendance during water interruptions besides reliance on the *Bill of Rights* as provided in the *Constitution* and the *OHSA*. Neither is there a specified period before employees are released from the workplace owing to prolonged water interruptions.

Guidelines

Government departments have advised employees to adhere to the following during water disruptions:

1. Every office must have a water tank with clean drinkable water, sufficient in size and capacity. The water tank must be maintained regularly by local property/facilities management (at least once every six months or as and when required).
2. Keep emergency contact numbers available on site at all times, including numbers for local municipality offices, or local water supplier.
3. Apply proactive measures and minimise health risk in the workplace.
4. In the event of water being depleted from the water tank, water containers or prolonged water disruption, officials should be released from work at least after three hours without water.

The PSA advises that these guidelines be applied uniformly and indiscriminately, but noting that they may be reviewed as and when the need arises.

Rand Water, the water supplier for Gauteng, in September 2024 warned about the province's high water consumption, including illegal connections and water leaks. Municipalities were instructed to impose daily limits. Residents and government institutions such as schools and hospitals were without water for days.

Water shortages at government facilities have caused serious disruptions to services. Kalafong Hospital in Tshwane, for example, scaled down on surgeries and redirected patients to nearby facilities. The University of Venda postponed examinations. At the Department of Home Affairs, Malamulele Office in Limpopo, employees were using buckets to flush toilets as there was no running water in the building. They also had to provide their own drinking water. Members of the public are equally treated in a disgraceful manner as public toilets are constantly out of order because of water shortages. The PSA raised concern in June 2024 regarding failure by the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) to adhere to the OHS Act based on a shortage of water and electricity at the IPID building. In the Free State, the PSA alerted members to pay attention to the responsibilities of employers and the rights of employees in ensuring a safe and healthy working environment during the ongoing water crises in Theunissen and Winburg.

The South African Social Security Agency's (SASSA) Records Management Centre in Cape Town in the Western Cape faced ongoing municipal drinking water quality challenges.

As a result, staff often had to leave the office during working hours. SASSA's Occupational Health and Safety Policy states that, "if a building or part thereof does not have basic services for the minimum period of two hours or more due to technical faults or circumstances beyond the control of the agency, that the relevant manager release employees/officials to either work from home or for managers to make alternative arrangements for critical services to be continued. This will be done after confirmation is received from the responsible official that such services will not be restored within the next two hours." SASSA informed the PSA that sufficient clean drinking water was procured as an interim measure and that it provided employees with ample quality drinking water throughout the water crisis. This version of events was refuted by members. The PSA called on the Department of Employment and Labour to assign a Labour Inspector to the address the concern.

Government's response to water crisis

In the 1980's, South Africa joined forces with Lesotho to establish the Lesotho Highlands Water Project to transport water from Lesotho to South Africa whilst generating revenue and hydroelectric power for Lesotho. The project encompasses a four-phase development plan, including extensive dam and tunnel construction.

Another initiative is the uMkhomazi water project which involves constructing a dam and an extensive network of pipelines to increase water availability in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality by 55%. It was recently announced that there is significant progress with the project to relieve pressure in KwaZulu-Natal.

The PSA will continue to defend employees' basic human right to clean drinking water as per the requirement of the South African National Standard 241 (read in conjunction with section 5 of the Water Services Act, 108 of 1997).

If you are unsure how to proceed during a workplace water shortage, contact your PSA shop steward or PSA Provincial Office.

Scan the QR code below to read the PSA's article: South Africa's water crisis and solutions.



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Impact on filling public-service vacancies

South Africa's public sector plays a vital role in delivering essential services, including health, education, and law enforcement, which are fundamental to the well-being and development of society. Ongoing budget cuts have, however, created severe challenges in filling critical vacancies across departments.

In the health sector, over 24% of positions at national level and 40% of priority roles are vacant. The Director-General of the Department of Health recently highlighted that the failure to fill crucial roles in the Department of Health undermines its ability to fulfill its mandate. Thousands of Community Health Workers have not been replaced after their contracts expired, affecting the Department's outreach efforts, particularly in rural areas. Over the past two to three years, budget constraints have resulted in a reduction of some 18 000 posts. The introduction of the National Health Insurance Bill will demand significant investment in the health sector. Programs such as community service placements for health graduates, are also underfunded. Adding to the challenges, National Treasury has directed all government departments to expect no additional funding, citing the need to prevent further financial strain. Treasury anticipated implementing additional budget cuts in 2024, threatening service delivery in sectors already struggling to support vulnerable populations.

The education sector's crisis is exacerbated by the Department of Basic Education's decision to slash thousands of teaching posts. This shortsighted decision will have devastating consequences for teaching and learning, particularly in under-resourced areas already burdened by overcrowded classrooms and insufficient educators.

The PSA is extremely concerned about the Department's approach, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, where severe budget shortfalls are placing more than 11 000 and 2 400 teaching positions respectively at risk in 2025. The PSA urged the Minister to intervene and address the funding crisis. The PSA is prepared to take decisive action to protect the Union's members and uphold the integrity of the education system. The repercussions of these decisions will be felt for generations with rising unemployment figures, dismal educational outcomes, and increased learner drop-out figures.

At the Office of the Public Protector, the PSA raised the alarm about ongoing vacancies for investigators, placing undue pressure on existing employees owing to increased workloads. This situation raises the risk of employee burnout. Unfilled positions, such as forensic investigation, forensic accounting, auditing, and technical roles in public procurement and supply chain practices, are crucial for maintaining efficiency. The PSA has urged the Public Protector to negotiate with National Treasury to lift the moratorium on hiring, as staffing these roles is essential to the Office's ability to meet its constitutional obligations.

The Department of Social Development is also under pressure, with increasing demands for social services professionals amidst rising youth unemployment. Currently, 23 561 social services professionals, including social workers, auxiliary workers, and child and youth care workers, are responsible for supporting communities. Projections in the National Development Plan indicate that South Africa will require 55 000 social service professionals by 2030 to meet the country's needs.

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In policing, resource shortages have hampered the South African Police Service. The Portfolio Police Committee Chairperson recently raised concerns about inadequate staffing levels at 10111 command centres. The detective services division, which plays a crucial role in crime resolution, is critically understaffed, contributing to a backlog of around 70 000 DNA cases. This impairs the justice system's capacity to address gender-based violence and other serious crimes, highlighting the broader impact of budget cuts on public safety and the criminal justice system. The Department of Correctional Services suffered a budget cut of more than R11 billion over five years, whilst the Border Management Authority has a budget shortfall of R4 billion and 8 500 vacancies.

In the Finance Minister's medium-term budget policy statement, he announced that National Treasury had set aside R11 billion to encourage older public servants and those in non-critical skills jobs to take early retirement to curtail government's wage bill. At least 30 000 workers will qualify for the programme, creating a further loss of workers and vacancies. The public sector further has an issue of "ghost employees", people who appear on government's payroll but do not report for work and, in some cases, are deceased.

The Auditor-General found that in, for example, Mpumalanga, more than R6 million in fraudulent payments were made to ghost workers at the Department of Education, adding to the public service wage bill. Most government departments are affected by this critical situation.

The public service is experiencing a severe depletion of critical skills, which departments cannot replace at the same rate as being lost. Austerity measures and budget cuts limit the ability to hire and retain skilled professionals. When experienced staff leave or retire, departments have decreased resources to deliver essential public services, resulting in a significant gap in service capacity. As a result, the quality of service is declining, causing growing frustration amongst by community members. This often boils over into violence against public servants. Vacancies means remaining employees often take on additional responsibilities to cover critical service areas without formal acting appointments or appropriate compensation.

This leads to immense stress on employees' health and wellness, as they are tasked with duties and responsibilities that may exceed their expertise and capacity, exposing them to significant risk. This pattern of overburdened employees compromises service quality and sustainability. A survey by the Department of Public Service and Administration indicated that workers are having difficulty with finding a work/life balance owing to being overstretched with inadequate support services.

Budget cuts by National Treasury will inevitably impact salary negotiations. When government claims financial constraints and reduces budget allocations to departments, any potential wage increase must be balanced against other priorities such as filling vacant posts. Employees may see improved wages at the cost of increased workloads. Addressing this requires a targeted strategy beyond immediate fixes. South Africa loses between R200 billion to R400 billion annually to illicit financial flows and tax avoidance by large industries. This directly undermines revenue that could support critical public services. Rather than cutting departmental budgets, government could prioritise empowering revenue agencies such as the South African Revenue Service, with the resources to tackle illicit financial flows. Such measures will reduce the significant revenue loss, ensuring adequate funding for public services, and reduce the need for budget cuts.

A well-functioning public sector is essential to attract investment that South Africa urgently needs. The PSA is steadfast in its commitment to exposing corruption and maladministration in public service departments. The PSA continuously speaks out against mismanagement, advocates for accountability, and calls for transparency to ensure public resources are directed towards strengthening services for communities and supporting employees tasked with this responsibility.

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The PSA offers **financial assistance** with funeral costs at the death of a member, provided that the application is received within six months of death



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In service of public-sector employees



Prosperous 2024 PROPELS PSA into 2025

The PSA provides consistent, reliable services in the public sector, impacting positively on the labour movement. The Union of Choice has made strides in ensuring improved working conditions of public-sector employees, as a cornerstone of professional, reliable service and progressive change in the South African public sector.

In 2024 the PSA continued building on this legacy, driving several campaigns. These included the critical need for employers to adhere to occupational health and safety standards. Various unsafe workplaces were closed to protect employees and members of the public who access public services. The PSA also expanded its service delivery by gaining organisational rights at the Special Investigating Unit, North-West Parks Tourism Board, and SANParks.

Various landmark awards were secured for members during 2024, including resolving a dispute with Gauteng Health Department after 14 years. The PSA navigated the complexities of the legal system in this case, resulting in a favourable ruling for members, and setting a crucial precedent for similar disputes. A host of satisfied members can further confirm how the PSA stepped in to assist them in their individual workplace matters, including providing legal assistance where required.

The PSA continued to advocate for the empowerment of women, including hosting a 2024 Women's Day event in KwaZulu-Natal. Key issues raised during the event included the promotion of women to leadership positions and democracy in the workplace, emphasising the need for employers to take decisive action against workplace bullying and victimisation. The PSA experienced a growth in younger public servants, including females joining the Union. Since 2018, female membership in the age group of 26 to 30 has grown from 512 to 11 142 in 2024.

Female membership in the age group of 31 to 40 grew from 1 279 to more than 28 000 in the same period. Females currently represent more than 64% of the PSA's membership, reflecting the trust of female public-sector employees in the Union. The PSA's Congress and Annual General Meeting in Cape Town is regarded as another milestone for 2024, marked by delegates celebrating unity, collaboration, and excellence in service of members.

The PSA continues to support the betterment of public services through various initiatives. In 2024, there was a focus on providing resources to clinics across the country to improve services to communities (*see page 25 for more information on the PSA's ongoing #ClinicProject*). In addition, life-changing corporate social investments have benefitted schools, police stations, and many communities, marking the PSA as a Union with Soul. The PSA further offer a range of fringe benefits to members, including free membership of *PSA Club*.

In 2025, the PSA remains firmly committed to focusing on critical issues affecting the public sector. Addressing pressing matters such as vacancies and infrastructure needs essential to maintaining efficient service delivery are key drivers. As is securing fair compensation for public-sector employees. The PSA will continue to confront corruption and maladministration, championing transparency and demanding accountability. The PSA will continue holding government accountable.

In all its efforts, the PSA is supported by its valued shop stewards who play a critical role in the dynamic growth of the Union and services to members. The PSA is dedicated to making a lasting impact in the public sector, strengthening protections, and advocating for the rights of public servants across South Africa.

**The PSA is more than a Union -
it is a dynamic movement for change!**

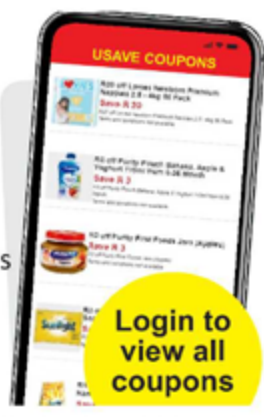


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#Advertorial

Void and Voidable Marriages in South Africa

An annulment of a marriage is the legal process in which a marriage is declared null and void or, in other words, treated as if it never came into existence. An annulment may be requested by any party to a marriage if it comes to be known that a fundamental flaw exists or if there is lack of a legal requirement.

The two categories for an annulment are "void" or voidable". The differences, grounds, procedures for declaration of such and consequences for these categories will be explored further in this article.

When is a marriage void or voidable?

A void marriage is seen as a marriage that never came into existence from the very beginning owing to a fatal defect or non-compliance with requirements as set out in the *Marriages Act 25 of 1961*.

A voidable marriage, on the other hand, is a marriage that was legally entered but may be declared invalid by a competent Court of Law. A marriage may be declared voidable if a defect existed at the time of entering the marriage to which one of the parties was aware of. What are the grounds for a void or voidable marriage?

A void marriage exists if -

- 1) A material defect is present, e.g., fraud, misrepresentation, and deception of for instance the identity of one of the parties.
- 2) There is non-compliance to prescribed legal formalities, e.g., the marriage was not solemnised by a registered marriage officer, no witness was present at the ceremony or if a minor was married without the proper consent from his or her parents.

- 3) There is non-compliance to material requirements, e.g., an existing civil marriage, mental illness, or incest.

A voidable marriage exists if -

- 1) One of the parties was not at the legal age for marriage.
- 2) A material mistake exists, e.g., mental illness.
- 3) There is a concealed existing pregnancy.
- 4) Impotence exists.
- 5) Sterility exists.

What process is to be followed to declare a marriage void or voidable?

In the case of a void marriage a court with the necessary jurisdiction will need to be approached for a declaratory order whereas in the case of the presumption of a voidable marriage, a court with the necessary jurisdiction will have to be approached for an order setting the marriage aside.

What are the legal consequences of a void or voidable marriage?

In both instances, whether a declaratory order has been given for a void marriage or if the court set aside a voidable marriage, there are no consequences and both parties will be placed in the same position as they were before the marriage.

If you are considering the annulment of your marriage, a family law attorney should be consulted to accurately assess the facts and provide advice on your rights and options going forward.

PSA members enjoy access to legal cost insurance policies at a specially discounted rate. Benefits include cover for legal costs, telephonic legal advice, and standard (non-personalised) legal documentation. Interested members can contact **Auto & General** on 086110 20 92, legalcostinfo@autogen.co.za or text your name and "PSA" to 44386.

National Police Day

More boots on the ground!



South Africa has experienced high crime rates for decades, and despite various Minister of Police and National Commissioners at the reign, very little has changed for citizens.

The country has the fifth highest crime rate world wide, consisting of assaults, sexual assaults, homicides and other violent crime, including gender-based violence against women and children. According to the *World Population Review*, contributing factors include, high levels of poverty, unemployment, inequality, social exclusion, and a generalised normalisation of violence.

This is not news to the many South Africans who have been victims of crime. In an attempt to bolster the South African Police Service (SAPS), 1 812, newly trained constables were deployed in October 2024, with more than 8 000 still undergoing training. A second batch of 10 000 officers was expected to start duty in December 2024. The aim is reaching the goal of one officer for every 220 persons, as in 2023 the police to population ratio stood at one officer for 423 persons.

The Minister of Police also signed an agreement of cooperation in various Gauteng municipalities that will allow for stronger co-operation between multiple law enforcement agencies to strengthen joint operations in combatting crime in the province. In the Eastern Cape, the Deputy Minister of Police, emphasised that adding more police officers was a sign of professionalising the SAPS. Another productive step was the progressive recruitment drive to re-enlist former officers to boost detective capacity.

The SAPS, like many other government departments, face challenges related to staffing levels, attritions, and resource constraints as the inability to retain skilled detectives or to replace them with equally experienced officers has created a vacuum. It was reported that the number of detectives has decreased from 26 000 to 17 000, thus limiting the ability of the SAPS to investigate crime and present winnable cases to the National Prosecuting Authority.

This recruitment drive is welcomed, but it is equally important that it must be implemented with a skills-transfers approach to increase the detective capacity in the SAPS. Such a mentoring programme will ensure that less-experienced officers will benefit optimally from experienced officers and increase detective capacity.

Crime levels in South Africa are extremely concerning. The PSA has previously called on the Minister of Police to address staff shortages impacting on crime combatting, exacerbated by inadequate resources, including working tools such a safety vests, motor vehicles, and inadequate infrastructure. Criminals have become aggressively violent, which has been seen with mass murders, cash-in-transit heists, and murders of police officers. Adding more personnel is a move in the right direction, but officers must be better equipped and protected. By September 2024, the country had lost 39 police officers in the line of duty. It is increasingly important for communities and businesses to be a part of the solution by supporting their local SAPS.

The PSA urges the Minister of Police to ensure that a holistic assessment of SAPS operations is conducted. Matters hindering the execution of the constitutional mandate to prevent, combat and investigate crime must be addressed. The SAPS must be empowered to maintain public order, protect, and secure citizens and their property whilst upholding and enforcing the law. South Africa cannot afford an inept police service as this has an adverse effect on the safety of citizens and investor confidence.

Sources

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383310196_Challenges_faced_by_the_government_in_addressing_organised_crime_in_South_Africa_a_policy_framework_analysis#:~:text=The%20government%20has%20implemented%20strategies,the%20growth%20of%20organized%20crime.
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In service of public-sector employees





REMOTE WORKING: What is happening in government departments?

The rise of remote working has dramatically altered the workplace landscape. Public-sector workplaces have not been exempted from this shift. Initially adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic as a necessity to ensure safety and continuity, remote work has evolved into a lasting practice in a growing number of workplaces. The PSA recognises the ongoing discussions on the implementation of remote work in government departments and the impact on public servants.

Government departments have taken varied approaches to remote work. Whilst some have embraced hybrid models, allowing employees to alternate between working from home and the office, others have been more cautious, preferring a gradual return to in-office work. These differences depend on the nature of departmental functions, technological capabilities, and leadership attitudes towards remote work.

In many cases, departments that provide direct public services, such as the Departments of Home Affairs and Social Development, have leaned towards more office-based arrangements owing to the need for in-person interactions with citizens. Departments that rely heavily on administrative and back-office functions have found remote work to be more feasible. However, this has not been without challenges, as maintaining data security, ensuring accountability, and managing productivity have become critical areas of focus.

The rise of remote working also brought about significant opportunities for a more inclusive workforce, especially for people with disabilities. The flexibility and accessibility that remote work offers have opened new possibilities for people who previously faced challenges in traditional work environments.

Benefits of remote working

- **Increased flexibility and work-life balance:** Remote work allows employees to better balance their professional and personal lives. It reduces commuting time, enabling employees to focus on work and spend more time with their families, which can contribute to improved mental well-being. Remote work allows people with disabilities to better manage time and accommodate their personal needs, including medical appointments and therapy sessions. Flexible scheduling can be especially beneficial for people who require frequent breaks or who have fluctuating health conditions, enabling them to work during their most productive hours without being confined to a rigid office schedule.
- **Cost saving:** For government departments, remote work can reduce overhead costs associated with office space, utilities, and office supplies. Employees save on commuting expenses, which is particularly beneficial in an environment where rising transport costs have a significant impact on household budgets.
- **Enhanced productivity:** Many public servants have reported increased productivity when working from home, where they can work without the distractions of an office environment. The flexibility to manage their schedules can lead to a more focused and efficient workday.



- **Enhanced accessibility and reduced physical barriers:** Remote work eliminates many of the physical barriers that people with disabilities often face in traditional office environments. For those with mobility challenges, the daily commute can be a significant hurdle. Working from home provides a safe and accessible environment, allowing employees to focus on their tasks without the stress of navigating inaccessible transportation systems or physical office spaces. Remote work can also alleviate some of the social barriers that persons with disabilities may encounter in the workplace. It allows them to focus on their performance without concerns about physical accessibility or misconceptions from colleagues. This shift can foster a more inclusive work environment where skills and contributions are prioritised over physical presence.
- **Personalised work environments:** Working from home enables employees to create workspaces that are tailored to their specific needs. Whether it is using specialised equipment for persons with disabilities, adjusted lighting, heating or cooling, or modifying seating arrangements, the ability to control the environment allows for greater comfort and productivity. This personalisation is often challenging to achieve in an office space.
- **Reduced stigma and greater comfort:** Remote work can alleviate some of the social barriers that employees with disabilities may encounter in the workplace. It allows them to focus on their performance without concerns about physical accessibility or misconceptions from colleagues. This shift can foster a more inclusive work environment where skills and contributions are prioritised over physical presence.
- **Data security and privacy concerns:** The nature of government work means that data security is a priority. Remote work introduces risks related to data breaches, unsecured networks, and unauthorised access. Ensuring that employees have secure access to systems and information remains a challenge for many departments.
- **Risk of reduced accountability and oversight:** Monitoring performance and ensuring accountability can be more complex in a remote setup. Managers may find it challenging to assess productivity and engagement without regular in-person interactions of an office environment. This could potentially impact service delivery if not managed properly.

The PSA is engaging with government departments on drafting and implementing a remote work policy aimed at guiding employees and management on procedures to be followed when special working arrangements are contemplated. Government departments have advised that a draft remote work policy is underway.

As government departments continue to navigate the evolving landscape of remote work, it is essential to find a balance between flexibility and accountability. Hybrid models, which combine the benefits of remote work with the advantages of in-person collaboration, have emerged as a potential solution. Such models allow departments to accommodate employees' needs for flexibility whilst maintaining the oversight and cohesion that come with working in a shared space.

The PSA continues to advocate members' interests in this transition. The PSA supports arrangements that prioritise the well-being and productivity of public servants whilst ensuring that the standard of service delivery to the public is not compromised. As discussions on remote work policies continue in departments, it is crucial to maintain open dialogue and ensure that the voices of public servants are heard. Cooperation will shape remote work arrangements that enhance accessibility, support productivity, and promote the well-being of employees.

Cons of remote working

- **Challenges in team coordination and communication:** Remote work can lead to difficulties in maintaining team cohesion and effective communication. For government departments, where collaboration is often crucial, the lack of face-to-face interactions can create silos and hinder the flow of information.

Sources
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Paternal Leave: Current status

By **Wandile Mphahlele** - PSA Legal Officer

The article aims to clarify confusion that may prevail regarding paternal and maternal leave.

#LegalCorner

In a judgement with constitutional significance for the workplace, the High Court in *Van Wyk And Others v Minister of Employment and Labour (2024 (1) SA 545 (GJ))* ruled that all parents, irrespective of gender, should be entitled to four months of parental leave from their employers. The matter stems from the Van Wyk family's utilisation of maternity and parental leave. Mr Van Wyk was a salaried employee, and Mrs Van Wyk runs her own business. The couple decided that Mrs Van Wyk would return to work as soon as possible after the birth of their child to ensure that she sustained her business. In this case, Mr Van Wyk was the only one eligible for leave because Mrs Van Wyk could not take maternity leave owing to her business operations. However, under the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA)*, he was only entitled to ten days paternal leave. As a result, Mr Van Wyk took partially unpaid extended leave after reaching an arrangement with his employer. He was, however, not eligible for Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) benefits as is the case with mothers who can access such benefits during the 16 weeks maternity leave period.

Before the High Court, the Van Wyk's main argument was to ensure that both parents were treated equally in a constitutionally compliant way. They aimed to do away with the traditional divide between childbearing parents and those parents who are not bearing children (adopting parents and parents in surrogacy agreement) on maternity leave. They hoped to achieve a more inclusive and fair approach to parental care by recognising both parents' shared duties and experiences.

The issue before the Court turned on whether the provisions of sections 25, 25A, 25B, and 25C of the *BCEA* and the corresponding provisions of the *Unemployment Insurance Fund Act (UIFA)*, namely sections 24, 26A, 27, 29A, were invalid owing to inconsistency with sections 9 and 10 of the *Constitution*.

The Court held that the provisions of the *BCEA* and the *UIFA* were invalid to the extent that these discriminated unfairly between mothers and fathers, as well as between one set of parents and another based on whether their children were born of the mother, conceived through surrogacy, or adopted by the parents.

After concluding that the provisions in the *BCEA* relate to child nurturing rather than the physiological needs of a birth mother, the Court concluded that there is no compelling reason to provide for ten weeks of adoption and commissioning parental leave, as provided for under the current frameworks, rather than the 16 weeks afforded to child-bearing mothers. Furthermore, restricting a father's parental leave entitlement to a mere ten days diminishes a father's dignity since it reflects a mindset that views the father's contribution in early parenting as insignificant.

According to the Court's decision, Parliament will be given two years to correct the deficiencies in the legislation that conflict with the provisions of the *Constitution*.

In the light of this judgement, the interim law is as follows:

- Child-bearing parents can decide between them who would take the allocated four-month parental leave period, or this period can be freely allocated between them.
- Parents who adopt a child younger than two years old are now entitled to the same leave regime as child-bearing parents. The Court stated that the differentiation between adopted children older than two years and those younger, is fair as children younger than two years require a more intensive form of nurturing than those children older than two years.
- Parents in a commissioning parent arrangement are now entitled to the same leave regime as child-bearing parents. What is also important to note is that the surrogate mother is also entitled to leave. This is, however, limited to ten weeks for physiological reasons and not for purposes of nurturing the child. A distinction between the surrogate mother and other mothers was fair, owing to the fact that the surrogate mother generally plays no role in the nurturing of the child.
- All the above-mentioned parental categories will now benefit equally from parental leave provisions and UIF benefits.

Updates on the matter will follow when the Constitutional Court has confirmed the invalidity of the impugned sections and Parliament has amended the *BCEA* accordingly.

Tailor Your Funeral Cover to Fit Your Family's Needs

Select Individual, Immediate Family, or Single Parent Funeral Benefits serve as the cornerstone of your policy, offering a lump sum payout when a life assured passes away. Coverage ranges from **R5,000 to R50,000** and includes additional features such as a **double accidental death benefit** and a **R250 airtime voucher**. With premiums payable for life, this policy ensures long-term protection for your loved ones.

To further enhance your policy, consider these **Add-On Service Benefits**

For PSA members, the **Additional Assistance Package** is available for only **R47.45**. This package includes a **clothing voucher worth R1,500**, an **electricity voucher worth R750**, a **grocery voucher worth R750**, and a **meat benefit valued at R3,000**, offering practical support during a difficult time.

Alternatively, you can opt for **Voluntary Buy-Up Options**, which provide additional peace of mind with services like **vehicle hire for three uninterrupted days** and **body repatriation cover of up to R7,500**.

For those looking to cover extended family members, the Extended Family Benefits offer flexible options. You can include up to eight extended family members or four parents, with coverage ranging from per person, for individuals **up to 80 years old**.

These benefits allow you to customize your funeral cover to suit your unique family structure and needs, ensuring comprehensive support when it matters most.

Policy Flexibility at Every Stage

- **Update Your Policy:** Add family members, adjust coverage, or change your beneficiary with ease.
- **Immediate Access to Funds:** Choose a policy that ensures money is available without delay, helping your family manage funeral arrangements seamlessly.
- **Flexible Coverage:** Look for policies that allow you to include extended family members or offer additional service benefits.
- **Transparency in Costs:** Understand how premiums work—what happens if you miss a payment, or how they might increase over time.
- **Transparent Waiting Periods:** Coverage for accidental death starts from day one. Waiting periods for natural causes (6 months) and suicide (12 months) ensure responsible risk management while protecting your loved ones long-term.

"Funeral cover is not just about money—it's about peace of mind. By planning ahead, you spare your loved ones from making difficult financial decisions during a time of grief. Take the time to discuss your funeral wishes with your family or document them alongside your will. While death is unavoidable, thoughtful preparation can make a world of difference for those you leave behind."



2025



January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Human Rights Day	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Good Friday	19
20	21 Family Day	22	23	24	25	26
27 Freedom Day	28 Public Holiday	29	30			

May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Workers' Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Youth Day	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					





July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 <small>Non-Public Holiday</small>	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 National Women's Day
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Heritage Day	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Day of Reconciliation	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Day of Goodwill	27
28	29	30	31			



20 VERY GOOD REASONS...

WHY THE PSA SHOULD BE YOUR LABOUR HOME

The PSA, a registered trade union, is the largest, politically non-affiliated, fully-representative Union in the Public Service and State-Owned Entities, with a proud history of more than a century of service to members. The PSA...

1. Is a **growing Union** with 240 000+ members served by Provincial Offices across the country.
2. **Attends to members' individual disputes FREE** of charge.
3. **Negotiates fair terms of remuneration** and represents members' interests in bargaining structures.
4. **Protects members' service benefits** (including medical aid, pension schemes, and housing subsidies).
5. **Addresses issues** such as fair and reasonable working conditions, hours of work, and leave.
6. **Is the only Union in the Public Service that serves Public Service pensioners.**
7. **Is financially stable** (complies with the *Companies Act and Labour Relations Act*).
8. **Assists beneficiaries and communities throughout South Africa as part of the Union's corporate social investment programs.**
9. **Protects members' rights** and defends them in unfair labour practices or infringements of constitutional rights and legislation (*Labour Relations Act, 1996, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997, and Employment Equity Act, 1998*). Disputes are resolved at the CCMA, Labour Court, and Labour Appeal Court. In the Public Service, the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), Safety and Security Sectoral Bargaining Council (SSSBC), Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC), and General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council (GPSSBC) provide dispute resolution functions. With the promotion of interests, rights are also established with collective agreements - non-compliance with such rights is being taken care of by these institutions.
10. **Employs professional, dedicated and competent staff** to support member structures in service of members.
11. **Promotes members' interests** during collective bargaining in bargaining forums with employers.
12. **Is admitted to the various bargaining councils**, which enables the Union to resolve workplace problems in these councils, saving cost and time.
13. **Acts only on members' mandate** (mandates on collective issues are obtained from member structures).
14. **Has country-wide, extensive member structures** (national and sectoral) that are the link between the Union and members. These structures mirror the structures for collective bargaining and ensure the protection and promotion of members' rights and interests. Structures are active in all provinces to promote the organisation of members, obtain mandates and improve communication. For information on your PSA representative and structure, contact your local PSA Provincial Office.
15. **Has an impressive success rate in resolving cases** by the Union's full-time staff and thousands of democratically elected, trained shop stewards.
16. **Offers fringe benefits to members, including FREE membership of PSA CLUB!** Other benefits include an exclusive PSA short-term insurance scheme, insurance benefits, funeral schemes, and assistance with debt and personal loans.
17. **Provides FREE financial assistance with funeral costs at a member's death.**
18. **Provides FREE professional indemnity insurance cover** for identified groupings of members (R1 million, per member, per year with no limitation in the aggregate).
19. **Holiday Resort** offers holiday accommodation at discounted rates.
20. **Magazine and workplace-specific newsletters** are issued to members **FREE** of charge - Update your contact details with the PSA's Membership Section (updatemyinfo@psa.co.za) to ensure that you receive all news.

The PSA effectively represents the full spectrum of the South African population and lives by the values of **LOYALTY, TRANSPARENCY, RESPECT, ETHICAL CONDUCT, CONSISTENCY and SERVICE EXCELLENCE!**

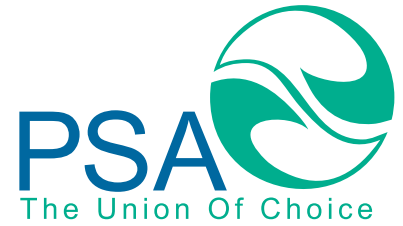
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PSA 
The Union Of Choice

PSA membership application

Public Servants Association of South Africa (NPC)

Reg No 1942/015415/08



In terms of the POPI Act, 4 of 2013, the PSA will only use the information provided on this application form for the intended purpose related to membership management
 The PSA Privacy Policy is available on the PSA website (www.psa.co.za).
 By taking up membership, I agree to the said Policy.

*** COMPULSORY FIELDS**

PERSONAL INFORMATION

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHOICE WITH A

DEPARTMENT / EMPLOYER*

TITLE (DR, MR, MRS, MS)* PERSAL / SALARY NUMBER*

SURNAME* INITIALS

FIRST NAMES*

IDENTITY NUMBER* DATE OF BIRTH DD MM YYYY

CELL PHONE* TELEPHONE FAX NO

EMAIL ADDRESS

METHOD OF PAYMENT* STOP ORDER (SALARY DEDUCTION)
 DEBIT ORDER (BANK DEDUCTION) (Noting that the Agency Fee will also be payable in this instance)

MEMBER'S BANKING DETAILS (only when debit-order payment option is chosen)

BANK NAME BRANCH CODE

ACCOUNT NO ACCOUNT TYPE

ACCOUNT HOLDER

CONSENT I consent to the PSA marketing products, services and special offers to me. The PSA may share my personal information, within the PSA and the businesses that provide special advantages to PSA members, for marketing purposes. The PSA may also contact me for research purposes. YES NO

SALARY STOP-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE: _____

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of the PSA (Public Servants Association of South Africa) and authorise and request the Accounting Officer of my employer to deduct the applicable PSA Membership Fee (as approved by the PSA Board of Directors) from my salary as membership fee, starting from the STOP-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE, and thereafter to continue such monthly deductions until my further written notice.

I UNDERSTAND THAT IN TERMS OF SECTION 13(3) OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT, 1995 THIS STOP-ORDER MAY ONLY BE REVOKED BY THE GIVING OF THREE MONTHS' (ONE MONTH IN THE CASE OF NON-PUBLIC SERVANTS) WRITTEN NOTICE TO MY EMPLOYER AND THE PSA.

I understand that membership fees are due to and collectable by the PSA while I am a member of the PSA.

BANK DEBIT-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE: _____

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of the PSA (Public Servants Association of South Africa) requesting and authorising you at the same time to deduct from my account at the above bank the applicable PSA Membership Fee (as approved by the PSA Board of Directors), which covers my membership fee to the PSA, starting from the DEBIT-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE and continue deducting said amount monthly on theth day of each month thereafter until further my written notice.

SIGNATURE*

DATE*

RECRUITER (NOT PSA STAFF MEMBER)

PSA MEMBERSHIP NO* TAX NO*

IDENTITY NO* CELL PHONE

INITIALS & SURNAME

POSTAL ADDRESS* POSTAL CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

BANK NAME* BRANCH CODE

ACCOUNT NO* ACCOUNT TYPE

ACCOUNT HOLDER

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO HONORARIUM CAN BE PAID WITHOUT A VALID TAX NUMBER. THE HONORARIUM WILL BE PAID DIRECTLY INTO YOUR BANK ACCOUNT.

NOTE: THE PSA WILL ASSIST MEMBERS (REPRESENTATION, FINANCIALLY, OTHERWISE) ON CONDITION THAT THE CAUSE OF ACTION FOR WHICH ASSISTANCE IS SOUGHT AROSE AFTER THE PSA'S ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

OFFICE DATE STAMP

WEEK NO*

WEEKLY REPORT ID



*** STAND A CHANCE
TO GET YOUR
* BILLS PAID!**

R6 000

*** TOP 10
RECRUITERS**

*** 25 NEW
MEMBERS**

*** Up to** 



HOW TO ENTER?

- ★ Recruit a minimum of **25** new members (excluding pensioner members) for the PSA between **1 January 2025 and 6 March 2025** and submit the fully-completed, signed application forms to your PSA Provincial Office or email to competition@psa.co.za by **12:00 on 6 March 2025** to secure your entry. Only entries submitted as stipulated above and received by the PSA by the closing date, will be considered.

**Competition open for PSA members only / Entries subject to standard terms and conditions and verification of membership
In the event of a tie, the PSA General Manager will draw a winner / The winner will be contacted by 20 March 2025
Prizes not claimed within 30 days will be forfeited / Prize not exchangeable for cash*



www.psa.co.za

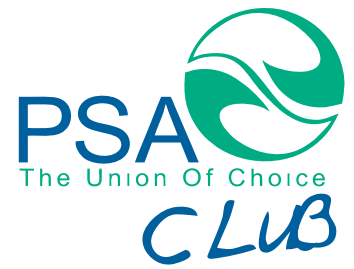
0861 452 452

The PSA provides
PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE
cover for health-sector members
of **R1 million per member per year**
(at no additional cost as part of
the PSA membership fee)
covering members in various
occupational groups.

Scan QR code for more information



PSACLUB LINE: 0860 021 067



UPDATE MY DETAILS:

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHOICE WITH A

CELL PHONE NUMBER EMAIL ADDRESS NEW PSA MEMBERSHIP CARD

*Will be posted to address indicated by member on this form

PSA MEMBERSHIP NUMBER OR ID NUMBER

PERSAL / EMPLOYEE NUMBER

INITIALS SURNAME

CELL PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

www.psaclub.mobi | info@psaclub.mobi | *120*960#

Understanding your PSA structure

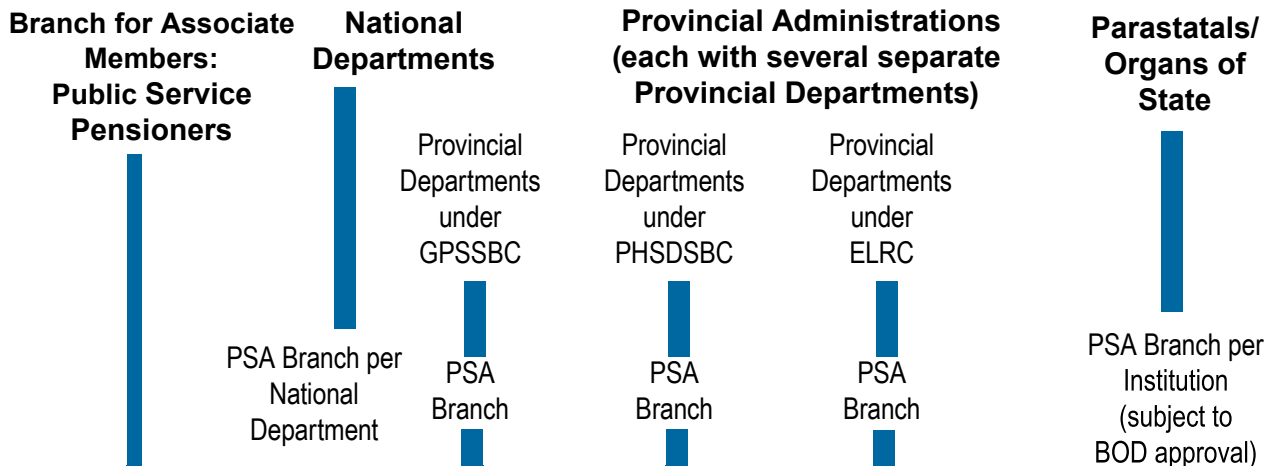
Country-wide member structures (on national and sectoral level) are the link between the PSA and its members. These structures mirror the current structures for collective bargaining and offer direction, thereby ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of members.

The PSA's Board of Directors (BOD) on 29 March 2017 resolved that in terms of the *Labour Relations Act* or an Organisational Rights agreement, a group will be entitled to elect five shop stewards. The Board may, on good cause shown, establish such a group as a branch.

These structures have been established in all provinces to promote the organisation of members, obtaining their mandates, and improving communication with members.

Details of this extensive network of committees and branches are available from the PSA Head Office as well as any of the twelve PSA Provincial Offices.

It is important to understand PSA member structures. In addition, you should be involved in these structures as active members can provide timeous, informed mandates, and ensure that skilled workplace representatives are elected.



Sub-structures for communication to grassroots level

JOIN today

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ask@psa.co.za

[0861 452 452](tel:0861452452)

Understanding PILIR leave process for public servants

The Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-Health Retirement (PILIR) is a vital system for public servants in South Africa who are unable to work owing to medical conditions. It provides additional leave after regular sick leave is exhausted, ensuring employees receive support whilst managing health issues.

PILIR is designed to provide appropriate leave for temporary incapacity, ensure fair assessment of leave applications, and support employees in managing their health whilst retaining employment.

How to apply for PILIR leave

Step 1: Check eligibility - PILIR applies to employees who have exhausted their regular sick leave and need more time off for illness (not injury). It is essential to understand this distinction to avoid confusion.

Step 2: Submit a leave application - Once you have exhausted your sick leave, follow these steps:

- 1. Medical documentation:** Obtain a medical certificate from a qualified practitioner, clearly detailing the illness and its severity.
- 2. Application forms:** Complete the appropriate forms:
 - Annexure A for short-term incapacity (29 days or less).
 - Annexure B for long-term incapacity (more than 30 days).
- 3. Submission timeline:** Submit the application within five working days of starting the absence. Delayed submission may result in rejection.

Step 3: Consult Human Resources - Consult with the Human Resources (HR) department during the application process. HR will verify details, ensure that all absences are covered by medical certificates, and offer guidance through the process. This step is crucial for ensuring that the application is reviewed accurately by the Health Risk Manager.

Step 4: Await decision and follow up - After the application is reviewed, the employer provides an outcome. If declined or partially approved, reasons will be given. A decision can be challenged by submitting additional evidence through a grievance form. The employer cannot implement "leave without pay" whilst the grievance is under consideration.

Common reasons for declined applications

A PILIR application may be rejected for several reasons:

- **Insufficient medical evidence:** Medical certificates must be detailed. Generic statements such as "medical condition" are not acceptable.
- **High absence rates:** If there is a history of frequent sick leave usage, it may affect the application.
- **Lack of treatment plans:** If the condition requires ongoing care, evidence of a treatment plan must be provided.

Understanding permanent incapacity

If an employee's condition is permanent but duties can still be performed, the employer may consider alternative employment or adapting the employee's role. If this is not feasible, the employer may terminate the employment under the *Public Service Act*. If the employee cannot effectively perform duties, termination may be necessary under section 17(2)(a) of the *Public Service Act*.

Death during application process

If an employee passes away while the PILIR application is pending, the employer will review the application based on available documentation. If sufficient evidence exists, the application may be approved posthumously.

Ill-health retirement

When an employee's medical condition prevents a return to work, ill-health retirement can be applied for. Early submission of this application is beneficial as it allows time for processing, re-skilling, and payment arrangements. Unlike PILIR, ill-health retirement does not require the exhaustion of sick leave to start with the process.

The PILIR process can be complex, but understanding its requirements and procedures can help public servants navigate it more effectively. By following the guidelines, providing thorough documentation, and working closely with HR, the chances of a successful application are higher. The PSA offers support to members, ensuring that their rights and well-being are protected throughout this process.

Sources
PSA Labour Relations

Refresh your finances

Six tips to reassess your budget for 2025

As the silly season approaches, be mindful about how you spend during this time. Planning your finances ahead of time allows you to take a closer look at your budget and spending behaviour. Here are six practical tips to help you refresh your finances into the new year.



Groom your budget

Revisit your budget by identifying areas where you can cut back.



Refresh your financial goals

Planning for the new year is the perfect time to reevaluate your financial goals. Whether you're saving for retirement, or your child's education, ensure your goals are still relevant and attainable.



Plan for preservation

With the launch of the Two-Pot retirement system, it's more important than ever to focus on preserving your retirement savings. This system allows you to access a portion of your funds during an emergency while safeguarding the rest for the future.



Review your insurance coverage

As life progresses, your needs change. Have a look at your funeral cover, life insurance, and other policies to ensure they still meet your needs.



Tackle your debt

Focus on paying off high-interest, low-balance debts first, and create a plan to tackle the rest. Debt management is crucial for long-term financial security.



Save for emergencies

An emergency fund is essential and should ideally comprise of 3-6 months of your expenses.

By taking the time to reevaluate your finances, you're setting the stage for a more secure and prosperous year.

Speak to a financial adviser to help you set or adjust these goals.

Together we can 

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PSA *greening* South Africa

The PSA contributed to environmental protection, a sustainable environment, and climate change mitigation by planting trees across the country during Arbor Month in September 2024.

These initiatives to promote environmental awareness are part of the PSA's ongoing commitment to community development. Indigenous Mountain Karee trees were chosen, based on their resilience and adaptability. The message sent to recipients is of resilience and adapting in search of success and a better life.

The trees will continue to impact on beneficiaries who will benefit from the shade, beauty, and improved air quality for years to come. Beneficiaries were actively involved in the planting process as a hands-on experience of the significance of trees in a healthy ecosystem. Trees play a critical role in combating climate change, improving air quality, and contributing towards an environment that supports productivity.

The events further symbolised the importance of environmental conservation and the role communities, especially the youth, play in ensuring a greener future.

The PSA's gift was accompanied by a memorial plaque erected at the tree.

As a leading Union, the PSA is proud to contribute to protecting the environment.



A PSA member in Limpopo, appointed as a Lecturer at the Department of Higher Education and Training, requested the PSA's assistance after his attempts to rectify his salary since appointment in 2013 failed. A settlement agreement was reached, resulting in R659 903.42 being paid to the member by the Department!

For more PSA successes for members, visit www.psa.co.za.



The PSA's **#ClinicProject** seeks to address critical health and safety challenges faced by healthcare workers and patients, providing much-needed support to clinics and ensuring a safer, healthier environment.

The launch of the project comes at a time when healthcare workers in South Africa face increasing pressure owing to limited resources and deteriorating infrastructure. Healthcare workers, particularly those working at clinics, often encounter hazardous working conditions, from exposure to infectious diseases to the physical strain of long hours in understaffed facilities lacking infrastructure. These challenges, coupled with the growing need for a robust occupational health and safety framework, highlighted the necessity of this project.

The **#ClinicProject** is designed to provide direct assistance to clinics aimed at addressing occupational health and safety (OHS) needs. The project aims to enhance the safety and wellbeing of healthcare workers by providing resources, offering practical solutions to mitigate physical workplace challenges.

With the support from the Union's shop stewards, the PSA in 2024 assisted 40 clinics across the country in various ways with identified needs. These include, amongst others, providing equipment, signage, building renovations, consultation rooms, shelters, fencing, first-aid kits, safety posters, water purifiers, water tanks, and guard huts.

Through these initiatives, the PSA is taking a crucial step towards creating a healthcare system that values the safety and health of those who care for the nation's most vulnerable.

The PSA's continuous efforts to address OHS concerns reflect the Union's commitment to improving the safety and well-being of public-sector workers. Members are urged to report any OHS non-compliance to the nearest PSA Provincial Office.

For the past decade, Community Health Workers in Chiawelo in Gauteng have been tracking the health of 30 000 residents through frequent home visits, referring those who need medical care, and leading fitness groups, thus contributing to a healthier community.

The PSA supported this sterling work by refurbishing Chiawelo Clinic's labour, emergency, casualty, and EPI rooms to improve the facility and create a conducive working environment.

A PSA member at the Department of Education in the Eastern Cape and employed as an Education Therapist, lodged a grievance against the Department for not being translated to the correct notch of Occupational Therapist (Grade 2). The matter was escalated as a dispute to the Education Labour Relations Council for adjudication. The Department subsequently signed a settlement agreement to translate the member with back pay of R758 090!





In KwaZulu-Natal, the PSA met with the MEC for GOGTA, Rev Thulasizwe Buthelezi, to address critical worker issues.



Congratulations to PSA magazine recruitment competition winner, Isaiah Rangata!

PSA Intersectoral Members' Meeting in Durban - October 2024.

#PSAInFocus

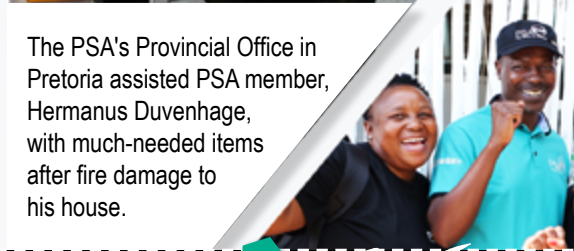


The PSA's Provincial Office in Pretoria assisted PSA member, Hermanus Duvenhage, with much-needed items after fire damage to his house.

PSA Intersectoral Members' Meeting in Limpopo - November 2024.



The PSA Provincial Office in Mpumalanga donated solar lights to Madoda School in Kwamhlanga area to assist learners to study for exams during load shedding.



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Life after RETIREMENT!

Retirement is something that many look forward to but comes with its own challenges. From a position where one's advice and knowledge were regularly sought, often this is no longer the case. Suddenly, many now see you as a burden on society. This need not be true! Retirement should be viewed as the beginning of a "new career".

The PSA's National Branch: Public Service Pensioners will showcase some of its members' successful transition into new roles after retirement. One such active member is Basil May (pictured), Honorary President of Railton Foundation. The Swellendam Heritage Society in 2023 also recognised him for a lifetime of devotion to the betterment of people through his many achievements.

Basil qualified as a teacher at Hewat College of Education when he was 18. He subsequently also completed a BA and B Ed degree at the University of the Western Cape and a Master's degree: Education Management and Administration, at Moray House College in Edinburgh, Scotland. He started his career as a primary school teacher at Swellendam DRC Mission School. He then taught at Modderdam Secondary School in Bonteheuwel for nine years before becoming Principal of Silverstream Secondary School in Manenberg for seven years. Basil next became a Vice-Rector at Söhngge College of Education in Worcester and was promoted to Rector of Wesley College of Education in Salt River. When the College closed in 1993, he took early retirement at the age of 48.

A few years earlier, rectors of colleges of education from across South Africa established a national body, the Committee of College of Education Rectors of South Africa (CCERSA). Basil was elected as Secretary. When he retired as Rector, he decided - with the full support of his colleagues - to open a national CCERSA office to serve all colleges of education. Basil became Executive Director of CCERSA. The main aim was to assist colleges to prepare for their roles under the 1994 democratic government. Basil explains: "Consequently, my life became more challenging and uncertain, but very interesting. I had to survive on a lower pension plus a small stipend. Nevertheless, my income was sufficient for my needs, and I was engaged in work, which I enjoyed and regarded as critically important for developing a more meaningful education system. It was gratifying to see that colleagues that were previously separated accepted one another and prepared to provide good teacher education for especially primary school teachers. Unfortunately, the powers that be shockingly decided to close colleges of education or absorb them into universities. Together with many other teacher educators, I was extremely disappointed. As a result, I started working for an American company that provided American university students with the opportunity to do a study-abroad programme in Cape Town. I managed their academic programme, excursions, homestays, and other aspects of the course. The curriculum included subjects such as South African education, geography, history and health systems plus isiXhosa and Afrikaans to give them a solid understanding of the social fabric of the country. I was satisfied with a small salary as my duties were stimulating. I learned so much during those seven years and had the opportunity to visit higher education institutions in America on several occasions. In 2005 we started a bursary fund in Swellendam to honour 28 learners and teachers who died in an accident near Rivieronsderend in 1975. Over the past 19 years, we have raised more than R2.4 million and assisted 332 students from the area to attend tertiary institutions. Although the bursaries are small, they help to expose the youth to studies after matric in other towns and cities. Many have returned as qualified teachers who teach learners of Swellendam. Others have become social workers, community workers, administrative staff, and lawyers. At a stage, I was approached to assist a Dutch benefactor with NGO work in Swellendam. I received a stipend for managing the project. When the funding stopped, I continued to assist. I still travel to Swellendam every month to attend meetings. I regard the Swellendam Bursary Fund and Railton Foundation Swellendam as my opportunity to give something back to the town where I was born, obtained my first full-time job, and have received so much love and acceptance."

In June 2016, Basil was elected as Secretary of the PSA Cape Peninsula Pensioners Committee, a role he still performs. He assisted in a dispute that the Committee declared regarding the National Pensioner Branch's constitution, which resulted in a democratically elected National Pensioners Branch now being in place. Basil also served as scribe of his congregation and Chairperson of the PanSALB Western Cape Provincial Language Committee until August 2024. "It has indeed been a joy and a privilege to be a pensioner for 31 years. Despite my age (78 years), I am still engaged in stimulating tasks, such as writing articles for Langeberg Bulletin in Swellendam and working on a book on unsung heroes and heroines of Swellendam," says Basil.



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Members who require more information or assistance can contact Basil - ccersa@mweb.co.za / 084 583 3811, Rob Moody (National Branch Chairperson) - rdmoody01@gmail.com / 081 016 5110 / 083 747 7671, or Reuben Makhubedu (National Branch Secretary) - Makhubedureuben@gmail.com.



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Safe workplace: What is YOUR role?

Workers in all sectors and across the world are exposed to unsafe and unhealthy working environments. Many lives are lost owing to occupational accidents and diseases, with millions suffering from work-related injuries or chronic illnesses.



Safety in the workplace requires strategic and collaborative efforts. Inadequate knowledge and lack of awareness or even interest in issues of safety of employees is a thorny issue as often employers are not prepared to invest in this matter, despite legal obligations. Equally, many employees are appreciative of the fact that they are employed and would not dare question the employer on safety issues.

The International Labour Organization's constitution preamble requires "...the protection of workers against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment." It further states that "...Failure of any national to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions of their own countries." What remains unquestionable is that occupational safety and health of employees is a basic right, and disregard thereof undermines the basic human rights of life and security of workers. An unsafe, unhealthy working environment is a hindrance to productivity and life threatening.

South Africa is not counted amongst countries that fail to provide humane conditions of labour. It has a legislative framework and institutions that are empowered to deal with such matters. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act No 85 of 1993 (OHSA)* is the principal legislation governing health and safety in the workplace and sets out duties and responsibilities for all stakeholders to ensure a safe working environment. Despite this, the PSA is observing increasing instances of non-compliance with the *OHSA* by public-sector employers.

Section 8 of the *Act*, for example, provides that every employer shall provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. The employer has a legal obligation, and employees must demand to work in place that is safe. The employer must therefore conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards and implement measures to mitigate or eliminate these.

It must provide adequate safety training to all employees to ensure that they understand the risks associated with their work. Appropriate personal protective equipment must be provided and used correctly. Emergency procedures must be in place to deal with incidents such as fires, medical emergencies, and natural disasters. The health of employees who are exposed to hazardous substances or processes must be monitored to ensure they are not at risk of developing occupational diseases.

In terms of section 17, every employer with more than 20 employees at any workplace, must designate in writing for a specific period health and safety representative(s) for such workplace or sections thereof. Employers of the ignore this basic responsibility to appoint health and safety representatives. Section 19 also provides for establishment of health and safety committees where two or more health and safety representatives have been designated. Health and safety representatives/committees must perform their functions as provided for in the *Act*.





The PSA constantly champions the promotion of health and safety of workers and reported non-compliance with the *OHSA* to the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL). Over the years, this had resulted in various notices being issued, including the closing of workplaces. Towards the end of 2024, the Government Mortuary in Bloemfontein, the Department of Home Affairs office in Bela Bela, Labour Centres in Makhado, and Thohoyandou as well as unsafe mobile classrooms in Vhembe district of Limpopo were, for example, closed owing to various non-compliance issues.

Common issues identified in workplaces include poor lighting, no ventilation, dilapidated buildings which are not habitable, non-provision of consumable water, dysfunctional toilets, poor electrical connections, no compliance certificates, failure to appoint representatives/committees or even training them, failure to conduct risk assessments, implement or communicate emergency procedures as well as ergonomic challenges. An often-neglected issue is that of mental health employees. Inspectors of the DEL in Mpumalanga, for example, received death threats in the execution of their duties, resulting in stress, depression, and anxiety attacks that necessitated treatment at mental-health hospitals.

Members are advised to report any concerns or contraventions of the *OHSA* to shop stewards for urgent attention. Where shop stewards have unsuccessfully attempted to engage the employer, the matter must be reported urgently to the DEL to conduct an inspection.

Labour inspectors are empowered in terms of section 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the *Act* to enter any workplace, conduct inspection, investigation, and enquiries, issue **compliance notices*** and ****prohibition notices**.

***Confirmatory notice:** Issued when the employer has failed to comply with a contravention/prohibition notice, making way for the DEL to refer the matter to the Magistrates Court for prosecution without further notice in terms of section 38 of the *Act*.

****Prohibition notice:** Issued when an inspector believes that an activity poses a serious risk to the health or safety of any person. It requires the immediate cessation of the activity until the risk is mitigated.

Improvement notice: Issued when an inspector identifies a breach of the *OHSA* that does not pose an immediate danger but requires rectification within a specified period.

Contravention notice: Issued if there is failure to comply with the provisions of the *OHSA* or its regulations. It specifies the nature of the contravention and steps that need to be taken to comply.

Compliance notice: Similar to an improvement notice but typically issued for less severe breaches. It requires the employer to take specific actions to comply with the *OHSA* within a given timeframe.

Sources

<https://www.ilo.org>

<https://normlex.ilo.org/>

Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993

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