

What's happening at DOT?

Compliance with COVID-19 regulations

On 1 March 2021, the country moved to COVID-19 alert level 1 after the pronouncement by the President. Owing to the alert level adjustment, the employer indicated that an OHS COVID-19 Committee meeting will be scheduled to discuss the adjustment of COVID-19 protocols for the Department in preparation of recalling staff under alert level 1. The employer further reported that steps are being taken to consider ways for the Department to move from paper-based systems and processes to digital methods. A meeting was held with the acting Chief Information Officer (CIO) to discuss the matter and a benchmark process with other employers who have already implemented digital systems is being embarked upon. It was again submitted by the employer that the process of procuring devices for the electronic screening of employees has commenced. Currently the Department is still registering employees manually when screening them during access registration and this poses a risk of possible COVID-19 transmission in the sharing of pen and paper. The electronic screening is meant to be quicker and safer as well as assist to mitigate the risk of exposure to the virus.

Lease agreement: Forum building

The employer reported that the lease agreement for the Department's stay at Forum building expired in September 2020 and the Department is currently on a month-on-month rental. The Director-General has approved the submission for the Department to find long-term accommodation, which may involve purchasing a building or building one from scratch. However, in the meantime, the Department is securing a short-term lease agreement, which may be for five years while working towards the long-term plan. The PSA will ensure that the needs of members are catered for in both the short-term accommodation and the long-term.

SHERQ Policy

The PSA previously reported that the employer tabled the Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality Policy and inputs were requested from members. This purpose of this policy is to enforce the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993* and provide measures aimed at identifying health and safety concerns, reduce the occurrence of occupational incidents, injuries and safety concerns and illnesses as well as promote employee well-being. The policy is applicable to all employees of the Department, irrespective of contractual status, including employees on permanent and fixed-term contracts, visitors, interns and general public. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of key role players responsible for ensuring a healthy and safe working environment as well as provides the procedure to be followed when reporting on occupational injuries and diseases.

Members are urged to read the policy (*attached*) and provide final inputs and mandate to the PSA to adopt the policy. Inputs should be submitted by no later than **17 March 2021** to joseph.mashigo@psa.co.za.

Members will be updated on developments.

GENERAL MANAGER