

Update: Victory to PSA members

Members will recall that PSA intervened as a result of an unsafe building where employees were working. Subsequently, a meeting was arranged between the PSA and the three departments, namely, Home Affairs, Public Works as well as Employment and Labour on 16 October 2020. The meeting led to the inspection and issuing of the Prohibition Notice by the labour inspector in terms of section 30 of the *OHSA*.

The unsafe building, which was disaster waiting to happen was immediately closed thus prohibiting employees and members of the public to access the building owing to noticeable and deep cracks in the wall. Surprisingly, the building had not collapsed owing to the size of the cracks and the inspector advised that no one must be allowed to enter the building. The unsafe condition of the building posed risks to the health and safety of persons working in the building. Employees and members of the public were at risk of electrical shock likely to be caused by electrical wires when combined with water droplets released from leaking roof. The structural integrity of the building required urgent and immediate condition assessment by a competent person to ascertain the appropriate degree of reliability, structural safety, and performance of structural systems. Subsequently, a certificate of occupancy in respect of the building was required to ascertain that the building has been erected in accordance with the *National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act*.

The employer had to find alternative accommodation and employees were moved to new offices, although others had to operate in mobile trucks to allow completion of outstanding work. The employer managed to complete all the outstanding work and employees are now accommodated in the new and safe offices, thanks to the PSA's intervention. The PSA visited the new offices on 14 May 2021 and is satisfied that members are now working in a safe and conducive environment. The protection and promotion of workers' rights and interests remain the priority of the PSA.

OHS non-compliance and work-related challenges must be reported to the PSA at queen.seema@psa.co.za.

GENERAL MANAGER