

## COVID-19 adjusted alert-level 4

Members will recall that the President of South Africa placed the country under alert-level 4 for 14 days commencing from 28 June 2021. Amongst many restrictions, the President stated that government will also be putting in place measures to reduce physical attendance of its employees at workplaces whilst limiting the disruption of government activities and services. Subsequently, the Limpopo Department of Health issued *Circular No 38 of 2021* to deal with management of human resources and other matters during level 4.

Surprisingly, the Department opted not to implement rotation of employees, citing the response to COVID-19. Further, it invited employees to submit the application to work from home without committing on the period to finalise the same, which is concerning as the period of 14 days might lapse before the employer decides on the applications. The DPSA directed Accounting Officers to ensure a reduction of the occupancy rate of less than 50% at any given time for public servants, using shift work and/or remote working arrangements, amongst others. The Department has not implemented any measures to reduce physical attendance as per the President's directives and the DPSA Circular.

The Department has not learnt that the practice of issuing circulars without engagement with labour creates unnecessary tension, particularly when contravening prevailing legislative framework. Insisting on having everybody at the workplace defies logic amidst the third wave and sends a message that the Department is oblivious of the impact of the virus.

The PSA has written a letter to HOD to consider amending the *Circular* to avoid unnecessary conflict with labour and exposing employees to infection. The President's directive and DPSA Circulars are the basis of COVID-19 management and anything outside that cannot be acceptable. Members with challenges at their workplace can contact Mike Mkhize at [mike.mkhize@psa.co.za](mailto:mike.mkhize@psa.co.za) or 082 880 2937, alternatively call the Office on (015) 295 0500.

GENERAL MANAGER