

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **GENERAL 16/2024**

18-07-2024

## Water-supply interruptions

The PSA noted that there have been constant water supply interruptions in and around the Pretoria CBD and other parts of the country. The shortage of water caused serious inconvenience for residents and employees owing to unplanned water-supply interruptions. The PSA received complaints from many members that they were compelled to work under unhygienic conditions. PSA structures on the ground engaged employers and urged them to ensure that there is a backup water supply.

The PSA urges government to develop a standard operating manual for such instances to ensure that employees would know who the responsible person is to report to during water shortages. The designated official must be able to determine when employees can be released to go home, and the maximum time allowed for employees to stay at work during a water interruption.

According to the Constitution of the Republic, human rights and democratic values of human dignity, which include the right to sufficient and accessible water, must be upheld. The *Water Services Act, 108 of 1997*, states that everyone has the right to access a basic water supply and basic sanitation. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993*, states that employers shall make available an adequate supply of water for employees at their workplace. Furthermore, departments must commit to providing services that value the quality of work life and well-being of employees, clients, and visitors.

It becomes a common threat to the health of employees and service delivery if precautionary measures are not in place. The PSA advises members to report water interruption immediately to management so that contingency measures can be applied. Employees should also request an alternative supply of water during the period they are at work. The employer is obliged to provide temporary water such as bottled water for drinking. Once a report is received from the local municipality that the water disruption will last for more than five hours, employees must be released. The employer must put up a notice, indicating the unavailability of water for a particular time frame.

Members are advised to contact their PSA shop stewards for advice on how to deal with occupational health and safety issues.

Employees who have not yet chosen the PSA as their union of choice can visit the PSA's website ([www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za)), send an email to [ask@psa.co.za](mailto:ask@psa.co.za), or contact a PSA Provincial Office.

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