

Feedback: Limpopo DHA Provincial Consultative Forum (PCF)

The PCF was launched on 16 August 2024 and had its first meeting on 4 September 2024 where the following issues were discussed:

Provision of tools of trade

The PSA raised concerns regarding the employer's failure to provide employees with tools of trade, including cellphones for officials placed at hospitals, laptops or tablets for Immigration Officers doing field work and the provision of protective clothing and uniforms for Immigration Management Services (IMS) officials and Asset Management staff. Employees placed at hospitals have no means of communication when experiencing challenges relating to services and are forced to use their own phones. Similarly, the Immigration Officers are not able to check the status of asylums and to track movements of foreign nationals. Further, the IMS officials are exposed to danger when conducting operations in that they work with foreign nationals who are at times heavily armed whilst they are not, compromising their safety as they are not protected and armed like members of the South African Police Service. Employees working at Asset Management are exposed to health hazards as they work without the necessary personal protective clothing such as dust masks, hard hats, work suits, and protective safety boots.

The employer reported that plans to procure handheld scanners are underway, which will assist the IMS officials when they are on field work and funds are available for that purpose. The enhancement of the safety of officials was also considered and the employer will procure bullet-proof vests to be used by officials during inspections and operations as a safety measure. The employer indicated that according to its knowledge, all employees were provided with uniforms, and it was not aware that other employees were not provided with uniforms. The employer will, however, investigate and report at the next meeting. The employer will report on progress pertaining to tools of trade and protective clothing at the next meeting.

Non-compliance with *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*

The PSA tabled the matter pertaining to the status of departmental buildings that leaves much to be desired. To make matters worse, where the Department of Employment and Labour closes non-complying buildings, employees are moved to buildings that are even less compliant with health and safety standards. The employer acknowledged the challenges and further indicated that the Health and Safety Committee is not effective. It was resolved that an integrated approach will be implemented where

the committee members will be invited to the Forum to present a report of their activities, findings of their investigations as well as their challenges.

Provision of cleaning services

The PSA raised concern regarding the lack of cleaning services for mobile offices/trucks, including other offices that do not have cleaners. However, the employer responded that *WesBank* contracted with service providers to wash and clean trucks which offices must utilise for such purposes.

Transfers and cross transfers in Department

The employer requested the PSA to provide a list of officials who were unreasonably denied transfers after the PSA raised concerns of inconsistent processing of employee-initiated transfers that bordered on favouritism and abuse of power. The PSA to provide the information at the next meeting.

Recognition of improved qualification and long service

The PSA requested that information-sharing sessions be conducted on the policies for awareness of employees. The employer welcomed the proposal and will report at the next meeting.

Compensation for employees who were infected with COVID-19

The PSA proposed compensation for employees who were infected with COVID-19 whilst on duty. The employer undertook to retrieve the requirements in terms of the regulations to determine if there are officials who qualified and will present such at the next meeting.

System downtime challenges

The PSA expressed concern pertaining to the attainment of targets by employees owing to technological challenges and proposed that IT personnel must be increased per district to mitigate system challenges. The employer indicated that it is not the inadequacy of personnel but system challenges. The employer is thus considering the termination of its contract with the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) to procure and manage its own IT system. Further, employees can address performance challenges with supervisors during performance assessment sessions.

The PSA will continue protecting members' rights and promoting their interests as practicing service excellence is an important value of the PSA. Members needing assistance with their cases can contact the PSA Provincial Manager at john.teffo@psa.co.za / WhatsApp 079 513 9856.

Employees who wish to join the PSA can contact Lawrence Muvhango on 082 880 8995 / lawrence.muvhango@psa.co.za or Paulina Moloto on 082 880 8957 / paulina.moloto@psa.co.za.

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