



FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - KWAZULU-NATAL

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07-02-2025

## Update: Non-compliance with *Occupational Health and Safety Act* – Water declared not suitable for consumption – Sevontein Correctional Centre

The PSA was alerted by members that they received proof from uMgungundlovu Municipality Environmental Health that the drinking water at the Sevontein Correctional Centre is not safe for human consumption. This was confirmed in the Water Sampling Report issued by the Environmental Health Practitioner of uMgungundlovu District Municipality, dated 27 January 2025. Employees further informed the PSA that about one and half years ago, they noticed that the tap water was muddy, brown, or dark and immediately reported this to their managers. After that discovery, employees at the Centre and inmates fell ill with diarrhoea. The Department, however, never acted on the reports from employees.

The report prompted the PSA to write a letter to the Head of Centre for Sevontein Correctional Centre and to KwaZulu-Natal Regional Office Deputy Director: Labour Relations, seeking an urgent bilateral meeting to discuss the matter as continued consumption of unclean water could lead to several serious gastrointestinal illnesses. The Department of Correctional Services is required by law to take all necessary measures in ensuring that water is safe for consumption for both PSA members and inmates at Sevontein Correctional Centre.

The damning report further states: “The water results came back positive with E-Coli and coliforms. The acceptable microbial standards for water sampling in South Africa specify that there should be no detectable total coliforms and E-Coli (0 cfu/100ml). Therefore, as per results obtained in can be confirmed that water at Sevontein Correctional Centre is not fit for human consumption.”

The state as employer is under obligation in terms of the provisions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of 1993, read together with Hazardous Biological Agents Regulations, to provide and maintain as far as reasonably practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees. Employees are advised to bring their own drinking water and not drink the contaminated water until water purification has been conducted by the Department.

For more information, please contact Nandi Dladla on 082 880 8903. Employees who want to join the PSA can contact Zweli Msane on [Zweli.Msane@psa.co.za](mailto:Zweli.Msane@psa.co.za).

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GENERAL MANAGER