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PSA SHOP STEWARD NEWSLETTER

SHOP STEWARDS: Making service a reality

Shop stewards are a valuable asset for the PSA. They are the eyes, ears, and hands of the PSA at workplaces in assisting members.

One of the PSA's values is "service excellence", meaning that the PSA's promise to the Union's members is that of the protection of their rights and promotion of their interests. Service excellence starts with the provision of such quality service to members, whose membership is the lifeline of the PSA. Service to members should also be seen against the backdrop that shop stewards are elected by members at the workplace. Shop stewards are thus responsible for these members who form such a constituency.

Since the concept of shop steward has the employer/employee relationship at heart, the terms of reference will be for shop stewards to assist with employer-employee labour relations at the workplace. The following are typically issues that affect the employer-employee relationship for which the shop steward will be responsible to assist with:

Address members' general enquiries

Since members are involved with duties entrusted to them by their employers, they are not privy to all information that shop stewards have with their regular interaction with the PSA. The PSA regularly updates members by means of the electronic newsletter, *Informus*. Members may, however, not receive such communication or need assistance with correct interpretation. Shop stewards will therefore have to address such general enquiries and explain workplace issues to members.

Provide members with information on PSA

It is important to remind members of the PSA's fringe benefits and to invite them to register on the PSA's Member Portal where they have access to update personal information, request membership certificates, etc.

Shop stewards should also constantly remind members to update their contact information.

Advise members

It is a major responsibility of a shop steward to give sound workplace advice to members. Since members' careers are at stake, it is the ultimate goal to contribute towards a healthy employer-employee relationship. A good employer-employee relationship supports performance, which contributes towards serving citizens with excellence.

Assist members with grievances, disputes, and workplace discipline

A shop steward serves as mediator between a member and the supervisor/manager. Many grievances and dissatisfaction at the workplace emanate from a lack of communication between supervisors and subordinates. Delay in addressing this, often results in strained workplace relationships that are difficult to resolve at a later stage.

Shop stewards should not hesitate to approach the relevant PSA Provincial Office for guidance or assistance. Representation of members in disciplinary hearings and arbitrations require a high level of skill. The responsibility rests with the shop steward to acquire the necessary skills and experience to render such assistance. PSA Provincial Offices are equipped to assist and will gladly start with a shadowing process with labour relations staff for a shop steward to acquire the required skills.

Together, the PSA and the Union's shop stewards stand in selfless service of members!

