

Workers' Day 2022: Tribute to PSA shop stewards

As the country commemorates Workers' Day, the PSA would like to express gratitude to the Union's shop stewards for their dedication, service to members, and hard work throughout the country, especially during testing times owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With public servants still striving for improved working conditions, prioritisation of occupational health and safety in the workplace, and the right to fair compensation, the role of shop stewards cannot be undermined. Shop stewards are the link between employees and their union, whilst ensuring that employers follow the appropriate workplace guidelines for the wellbeing of workers to support service delivery.

Their job is to get mandates from the workers they represent and report back to these workers. Shop stewards form part of a structure and do not work as individuals. They are part of a leadership team in the workplace and in the Union.

Ultimately, their priority is the Union and its members, whilst carrying important responsibilities including:

- Understanding union policies and collective bargaining agreements to empower members with knowledge.

- Serving as facilitator and mediator between the employer and union members.
- Enforcing basic conditions of employment.
- Being available to hear grievances of employees and working with the employer to resolve these.
- Writing up, filing, and investigating employees' grievances.
- Organising, leading, or assisting in collective bargaining meetings. This includes preparing meeting agendas.
- Staying informed of new agreements impacting on members.
- Alerting Union leaders of issues, problems, or developments related to collective bargaining.
- Recruiting and welcoming new members to the Union.
- These duties reflect the invaluable part played by shop stewards, as those accountable to the workers who elected them. All of this takes time and dedication, and the PSA would like to thank all the Union's shop stewards for their efforts.

Workers' Day serves as a reminder of the continued struggle for workers with new challenges. Unionism remains the strongest weapon in ensuring that collective bargaining gains are protected, guarded by shop stewards as the voice of workers!

