

Minister Nxesi looks at ways to assist emerging contractors

Public Works Minister TW Nxesi says ways must be developed to look at how small and emerging contractors, often employed on seemingly small day-to-day emergency repairs can be assisted to up their game.

Minister Nxesi made the remarks during his address to a Construction and Safety seminar organised by the South African Council for Projects and Construction Management Profession (SACPCMP) and the Department of Labour in Umhlanga, north of Durban.

“This is where a lot of risk lies for us as Public Works, as we strive to maintain a massive state property portfolio (of some 90,000 buildings on 30,000 land parcels). We are also seeking to shift budget priorities towards planned maintenance; reducing reactive maintenance that often leads to increased health and safety risks,” said Minister Nxesi.

The Minister said the recent incident at Charlotte Maxeke where a roof that collapsed while being repaired led to injuries - obliges government to focus on the need to improve Health and Safety standards on construction sites.

“Government has a vision of zero harm through collaborative action in the construction sector. But while we are all working to achieve this vision, and whilst the number of fatalities has declined – even one death is too many,” stated Minister Nxesi.

He said DPW, through the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) is fully committed to supporting the SACPCMP in delivering on its mandate that is to register eligible and competent people as Construction Health and Safety professionals and practitioners.

“I will also engage my colleague, the Minister of Labour to consider that my Department together with the Department of Labour make a presentation to the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) or Cabinet about some of the successes and challenges that are still facing us in reducing the fatalities and injuries on construction sites in our country,” said the Minister.

The Minister concluded by committing to engage and seek further support for the SACPCMP’s work from his partners, the Provincial MECs of Public Works and Infrastructure Development, within the DPW

MINMEC to ensure that Construction Health and Safety is on the agenda in every corner of the public works family across South Africa.