

Treatment of collapsed woman now subject of probe

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A SHOCKING image of a woman who collapsed in the Home Affairs queue being loaded like a sack of potatoes into an ambulance in East London has prompted an official probe.

Two emergency medical services employees are under investigation for not following procedure, said provincial health spokesman Sizwe Kupelo.

"They were expected to put on gloves, check vital signals and use a stretcher when loading her in the ambulance," he said.

He said the image, which went viral, seemed to indicate that the

EMS workers showed "disregard" for their patient.

Kupelo said they are investigating the matter through "internal processes". The workers were given five days to give their side of the story.

Kupelo appealed to health staff to to practice Batho Pele – putting people first. "Treat our people with respect and dignity," he said.

Meanwhile, the underlying problem is that the Fleet Street Home Affairs office is collapsing under the strain of public demand for services.

This is a result of people from the hinterland coming to East London for their documentation, the office stated on Monday when the woman collapsed.

Plans to modernise the Home Affairs office in Mdantsane and install a live capture system so that the outlet can produce new smart ID cards are on the table – but only if suitable premises can be found or built.

Home Affairs provincial manager Gcinile Mabulu said that to build another department office in East London to reduce the queues at the East London CBD branch would come at "a great cost", so the focus instead would be on building a newly-equipped office in Mdantsane.

"Instead of building a new office in East London, we have invested money to install a new live capture system in Mdantsane so that smart



UNGLOVED: Two department of health emergency medical services workers carry a woman who collapsed at the Home Affairs office in East London on Monday Picture: SUPPLIED

ID applicants in the region have more options," said Mabulu.

Elderly mother Thembisa Mayende, from Scenery Park, said she was turned away from the Mdantsane Home Affairs office as it had no live capture system.

She wanted to collect a smart ID for her son, who is in matric.

National Public Works spokesman Thamsanqa Mchunu said they were in the process of issuing tenders for the building of new Home Affairs offices in Mdantsane.

A tender – the third they have issued for this project – closed on March 20, and bids are now being evaluated.

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