

SAPS building in Springs without water for a week – Solidarity

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Owner of Alpha Romeo Building leased by DPW failed to pay municipal service bills

200 SAPS members in Springs subjected to shocking sanitary conditions

Trade union Solidarity yesterday issued a letter to the Department of Labour (DOL) with a request that the Department commission an urgent health inspection into conditions under which SAPS staff members currently have to work in the Alpha Romeo Building in Springs.

This letter to the DOL follows after Solidarity had been contacted by members this week to inform the trade union that members of staff had been without water in the workplace for more than a week. According to Solidarity Deputy General Secretary Schalk de Bruin, they have been asked to bring water to the office for sanitary use. They have even been told to relieve themselves under a tree should they have to.

According to De Bruin, the Alpha Romeo Building is being leased by the Department of Public Works (Public Works) in terms of a lease agreement with the legal owner. "However, the landlord has failed to pay the municipal service bills and consequently, the Ekurhuleni Municipality has cut the water supply. The outstanding municipal bill amounts to R329 066," De Bruin said.

De Bruin also said the trade union had previously liaised with both the SAPS as employer and with Public Works demanding that an urgent solution be found. "We have suggested that Public Works pay the outstanding amount directly to the city council and that an internal arrangement be made to recover the expense from the landlord," De Bruin said.

Solidarity contends that as an employer the SAPS has a legal obligation to provide a safe work environment to its employees. "It is clear that the employer's failure, and

that of the other government department (that is, Public Works) have serious consequences for the more than 200 SAPS employees. It would also appear as if the problem is not being treated with the seriousness it deserves as no solution has been forthcoming yet," De Bruin said.

According to De Bruin, the lack of access to water as a result of non-payment has many consequences such as legal implications in terms of labour law, reputation damage and health risks. Even employee motivation and productivity could suffer as a consequence.

Meanwhile, the Department of Labour has responded immediately to Solidarity's request and will send a health inspector to investigate. "Solidarity is monitoring the steps being taken to resolve the issue," De Bruin concluded.