

File no.: 3/3/2/4/3  
Reference: 20230831-7637

Circular: 0023/2023  
Expiry date: None

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors (Head Office and district offices), Deputy Directors, Circuit Managers, Heads: ISLES Coordination and Advice, Head Office and district office officials, Principals, Educators and education support staff

Short summary: *Process for the management of leave of absence applications for 04 to 10 August 2023 due to the SANTACO taxi strike and related civil unrest.*

**Subject: Leave of absence arrangements during the SANTACO taxi strike and related civil unrest from 04 to 10 August 2023 (unrest period)**

1. At 15:00 on Thursday, 03 August 2023, the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) embarked on a taxi strike in the Western Cape and immediately withdrew all taxi transport, leaving commuters stranded. Due to the resultant civil unrest, nearly all other forms of road passenger transport also withdrew services or rendered a limited service out of fear of retaliation for rendering passenger transport services in the absence of SANTACO taxis.
2. The workdays following 03 August 2023 saw an increase in employee absenteeism as a result of the taxi strike and civil unrest, coupled with a wave of verified reports of violence as well as misinformation on social media platforms.
3. Late on the evening of 10 August 2023, SANTACO called off the taxi strike. This was immediately communicated by various stakeholders on a range of social media platforms.
4. The following arrangements will apply for leave of absence applications related to the unrest period.

5. Leave applied for prior to and during the unrest period and for reasons other than the taxi strike/civil unrest:
  - a) All types of leave of absence applications for days within the unrest period, applied for prior to the taxi strike/civil unrest, will be processed as per the original request and supervisor/manager's recommendation.
  - b) All sick and temporary incapacity leave applications made during the unrest period will be processed as such.
  - c) Annual leave applied for during the unrest period may be reconsidered in line with paragraphs 6 or 7 hereunder.
  
6. Arrangements for leave of absence applications for **office-based employees** applied for during the unrest period for reasons related to the taxi strike/civil unrest:
  - a) If the reason proffered for the leave of absence is related to the taxi strike/civil unrest, office-based employees must apply for special leave for the specific day(s) or period(s) of absence and provide proof of the extraordinary circumstances that prevented workplace attendance. Such proof can be substantiated by an affidavit deposed of before a commissioner of oaths. Managers or supervisors, in considering the recommendation or approval of the leave of absence as special leave, may consider applications that are only supported by an affidavit.
  - b) The special leave must be applied for using the *Application for Leave of Absence* form (Z1(a)) and must reach the Directorate: Service Benefits, for the attention of Ms Jenny Williams, by **27 September 2023**.
  
7. Arrangements for leave of absence applications for **institution-based employees (public service employees and educators)** applied for during the unrest period for reasons related to the taxi strike/civil unrest:
  - a) If the reason proffered for the leave of absence is related to the taxi strike/civil unrest, institution-based employees must apply for special leave for the specific day(s) or period(s) of absence and provide proof of the extraordinary circumstances that prevented workplace attendance. Such proof can be substantiated by an affidavit deposed of before a commissioner of oaths. Principals, in considering the recommendation or approval of the leave of absence as special leave, may consider applications that are only supported by an affidavit.
  - b) The special leave must be applied for using the *Application for Leave of Absence* form (Z1(a)) and must be uploaded onto the People Management Practices System (PMPS) by no later than **27 September 2023**. Principals are requested to monitor the communication on the PMPS, as unforeseen circumstances may necessitate a change in the mode of delivery of documents. The *Application for Leave of Absence: School-based educators* form (H.1) MUST NOT be used as it does not make provision for special leave. Errors on this form have been shared with the Department of Basic Education and once a corrected version is published, it will be made available.
  - c) Employees at institutions that were closed, as outlined in the Head of Education's letter of 09 August 2023, albeit that the closure occurred before 09 August 2023, are excluded from these arrangements for those days during the unrest period that the institutions were closed.

8. Any leave of absence has financial implications and as such is extensively audited by the Auditor-General of South Africa on an annual basis. It is for this reason and to ensure a culture of good governance, that the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) requests all the affected employees, principals, supervisors and managers to diligently manage the administrative fallout of the disruption caused by the taxi strike and civil unrest. Fairness, reasonableness and communication with the affected employees (written and verbal) must underpin all recommended/not recommended leave applications.
9. The WCED's Client Services officials at both the Call and Walk-in Centres have been briefed on this matter and are ready to assist with advice and guidance.

**SIGNED:** B WALTERS

**HEAD: EDUCATION**

**DATE:** 2023-09-11