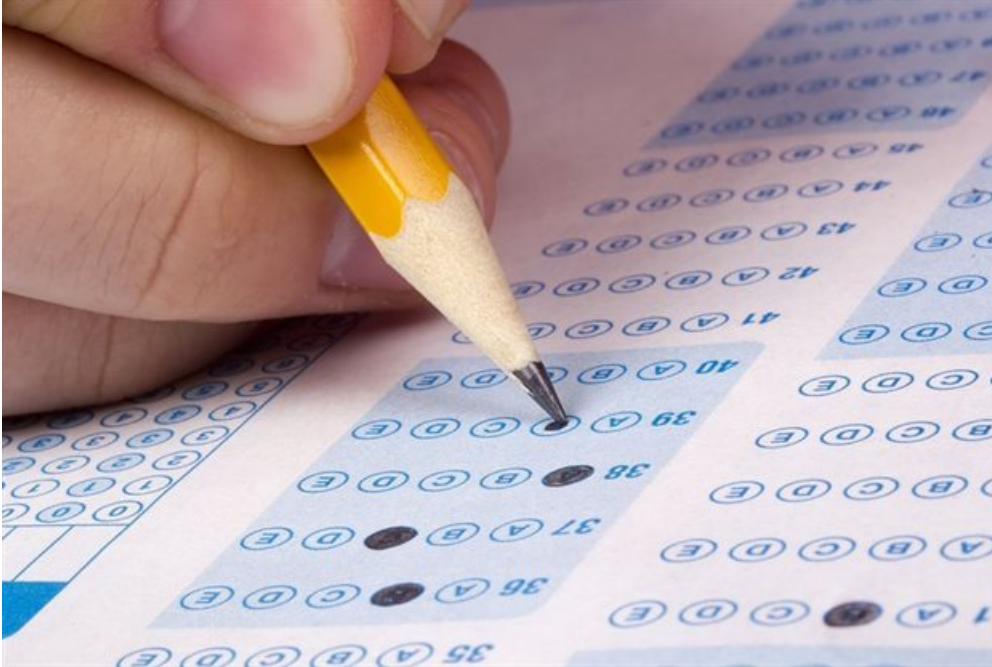


Printing of exam papers being reviewed

The Government Printing Works (GPW) says it is reviewing the contract it has with a service provider following an incident in which children and educators in Limpopo fell ill after inhaling an unpleasant smell from examination papers.



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The affected examination papers, which were printed by the service provider for Grade 11 examination papers, were recalled.

The subjects affected were Maths Literacy paper two, Geography paper one and two and Home Languages.

The Government Printing Works said it did not usually outsource the printing of examination papers.

“The air-conditioning system at the GPW’s printing facility unexpectedly became faulty and stopped working. This situation called for an immediate intervention and we got a contractor to help us manage the volumes we needed to print timeously.

“The printing service provider may have used paper which contains chemicals that led to the people falling sick. I need to emphasise that GPW remains committed to the printing of state security documents, and has the capacity and capability to deliver on these products and services,” said GPW Acting CEO Alinah Fosi in a statement.

Replacement papers have been printed by Government Printing Works and they have already been delivered to the affected districts, for examinations scheduled for Thursday and Friday.

Therefore there are no anticipated disruptions to the examinations in these districts.

Fosi said the Government Printing Works is working with relevant role players to investigate the source of the problem which resulted in the examination papers having a paint-like smell.

She said air-conditioners are critical in the printing environment because these machines use sophisticated electronic instruments to measure the printing process and these instruments are sensitive to high temperatures.

Once the temperature is too high, the machines automatically switch to fail mode and shut down, to prevent permanent damage.

“This is a risk that requires a long-term solution for the maintenance of our air-conditioners to ensure that GPW does not find itself in a similar situation in the future.”

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