Emergency workers urged to end illegal strike

By More Matshediso   17 Oct 2014

Gauteng's Department of Health says normal emergency services have not yet been badly affected by the illegal and unprotected strike of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) workers.

Gauteng's Acting MEC for Health, Lebogang Maile has urged striking emergency workers to get back to work and to stop intimidating other workers who are not and strike and do not support the strike action. Image: Jo'burg

The department called on all workers who are part of the illegal strike, which started earlier this week, to return to work immediately.

"The strike was initially confined to the rural areas of Tshwane," said the department.

It said the management of the department, in conjunction with all the municipalities in Gauteng, have begun implementing contingency measures to ensure emergency services offered to the public are not affected.

Acting MEC for Health, Lebogang Maile, said the management team of the department met with the unions to examine issues that are prompted the illegal strike.

"We remain committed to addressing the grievances of our employees. Workers must explore and use proper channels of engagement in the workplace," Maile said.

He added that he has instructed the acting head of the Department of Health to engage with the unions and to reach some amicable agreement.

The department said it will seek an interdict to stop striking workers from engaging in criminal acts, and prevent them from intimidating other workers.

"Disciplinary action will be taken against employees who intimidate others," the department said.

"While workers have a right to express their dissatisfaction, it is unacceptable to engage in criminal acts and destroy state property. We encourage workers to go back to work while discussions with management are underway," said Maile.

He said the department wants to assure the public that it will not employees putting the lives of other people at risk by going on strike.

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