



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA RELEASE ON THREATENED STRIKE BY FUNERAL UNDERTAKERS

The Department is aware that a group of funeral are planning to shut down the collection of human remains from private and public health facilities. This is very concerning as this action may lead to undesired conditions and risks to public health

The Department arranged several meetings (2 virtual in August and 1 physical at the beginning of September. These meetings were as a result an open letter by the National Funeral Practitioners of Association of South Africa. This is the only association that wrote to the Department. The Department would like to emphasise the following:

All funeral undertakers and mortuary premises used in connection with the preparation, storage and preservation of human remains must be in possession of a valid certificate of competence issued by the relevant local authority.

Environmental Health Practitioners are and will continue to conduct inspections in all funeral undertakers' premises in the country to check compliance to the Regulations. Legal action will be taken against owners of premises found to be in contravention.

Family members are urged to check the legitimacy of the undertakers and agents being utilised for overall management of the burial of their loved ones to ensure proper tracking and tracing and that the handling of the remains is done with dignity and within the law.

Environmental Health Practitioners in District and/or Metropolitan Municipalities can be contacted for assistance on any issues relating to the management of human remains and for advice to ensure compliance to the Regulations.

We further call upon members of the public to report any illegal operations to ensure the public can be protected from potential risks and the spread of communicable diseases as a result of poor management of human remains.

We will not allow non-compliance to legislation in this sensitive area. The Department of Health is willing to continue with talks with the funeral parlour sector to come to an amicable solution.

For more information, please contact

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