# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1092**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 14 MAY 2021**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 12)**

**Mrs E R Wilson (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) Whether, in light of the Department of Labour issuing a notice with regard to the amendments that had to be made to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993, at the Forensic Laboratories at 271 Visagie Street, Pretoria, in October 2018, the amendments have been made; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, on what date did the amendments begin according to the notification;

(2) what are the reasons that (a) the amendments have not been completed and (b) it has taken three years to act on the notification which advised that such improvements had to be made in 60 days;

(3) on what date will the amendments in terms of the notification be completed?

###### NW1279E

**REPLY:**

1. The Department of Employment and Labour issued an improvement and contravention notice to the Forensic Chemistry Laboratory at 271 Visagie Street, Pretoria on 8 October 2018. The laboratory began immediately with the compliance requirement in the improvement notice under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993. Copies of all relevant Acts and Regulations have been made available at the laboratory. Posters are also visible on the walls of the corridors of the laboratory. All DB boards in the laboratory have warning signs attached to them. This was done by the laboratory in October 2018.
2. The risk assessments and medical surveillance program of employees were part of a tender awarded to a service provider in 2019 to cover the National Department of Health and its decentralised units including the Forensic Chemistry Laboratories. The service provider was due to start the risk assessments and medical surveillance of employees in March 2020. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic response the service provider undertook risk assessments related to Covid-19 only and not general health and safety assessments. In addition, many employees were not at work or undergoing rotational shifts in line with DPSA guidelines and thus the medical surveillance programme was placed on hold. It is envisaged that the risk assessments will be conducted in the third quarter of the 2021/22 financial year. Medical surveillance will be undertaken in the fourth quarter of the 2021/22 financial year after the risk assessments in order to link risk assessments to medical surveillance of individual employees.

Afrox was not able to assist the laboratory with the Certificate of Compliance for gases. The laboratory is following up with Afrox to take responsibility and provide a Certificate of Compliance.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure was contacted on the 23 October 2018 and to date despite follow up by the laboratory manager on multiple occasions has not responded on the contravention notice covering infrastructure, electrical and mechanical requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993.

1. The laboratory does not have any details or specific dates on when to expect the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to attend to the request. The Director-General will write to the Director-General of Public Works and Infrastructure later this month requesting feedback and intervention.

END.