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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1310**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 21 APRIL 2023**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 13 - 2022**

**1310. Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) Whether she has been informed that the SA Social Security Agency offices in Limpopo recently closed their doors while beneficiaries and applicants had to wait until staff members returned from attending funerals; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (2) Whether the specified practice is acceptable; if not, what consequence management actions have been instituted against each official; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1475E

**REPLY:**

1. The SASSA Polokwane Local Office located at Schoeman Street, lost one of its officials through death. Guided by clause 6.2.4 of the SASSA Bereavement policy, a memorial service of the departed colleague was arranged by the local office staff with the permission of the family.

The memorial was scheduled for the 09 March 2023 at 12H00 in the Seshego Hospital Hall. The local office management prepared and submitted a request to the Regional management which was duly approved, to hold a memorial service and arrange that skeletal staff remain in the office.

Three (3) officials out of fourteen (14) staff members, were identified to ensure continued service delivery. It transpired that these officials upon seeing that there were no clients to be serviced at about 14H00, decided on their own accord to join the rest of the staff at the memorial service. The time of their departure was corroborated by the security guard who was on duty.

The Regional Manager did not inform the Minister and the CEO of this occurrence disciplinary measures were effected upon receipt of complaints from customers.

1. Leaving an office unattended is not acceptable and if this happens, it has to be under exceptional circumstances permitted by the Regional Executive Manager with the CEO sanctioning it. Since the behaviour of the three (3) officials were regarded as untoward, corrective disciplinary measures were taken and they were all served with written warning(s) for unauthorised closure of the office.