GUARDIAN EMPLOYERS ORGANISATION
LR2/6/3/316
Assisting Employers in Labour Law

OCTOBER 2026

NEWSLETTER

THE CCMA: WHY UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS MATTERS

New Rules. New Procedures. No Room for Guesswork.

Dear Member,

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) plays a vital role in resolving workplace disputes. However, for employers, the process can often be unfamiliar, intimidating and, at times, frustrating.

With the introduction of the new CCMA Rules, this is an opportune time to revisit the importance of understanding how the dispute resolution process works and what employers can expect when a matter is referred to the CCMA.

As a GEO member, you already have the benefit of professional labour relations assistance and representation. Our officials regularly assist members with workplace disputes, conciliations, arbitrations and the complexities that accompany these proceedings.

However, effective dispute resolution is a partnership between the employer and their representative.

Understanding the process allows employers to make informed decisions, appreciate the legal requirements and actively contribute to the successful management of their matters.

WHY SHOULD EMPLOYERS UNDERSTAND THE CCMA PROCESS?

1. Understanding what to expect

Many employers are unfamiliar with the differences between conciliation and arbitration, the role of the commissioner, the importance of evidence and the procedural steps involved.

Understanding these processes helps employers appreciate why certain steps must be followed, why matters may take time to conclude and what is required at each stage.

2. The importance of preparation and cooperation

While GEO officials assist members with preparing and presenting their cases, employers play an equally important role in providing accurate information, relevant documents and access to witnesses.

The quality of the evidence available can significantly influence the outcome of a dispute.

A well-informed employer is better equipped to assist their GEO representative in preparing a comprehensive case.

3. Understanding litigation risks

Not every matter is straightforward, and even cases that appear strong may carry litigation risks.

Commissioners are required to consider the evidence and applicable legal principles when reaching their decisions.

Understanding how the CCMA evaluates disputes helps employers appreciate the advice provided by their GEO officials, particularly when considering settlement opportunities, the prospects of success and the potential consequences of proceeding to arbitration.

4. Avoiding unnecessary procedural complications

The CCMA operates within a framework of rules, prescribed timeframes and procedural requirements.

Although GEO assists members in navigating these requirements, employers also benefit from understanding the importance of promptly forwarding notices, providing instructions, ensuring witnesses are available and responding to requests for information.

Timely cooperation helps ensure that matters can be managed effectively.

5. Making informed business decisions

Workplace disputes do not occur in isolation. They can affect business operations, employee relations, productivity and management resources.

An understanding of the CCMA process enables employers to make informed decisions in consultation with their GEO representatives, balancing legal considerations with operational realities.



THE NEW CCMA RULES: STAYING INFORMED

The introduction of new CCMA Rules makes it particularly important for employers and their representatives to remain informed about the procedures governing dispute resolution. At GEO, our role extends beyond simply attending proceedings on behalf of members.

We aim to guide, advise and support employers throughout the dispute resolution process, ensuring that they understand the matters affecting their businesses and the options available to them. We believe that members who understand the fundamentals of the CCMA process are better positioned to work alongside their representatives and make informed decisions. At GEO, we understand that employers have businesses to run and cannot be expected to become experts in labour law and dispute resolution.

Our role is to provide the guidance, support and representation that employers need when navigating the complexities of labour relations. However, we also believe that informed employers make better decisions, and that a sound understanding of the CCMA process strengthens the working relationship between our members and their GEO representatives.

GEO is excited to present a webinar on the 18th November 2026 discussing the changes brought with the New CCMA Rules. We would like to invite you and your teams to attend to better understand what exactly the changes are and how it will impact you.

We hope to see you there.

Kind regards,
Guardian Employers Organisation (GEO)
Assisting Employers in Labour Law
geo@geo.org.za
0861 436 436