

Fiona Leppan

Director



Fiona Leppan is a Director in our Employment Law practice. She has extensive experience in the field of employee relations both from a litigation perspective and in terms of strategic planning. Training and development in this field has been a focal point. Fiona has actively trained clients on how to deal with internal disputes and to conduct enquiries and arbitrations. Fiona previously served as Joint Head of the Mining & Minerals sector. She has also established entire dispute resolution processes for a number of mining houses where disputes were dealt with by way of private conciliation and arbitration. Fiona works in various industries including mining, metals, engineering, retail, broadcasting, financial services and the commercial distributive trade. She has also been involved in occupational health and safety work.

Fiona's sector specialities include Employment litigation, individual labour law, collective bargaining law and strategic planning and Occupational Health & Safety in Mining & Minerals.

About Fiona

Fiona began her career as registrar to Mr Justice Margo in the then Supreme Court. In 1983 Fiona joined Webber Wentzel as a Candidate Attorney where she was later promoted to Partner. She subsequently joined Deney's Reitz as a Partner. In 1998, she left Deney's Reitz to establish the law firm Leppan Beech Attorneys. In 2007 Fiona joined Cliffe Dekker (now Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr) as a Director.

Credentials

Education

- BA LLB, University of Witwatersrand
- LLM (with distinction), University of the Witwatersrand
- HDip (Advanced Company Law), University of the Witwatersrand
- Certificate course (Mining and Prospecting Law) with distinction, Mandela School of Law, University of Witwatersrand
- Year of admission as an attorney: 1986
- Registered with the Legal Practice Council

Memberships

- Member of the SAEFA Industrial Relations Forum in the Metals' Industry
- SASLAW

Contact Fiona

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[Fiona on LinkedIn](#)

Expertise

[Employment Law](#)

[Occupational Health & Safety](#)

[Industrials, Manufacturing & Trade](#)

[Mining & Minerals](#)

[Technology & Communications](#)

Location

Johannesburg

Language

English

Experience

- Ground breaking cases

Conducted many ground breaking reported cases in the Labour Court, Labour Appeal Court, High Court and Land Claims Court.

- Lonmin Platinum

By way of example, she represented the then Lonmin Platinum at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry. She represented Sibanye Gold in the recent 2019 Gold Strike and played an imported role in the resolution of that matter.

- Occupational health and safety

Undertaken occupational health and safety work and conducted serious incident and fatal accident inquiries.

- Developed Land Law

Developed Land Law as an area of expertise, inclusive of community relocations and land claims.

News

[Navigating the balance between the right to privacy and the right of access to information in De Jager v Netcare Limited and Others](#)

The balance between the constitutional right to privacy and the right of access to information becomes especially complex in circumstances where personal data is impacted by the pursuit of justice.

[Changes to COIDA employer assessments effective 1 March 2025](#)

On 4 April 2025, the Minister of Employment and Labour published a notice announcing key changes to the prescribed assessment amounts under Section 83(8) and Section 83(2)(b) of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993, as amended (" COIDA ").

[Navigating occupational health and safety in the digital economy](#)

The digitalisation of labour has become increasingly prevalent, necessitating a review of occupational health and safety (OHS) protocols and standards. Employers and employees face unprecedented challenges as well as opportunities in the digital workplace. On 25 March 2025, the Department of Employment and Labour released a guide titled " What Every Employer and Employee Should Know for the Digital Economy ", (Guide) which addresses the risks associated with digital labour, highlights key precautionary measures and emphasises the importance of risk management by outlining a step-by-step approach to identify and minimise workplace risks.

[How inspectors should conduct inspections under the OHSA](#)

The recent Labour Court decision in *Truworhts Limited v The Chief Inspector: Occupational Health and Safety, Department of Employment and Labour* and Another Case Number: J1597/21 has provided clarification on the authority of labour inspectors and the correct application of the "reasonably practicable" standard under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 (OHSA). The court's decision considered whether inspectors issuing contravention notices were properly certified, and whether their interpretation of workplace seating requirements under the Facilities Regulations 2004 (Facilities Regulations) was legally sound. The court also clarified what is meant by an appeal in terms of section 35(3) of the OHSA and how a court should approach such an appeal where an aggrieved party challenges the findings of an inspector.

[The steps and missteps from employers approaching mental health in the workplace: Lessons from the Court](#)

Employers are required to balance the relevant support for employees against their operational needs. The Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, SANS regulations and South African case law provide a framework for achieving this balance. Recent judgments offer critical insights into managing mental health issues related to misconduct, incapacity and constructive dismissal

Videos



Health and Safety in the Workplace: Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) - Pending Amendments

Webinar Recording | The new Labour Court and Labour Appeal Court rules: A roadmap to efficiency

On 3 May 2024, new Labour Court and Labour Appeal Rules were published that will soon replace the existing court rules.

Webinar Recording | Health and Safety in the Workplace webinar series: COIDA

Health and safety is an important component of all workplaces. Watch the first webinar discussion of our Health and Safety series.

How well do women fare in the South African labour market

Employment Director Fiona Leppan joined Newzroom Afrika to take a look at whether South African employers are being sufficiently receptive to the additional burden of family responsibility that has been introduced to women working at home during lockdown.

Gender parity in the workplace

Fiona Leppan, Director in the Employment practice joined Morning Live on SABC 2 to discuss gender parity in the workplace.

Podcasts

Criminal charges laid by employer? An employer can still take disciplinary action!

The Labour Court held that criminal charges laid by the employer against an employee can never stand in the way of that employer subjecting the employee to a disciplinary enquiry in the workplace in respect of the same charges.

Can an employee be dismissed for refusing to obey an instruction to work overtime?

Recently the labour court handed down a judgment in which it had to consider whether dismissal for insubordination was an appropriate sanction for employees who refused to obey an instruction to work overtime. The case raised important questions relating to overtime and highlighted an important aspect of section 10 of the BCEA. Employment Law experts Director Fiona Leppan and Associate Kgodisho Phashe, joined CDH Conversations to discuss the recent judgement.

Four day work week

During her interview with 702, to discuss the global trend of a four-day work week, Fiona Leppan, Director in our Employment Law practice noted that, "doing collaborative sessions with employees and daily check-ins with them, where you are clearly defining their daily and weekly deliverables to make sure they are all met."

Firefighter injured on Duty – A closer look into inherent job requirements and reasonable accommodation

Recently, the Constitutional Court decided the case of Adam Damons v City of Cape Town, where an employee firefighter who was injured at work and sustained a disability (as a result of the employer's non-compliance with safety procedures) sought a position as a Senior Firefighter but was inhibited by the employer's Fire and Rescue Advancement Policy. The case raised important questions relating to unfair discrimination in the workplace, the place of the inherent requirements of the job defence and the scope of reasonable accommodation

Religious and cultural wear at work

Religious and cultural expression is of paramount importance among South Africans, and as we come down from the high of Heritage Day on 24 September, the conversation around religious, cultural, or political clothing in the workplace has come to the fore. Fiona Leppan, Director in our Employment Law practice delves into how the South African constitutions strikes a balance between cultural expression and workplace dress code policies.

[All news by Fiona Leppan →](#)

Recognition

- Chambers Global 2018–2025 ranked Fiona Leppan in Band 2 for employment.
- The Legal 500 EMEA 2022–2025 recommend Fiona for mining.
- The Legal 500 EMEA 2025 recommend Fiona in the 'Hall of Fame' for employment.
- The Legal 500 EMEA 2019–2024 recommended her as a leading individual for employment, and recommended her from 2012–2018.