



**NUMSA Statement on Mercedes Benz temporary suspension of production  
3 July 2025  
Press statement**

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has noted that Mercedes Benz South Africa (MBSA) has implemented its scheduled lay off, which means it has suspended its production temporarily for a month. Production was suspended from the 24th of June at the plant in East London until the 30th of July.

We have noted that many media houses are speculating that this closure is as a result of the decision by the U.S. to impose tariffs against South Africa's trade agreement, AGOA, which is not necessarily the case. MBSA is not closing its plant in East London, it is on a lay off. The suspension of operations was planned for and it is part of the company's annual plans to shut down. It is a common strategy in auto companies, to stop or temporarily slow down production when adjusting volumes in the production programme. It is unfortunate that speculation from some media houses has caused unnecessary panic. Furthermore, NUMSA was informed, ahead of time, that production would be temporarily suspended, and in the meantime, workers will participate in a variety of training programs. Workers will receive wages during this period. Production will start up again at the end of July into the first week of August.

However it is NUMSA's firm view that it's completely unfair for Auto OEMs to subject workers to lay off and short time which reduces hours as this negatively affects our members by drastically reducing their take home pay. It is worse for workers who supply these OEM's as they do not enjoy the reduced hours of work, because they often lose their salaries. Our position both for the OEM's and suppliers to the OEM's, including the component companies that supply them, is that they must work with NUMSA to apply for the training lay off scheme from the UIF through CCMA, to ensure that workers are cushioned during the lay off or short time. NUMSA also calls on these companies to pay a top up to ensure that workers do not suffer as a result of the negative impact of such decisions.

ENDS.

Issued on behalf of NUMSA by:  
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