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Department:
Human Settlements, Public Safety & Liaison

North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

PUBLIC SAFETY & LIAISON BRANCH

**NORTHWEST PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT:
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, PUBLIC SAFETY AND
LIAISON (PUBLIC SAFETY & LIAISON BRANCH)
HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY**

POLICY NO : HR2012/002
NAME OF POLICY : OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
EFFECTIVE ON : SEPTEMBER 2013
DATE OF REVIEW : 31 AUGUST 2016

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PREAMBLE

The North West Department of Human Settlements, Public Safety and Liaison (Public Safety & Liaison Branch) recognizes that there is a need to create and maintain a healthy, safe and supportive work environment for its employees, and that every effort will be made to involve all managers, supervisors and employees in the development and implementation of health and safety procedures and to comply with health legislation in the spirit and the letter of the law.

1. ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **Department;** "means the Department of Human Settlements, Public Safety and Liaison(Safety House);
- 1.2 **H.O.D;** "means the Head of Department;
- 1.3 **Healthy;** " means free from illness or injury attributable to occupational causes (exposure);
- 1.4 **Employee;**" means subject to the provision of subsection (2) of the OHSA, any person who is employed by or works for an employer and who receives or is entitled to receive any remuneration or who works under the direction or supervision of the employer or any person;
- 1.5 **Employer;** " means, subject to the provisions of subsection (2) of the OHSA , any person who employs or provides work for any person and remunerates that person or expressly or tacitly undertakes to remunerates him;
- 1.6 **Official;** "means the officer to whom a firearm has been issued.
- 1.7 **Danger;** " means anything which may cause injury or damage to persons or property,
- 1.8 **Hazard;** " means a source of or exposure to danger;
- 1.10 **Health and Safety Representative;** "means a person designated in terms of section (17) (1) of the OHSA,
- 1.11 **Health and Safety Committee;** "means a committee established under section (19) of the OHSA,
- 1.12 **OHSA;** "means Occupational Health and Safety Act,
- 1.13 **Hazard;** "means a source of or exposure to danger
- 1.14 **Danger;** "means anything, which may cause injuring or damage to persons or property.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- (a) That employee's work in an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being,
- (b) Provision for measures and procedures through which a healthy, safe and supportive work environment can be created and maintained,
- (c) Establish and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for employees of the department,
- (d) Improve efforts to reduce occupational health and safety hazards in the workplace.
- (e) Maintain open and transparent relations with our stakeholders in occupational health and safety matters, and to actively involve employee representatives in the management of health and safety.
- (f) To put measures in place to reduce the occupational exposure.

2.2 The objectives of the Department with respect to Occupational Health and Safety are to:

- (a) Implement formal systems and structures to maintain a healthy and safe environment to its employees.
- (b) Educate, train and develop employees to ensure that each person is able to apply his/her skill to ensure a healthy and safe work place.

- (c) Promote co-operation between individuals, Health and Safety representatives, employees and Managers in the management of health and safe working environment.
- (d) Comply with any law or prescript/guidelines governing or impacting on occupational health and safety including the Constitution.
- (e) Put effective information systems in place to ensure health and safety of employees and our departmental clients.
- (f) Put consultative processes in place with health and safety committees.
- (g) Perform regular risks assessments and incident investigations.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 To ensure the promotion and maintenance of occupational health and safety standards, and to consider safety and environmental factors in all operating decisions including planning and acquisition.
- 3.2 To ensure healthy, safe and risks free working environment.
- 3.3 To ensure that everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being.
- 3.3 To ensure that awareness prevails that maintains open and transparent relations with all stakeholders or clients in respect occupational health and safety matters, and active involvement with Health and Safety representatives will also reduce risks and hazards in the work place.
- 3.4 The Head of the Department shall be accountable for the maintenance of health and safety within the Department and may further delegate the responsibilities to any person under his/her control.

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 1996;
- 4.2 Public Service Act, 1994 as amended;
- 4.3 Public Service Regulations, 2001
- 4.4 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993
- 4.5 Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993
- 4.6 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997
- 4.7 Fire Arm Control Act

5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

The policy shall apply to all employees, stakeholders and clients within the Department.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

The Department is committed to provide measures and procedures through which a healthy, safe and supportive work environment can be created and maintained within the Department.

7. STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION

- (a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, requires that everyone has the right to a safe environment.
- (b) The Public Service Regulations 2001, as amended in 2006, requires the Head of the Department to establish and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for employees of the department.
- (c) The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 requires the employer, employees and their clients to take responsible care and maintain a working environment that is healthy, safe and free from hazards and risks.

- (d) The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 requires the Head of the department to put measures in place/develop systems that will continuously maintain and reduce occupational health and safety hazards in the workplace.
- (e) The Basic Conditions of Employment Act prohibits employers from requiring or permitting a pregnant employee or an employee who is breast-feeding to perform work that is hazardous to the health of the employee or her child.

8. POLICY MATTERS

8.1 Responsibilities of employer

- 8.1.1 The Head of Department shall provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of his/her employees.
- 8.1.2 For the attainment of the responsibility in sub-section 8.1.1 above, the Head of Department, has a duty to provide, amongst others, the following:
 - (a) To provide and maintain systems of work that are safe and without risks to health.
 - (b) To clear instructions on the importance of safety in the workplace.
 - (c) To take necessary steps to eliminate any hazard or potential hazard to the safety or health of employees before resorting to personal protective equipment.
 - (d) To set up information and control systems so that the health and safety performance can be monitored and corrective action taken, and also to provide supervisors with requisite help, guidance and training.
 - (e) To ensure that the requirements in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act are complied with by every person in his/her employment or on premises under the control where plant and machinery is used.

8.2 Responsibilities of employees

- 8.2.1 It is the duty of all employees whilst at work to take reasonable care for their safety and health. It is therefore the duty of every employee to:
 - (a) To take care of his/her own health and safety as well as that of other persons who may be affected by his/her actions, omissions or negligence.
 - (b) Carry out any lawful instruction which the employer or authorized person prescribes with regard to health and safety.
 - (c) If any situation which is unsafe or unhealthy comes to his/her attention, as soon as practicable report such situation to his/her employer or to the health and safety representative, for his workplace or section thereof, as the case maybe, who shall report it to the employer.
 - (d) Refrain from damaging, interfering with or misusing anything that has been provided for health and safety reasons.
 - (e) Only undertake tasks for which appropriate training were received.
 - (f) Wear the prescribed safety clothing or use the prescribed safety equipment where it is required.

8.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

Subject to the provisions of subsection (2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, every employer who has more than 20 (twenty) employees in his/her employment at any workplace, shall, within 4 (four) months after the commencing of the business or from such as the number of employees exceeds 20 (twenty), designate in writing for a specified period health and safety representatives for such workplace, or for different sections/directorate/workstation thereof. Consultations with employees of the department should be done before health and safety representatives are elected.

In the case of offices there shall be at least (1) one health and safety representative for every 100 (hundred) employees.

8.3.1 Functions of Health and Safety Representatives

- (a) Review the effectiveness of health and safety measures (inspections).
- (b) Identify potential hazards and potential major incidents at the workplace.
- (c) Participate in any internal health and safety audits.
- (d) Attend Health and Safety Committee Meetings.
- (e) Investigate complaints by any employee relating to that employee's health and safety at work.
- (f) In collaboration with the employer, examine the causes of incidents at the workplace.

8.4 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE/S

An employer shall in respect of each workplace where two or more health and safety representatives have been designated, establish one or more health and safety committees and, at every meeting of such committee (s), consult with the committee with a view to initiating, developing, promoting, maintaining and reviewing measures to ensure the health and safety of his/her employees at work.

Departmental Health and Safety Committee(s) shall be established in the Department of Human Settlements, Public Safety and Liaison (Public Safety Branch) where Health and Safety representatives have been designated, comprising in addition, nominated members representing the employer. Members will elect the Chairperson and will determine the place and frequency of their meetings.

8.4.1 Functions of Health and Safety Committee/s

- (a) Monitor all health and safety arrangements within the department and keep under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety of the employees at work, and make recommendations to the HOD.
- (b) Act as consultative and advisory body for matters of occupational health and safety affecting employees and clients/customers and promote sound policy practice.
- (c) Develop an overall strategy to promote a positive health and safety culture.
- (d) Renew membership and operation of the committee from time to time.
- (e) Receive all reports on accidents, dangerous occurrences and notifiable diseases and propose risk reduction strategies.
- (f) Monitor the effectiveness of health and safety management.

8.5 OCCUPATIONAL AND SAFETY PROGRAMMES

Occupational and Safety Programmes are aimed at protecting employees against hazards to their health and safety. Possible causes of accidents must be identified and communicated to employees as well as introducing methods with which such hazards can be controlled or eliminated.

8.5.1 GUIDANCE (SAFE PLACE TO WORK):

- (a) Safety devices, such as fire extinguishers, shall be installed where required, and shall be maintained and tested on a regular basis.
- (b) Employees shall be provided with protective clothing/equipment such as gloves, safety glasses (etc) relevant to their work environment
- (c) Employees shall be induced to "think safety" that is, exhibit easily recognizable signs that proclaim safety slogans or even place articles regarding accident prevention in organizational news letters or bulletins.
- (d) First aid boxes shall be provided and maintained for minor injuries/sickness. The contents thereof shall meet the minimum requirements as prescribed in the Regulation and Act.
- (e) Use approved safety clothing/protection/equipment provided by employer and approved by (ISO), International Organization for Standardization and South African National Standards.
- (f) Firearms and ammunition must be stored in the prescribed manner.
- (g) No official may carry a firearm in a public place unless the firearm is carried:
 - in the case of a handgun.
 - in a holster or similar holder designed, manufactured or adapted for the carrying of a handgun and attached to his or her person, or
 - in a rucksack or similar holder, or
- (h) The firearm must be completely covered and the person carrying the firearm should be competent and in possession of a valid competency certificate.

8.6 HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS

Head of Department or delegate is required to make provision within the policy for health and safety procedural arrangements which will amongst others the following:

- (a) Procedures for reporting accidents, illness and health and safety hazards.
- (b) Arrangements for monitoring and maintaining high standards of hygiene as regards potentially harmful substances.
- (c) Arrangements for training employees in safe working methods and health and safety matters.
- (d) The maintenance of equipment and the provision of proper inspection and testing arrangements.
- (e) General rules on safe working habits.
- (f) The provision of personal protective equipment and rules for its use.
- (g) Safety auditing systems must be either established or adopted.

8.7 HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

Health and safety training may include specific individual requirements, but as a minimum should cover:

- (a) The relevant provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act,
- (b) The primary causes of accidents at work and their avoidance/prevention.
- (c) The keeping of safety records.
- (d) First Aid

8.8 FIRST AID, EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES

- (a) The employer shall take reasonable steps that are necessary under circumstances, to ensure that employees at work receive prompt first aid treatment in case of injury or emergency.
- (b) The employer shall provide a first aid box or boxes at the workplace which shall be available and accessible for the treatment of injured employees at the workplace. The first aid box or boxes shall contain suitable first aid equipment as per General Safety Regulations in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

8.9 LEAVE FOR OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES

An employee who is absent from duty owing to an injury sustained in an accident arising out of and in the course of his/her duties or owing to a disease contracted in the course of and as a result of his/her duties may be granted leave for occupational injuries and disease with full pay, as prescribed, for the period she or he is incapacitated for his/her normal duties unless the Department is of the opinion that the accident is attributable to the serious and willful misconduct of the employee or gross negligence.

The Head of Department or his/her delegate shall ensure that he/she receives, where applicable, a copy of medical certificate issued by the medical practitioner to ensure that proper medical follow-up(s) may be implemented when necessary.

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The department's Human Resources Sub-Directorate and Occupational Health and Safety unit are responsible for communicating the provisions of this document within the department. All managers and supervisors are responsible for the implementation thereof.

10. POLICY AMMENDMENT

This policy shall be amended as and when a need arises to ensure that is aligned to prevailing legislation and market conditions.

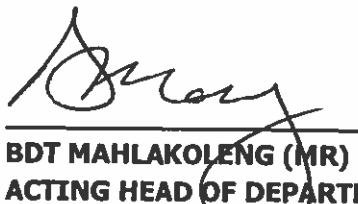
11. RELATED POLICIES

Effective implementation of this policy requires that it be read together with other relevant Departmental policies.

12. COMMENCEMENT OF THE POLICY

This is a newly developed policy and it shall be implemented by the Department with effect from the date of approval and signature by the HOD.

APPROVED



BDT MAHLAKOLENG (MR)
ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

07/04/2013
DATE