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# DSD Occupational Health and Safety Policy 6/5/P

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Western Cape Provincial Department of Social Development (hereinafter referred to the Department) hereby makes provision for an occupational health and safety policy (hereafter referred to as the policy) which will regulate the health and safety of its employees.
- 1.2 The Department undertakes to provide as far as reasonably practical, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health and safety of its employees. To achieve this purpose the Department will work closely with its employees in minimizing any risk that might endanger their health and safety.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

In this policy unless the context otherwise indicates:

**“Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act”** means the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act 130 of 1993);

**“danger”** means anything which may cause injury or damage to persons or property;

**“hazard”** means to a source of or exposure to danger, for example open electrical cables;

**“health and safety representative”** means a person designated by the Department in terms of section 17 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;

**“inspector”** means a person designated under section 28 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;

**“Occupational Health and Safety Act”** means the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act 85 of 1993);

**“reasonably practical”** means practicable having regard to –

- (a) the severity and scope of the hazard or risk concerned;
- (b) the state of knowledge reasonably available concerning that hazard or risk and of any means of removing or mitigating that hazard or risk;
- (c) the availability and suitability of means to remove or mitigate that hazard or risk; and
- (d) the cost of removing or mitigating that hazard or risk in relation to the benefits deriving therefrom.

**“risk”** means the probability that injury or damage will occur.

### **3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

The occupational health and safety policy which will regulate the health and safety of employees shall apply to all the employees of the Department.

### **4. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines to all employees, with regard to their health and safety in the workplace in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act.

### **5. OBJECTIVES**

- 5.1 To ensure a safe and healthy work environment for its employees, the Department will as far as reasonably practical, implement the following measures:
  - 5.1.1 Provide an environment and equipment that is safe and will not endanger the health of employees;
  - 5.1.2 Ensure that employees are properly trained and are provided with appropriate safety and emergency equipment, where applicable;

- 5.1.3 Eliminate any hazard or potential hazard which will endanger the safety or health of employees, before providing personal protective equipment to its employees;
- 5.1.4 Reduce and prevent work related injuries, communicable diseases and accidents which may result in death and/or injury to employees and/or damage to property;
- 5.1.5 Implement programs and/or procedures to ensure that the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act are complied with by all its employees.

## **6. PRINCIPLES**

- 6.1 The Department will and as far as reasonably practical when implementing the policy, apply the following principles:
  - 6.1.1 Take appropriate action to address risk or danger in the workplace by means of shared co-operation between it and the employees;
  - 6.1.2 Pro-actively observe dangerous or hazardous situations and develop control measures to ensure that its workplace is safe;
  - 6.1.3 Encourage its employees continually especially during their training and performance reviews to take personal accountability for their safety and health in their workplace and to comply with the provisions of this policy and any other applicable prescripts;
  - 6.1.4 Continuously improve its performance with regard to its measures to improve the safety and health of its employees in the workplace;
  - 6.1.5 Inform its employees to comply with the policy and to report any health and safety concerns to the Department.

## **7. DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT**

- 7.1 The Department will adhere to the duties imposed upon it as employer as outlined in section 8 of the Occupational Health and

Safety Act insofar as these duties are applicable to it. Therefore, certain sections of section 8 of the said Act which are applicable to the Department are stated, namely:

- 7.1.1 The provision and maintenance of systems of work, plant and machinery that, as far as is reasonably practical, are safe and without risks to health;
- 7.1.2 Take such steps as may be reasonably practical to eliminate or mitigate any hazard or potential hazard to the safety or health of employees, before resorting to personal protective equipment;
- 7.1.3 Make arrangements to ensure the safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the storage of material;
- 7.1.4 Provide information, instructions, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, the health and safety at work of its employees;
- 7.1.5 Enforce such measures as may be necessary in the interest of health and safety.
- 7.2 The Department shall ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that persons other than those in its employment who may be directly affected by its activities are not thereby exposed to hazards to their health or safety.

## **8. DUTIES OF THE EMPLOYEES AT WORK**

- 8.1 Every employee shall at his or her workplace do the following:
  - 8.1.1 Take care of his or her own health and safety, as well as that of other persons who may be affected by his or her actions or omissions;
  - 8.1.2 Cooperate with the Department to ensure that any duty or requirement imposed by the Occupational Health and Safety Act is performed or complied with;

- 8.1.3 Carry out any lawful order given to him or her, and obey the health and safety rules and any procedure laid down by the Department, in the interest of health and safety;
- 8.1.4 Report to the Department or the health and safety representative any situation which comes to his or her attention which is unsafe or unhealthy;
- 8.1.5 Report to the Department or the health and safety representative if he or she is involved in an incident which may affect his health or which has caused an injury to himself or herself. Such report should take place as soon as possible but not later than the day on which it occurred or if that is not possible, he or she shall report the incident as soon as practical thereafter;
- 8.1.6 Wear the prescribed safety clothing or use the prescribed safety equipment where it is required.

## **9. ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

- 9.1 The Department will establish a health and safety committee for its head office which will consist of at least one health and safety representative for every 100 employees or at least one health and safety representative for every 50 employees, whichever is applicable in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, subject to paragraph 17.2 of the policy.
- 9.2 The occupational health and safety officer of the Department shall serve as the chairperson of the health and safety committee established at its head office (hereafter referred to as the departmental health and safety committee).
- 9.3 The departmental health and safety committee will develop a health and safety statement which will be displayed at all the institutions of the Department.

- 9.4 The departmental health and safety committee shall hold meetings as often as may be necessary, but at least once a quarter, at a time and place determined by the said committee.
- 9.5 The provisions relating to the functions of other committees will also be applicable to the departmental health and safety committee.

## **10. ESTABLISHMENT OF OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES**

- 10.1 The Department will also establish a health and safety committee at its regional and local offices, its child and youth care centres as well as any other institution which it administers, in accordance with section 19 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- 10.2 The health and safety committee will consist of health and safety representatives as indicated in paragraph 9.1 of the policy.
- 10.3 A health and safety committee shall hold meetings as indicated in paragraph 9.4.

## **11. FUNCTIONS OF A HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

- 11.1 The functions of a health and safety committee will be the following:
- 11.1.1 Make recommendations to the Department about the health and safety of its employees or if the recommendations fail to resolve the matter, to an inspector as contemplated in section 20 (1) (a) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- 11.1.2 Discuss any incident that led to the injury, illness or death of any employee and may in writing report on the incident to an inspector contemplated in section 20 (1) (b) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- 11.1.3 Keep a record of every recommendation which it had made to the Department and every report it had submitted to an



inspector as referred to in paragraphs 11.1.1 and 11.1.2 of the policy.

## **12. APPOINTMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES**

- 12.1 The Department will designate in writing for a specified period health and safety representatives for its workplace and will consult with trade unions of the employees concerned with regard to the arrangements and procedure for the nomination or election and period of office of such health and safety representatives as contemplated in section 17 (2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, subject to paragraph 17.2 of the policy.
- 12.2 The Department will only appoint those employees who are employed in a full-time capacity and who are acquainted with conditions and activities at the workplace as health and safety representatives for that workplace.

## **13. FUNCTIONS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES**

A health and safety representative may perform the functions as set out in section 18 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in respect of the workplace for which he or she has been designated as set out in section 17 (2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and which is relevant to that workplace.

## **14. FIRST AID AND INJURY ON DUTY**

- 14.1 The Department shall as far as reasonably practical take steps to ensure that employees at their workplace receive prompt first aid treatment if they sustain an injury or if it is caused by an emergency as contemplated in paragraph 15.1 of the policy.
- 14.2 The Department shall provide a first aid box or boxes which shall be available and accessible for the treatment of injured employees at the workplace. The first aid box shall contain suitable first aid equipment which includes at least the equipment listed in

Annexure A of the General Safety Regulations in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- 14.3 The relevant Head Office Manager or Regional Office Manager or Facility Manager as the case may be shall designate a first aider to assist with first aid treatment at the workplace. Such person shall be trained at departmental expense to obtain a valid certificate of competency in first aid, either from the South African First Aid League, or a person or organization approved by the Health and Welfare Sector for Education and Training Authority (HWSETA).
- 14.4 The affected employee or where this is not possible the relevant manager of the employee concerned shall ensure that the injury on duty of the employee concerned shall be recorded on the prescribed forms as indicated in the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act and must also report the said injury to the health and safety representative as well as the to the Sub-Directorate Support Services. The Sub-Directorate Support Services forward the relevant documentation to the Human Resource Management component (Corporate Service Centre). The relevant Human Resources Management component must forward the said forms to the Compensation Commissioner in order to register the injury on duty claim.

## **15. EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PLAN**

- 15.1 The occupational health and safety officer as contemplated in paragraph 9.2 of the policy must ensure that a comprehensive emergency and evacuation framework for the Department is followed at all times by all employees in a case of an emergency at their workplace, which threatens their safety, namely, when fire, gas leakage, floods, bomb threats etc occur. The health and safety committee as contemplated in paragraph 9 and 10 of the policy must thereafter develop a health and safety plan at the institutions as contemplated in paragraphs 9.1 and 10.1 of the policy which must include the inputs of the managers at the said institutions.

- 15.2 The health and safety committee must ensure that emergency and evacuation drills are conducted in accordance with the comprehensive emergency and evacuation framework to ensure that each employee knows how to react in a case of an emergency as contemplated in paragraph 15.1.
- 15.3 The health and safety committee must ensure that the telephone numbers of the health and safety representatives, South African Police Service, fire department, ambulance services, etc. are made available to all employees.

## **16. ACTS OR OMISSIONS BY EMPLOYEES**

Any transgression of this policy by an employee will at the discretion of the Department be dealt with in accordance with section 37.3 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Disciplinary Code and Procedures for the Public Service.

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **17. EMERGENCY CO-ORDINATION**

- 17.1 A team established by the departmental health & safety committee consisting of the members of the health and safety committees of the Department shall co-ordinate an emergency as contemplated in paragraph 15.1 of the policy which occurs in the building where they work.
- 17.2 The health and safety committees of the Department shall consist of employees, who have already been appointed by the Department and who already serve at the workplace as emergency controllers, fire marshals, floor marshals and first aiders.  
Nominated representatives from the employees will become members of the health and safety committees as contemplated in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the policy.

17.3 The Department must ensure that health and safety training must be provided to the employees stated in paragraph 17.2 which includes but is not limited to the following training areas:

17.3.1 Occupational Health and Safety Act;

17.3.2 First-Aid up to level 3;

17.3.3 Emergency Controller;

17.3.4 Fire-Fighting.

————— **END** —————