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**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**HEALTH.**



**OCCUPATIONAL**  
**HEALTH &**  
**SAFETY**  
**POLICY.**

01 APRIL 2003.

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<b>POLICY NAME</b>	<b>POLICY MANUAL</b>	<b>NO 1</b>	<b>DATE POLICY DEVELOPED</b>	<b>DATE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL</b>
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY	SECT. 7.	PROG: OCC. HEALTH.	01 APRIL 2003.	

**1. PREAMBLE**

The Department of Health as an employer considers its employees to be its most valuable assets and undertakes to safeguard them through providing and maintaining, as far as reasonably practical, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of its employees. In ensuring a safe and healthy working environment all employees of the Department of Health have to work closely together with the employer in minimizing any risk that might jeopardize the health and safety of employees of the Department.

**2. PRINCIPLES**

The Department of Health will strive to continuously improve the occupational health , safety and environmental performance by adhering to the following principles:

- 2.1 Developing and improving programs and procedures to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- 2.2 Ensuring that personnel are properly trained and provided with appropriate safety and emergency equipment, where applicable.
- 2.3 Taking appropriate action to correct hazards or conditions that endanger health, safety and the environment.
- 2.4 Considering safety and environmental factors in all operating decisions including planning and acquisition.
- 2.5 Engaging in sound re-use and recycling practices and exploring feasible opportunities to minimize the amount and toxicity of waste generated.
- 2.6 Using energy efficiently throughout all operations.

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- 2.7 Encouraging personal accountability and emphasizing compliance with standards and conformance with Departmental policies and best practices during employee training and in performance reviews.
- 2.8 Communicating our desire to continuously improve our performance and fostering the expectation that every employee will follow this policy and report any environmental, health, or safety concern to management
- 2.9 Monitoring progress through periodic evaluations.

## 3. MANDATES

- 3.1 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993
- 3.2 General Safety Regulations in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- 3.3 Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993
- 3.4 Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996.
- 3.5 Hazardous Biological Agents Regulations.

## 4. DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 Local emergency/evacuation plans
- 4.2 Annexure A of the General Safety Regulations in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act

## 5. OBJECTIVES

**To ensure a safe and healthy work environment for employees throughout the Department based on the following objectives :**

- 5.1 To provide and maintain, as far as practicable, hospitals, offices, systems and equipment that are safe and without risk to the health of staff.
- 5.2 To take steps to eliminate or mitigate, as far as practicable, any hazard or potential hazard to the safety or health of employees, before resorting to personal protective equipment.;
- 5.3 To make arrangements for ensuring, as far as practicable, the safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the production, processing, use, handling, storage or transport of articles with toxic substance;

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- 5.4 To establish, as far as practicable, what hazards to the health or safety of persons are attached to any work which is performed, any article or substance which is produced, processed, used, handled, stored or transported and any plant or machinery which is used in the business, and shall as far as is reasonably practicable, further establish what precautionary measures should be taken with respect to such work, article, substance, plant or machinery in order to protect the health and safety of persons, and shall provide the necessary means to apply such precautionary measures ;
- 5.5 To provide such information, instructions, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure, as far as practicable, a healthy and safely working environment for all employees ;
- 5.6 To not permit, as far as practicable, any employee to do any work or to produce, process, use, handle, store or transport any article or substance or to operate any plant or machinery, unless the precautionary measures contemplated in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.4, or any other precautionary measures which may be prescribed, have been taken ;
- 5.7 To take all necessary measures to ensure that the requirements in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act are complied with by every person in his employment or on premises under the control of the Department where plant or machinery is used;
- 5.8 To enforce such measures as may be necessary in the interest of health and safety ;
- 5.9 To ensure that work is performed and that any machinery is used under the general supervision of a person trained to understand the hazards associated with it and who have the authority to ensure that precautionary measures taken by the employer are implemented.

## **6. DISCUSSION (POLICY MATTERS)**

### **6.1 Responsibilities of employer**

- 6.1.1 The Superintendent-General shall assign, in terms of subsection 16(2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the duties as contemplated in subsection 16(1) of the said Act to the Managers : Districts, Hospitals and/ or Institutions.
- 6.1.2 All District, Hospital and Institutional Managers have the statutory responsibility and accountability for health and safety within their components and working environment.

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**6.2 Responsibilities of employees**

The responsibilities of each employee are the following :

- 6.2.1 Take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions.
- 6.2.2 As regards any duty or requirement imposed on his/her employer or any other person, co-operate with such employer or person to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.
- 6.2.3 Carry out any lawful order given to him/her, and obey the health and safety rules and procedures laid down by his/her employer or by anyone authorised thereto by his/her employer, in the interest of health and safety.
- 6.2.4 If any situation which is unsafe or unhealthy comes to his/her attention, as soon as practical report such situation to his/her employer or to the health and safety representative for his/her workplace or section thereof, as the case may be, who shall report it to the employer.
- 6.2.5 If he/she is involved in any incident which may affect his/her health or which has caused an injury to him/herself, report such incident to his/her employer or to anyone authorised thereto by the employer, or to his/her health and safety representative, as soon as practicable but not later than the end of the particular working day during which the incident occurred, unless the circumstances were such that the reporting of the incident was not possible, in which case he/she shall report the incident as soon as practicable thereafter.

**7. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES/COMMITTEES**

- 7.1 Health and Safety representatives must be appointed for each Directorate/District Hospital and / or Health Institutions of the Department as specified in section 17 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- 7.2 At least one Health and Safety representative shall be appointed for every 100 employees or part thereof. The names of those designated as Health and Safety representatives shall be made known by placing notices on the notice boards of the various work places. Hospital, Institution and District Managers shall nominate a Health and Safety representative for appointment within 30 days after notice has been received that a Health and Safety representative will vacate the position.

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- 7.3 Health and Safety representatives shall incorporate their duties in their performance agreements/ duty sheets and shall not suffer any prejudice in their employment as a consequence of carrying out their duties as representatives.
- 7.4 Health and Safety Committees as prescribed in section 19 of the Health and Safety Act shall be established for each Directorate, Sub- directorate, Hospital, Institution , Head office and any other workplace.
- 7.5 The functions of the Health and Safety Representatives/Committees are prescribed in sections 18 and 20 of the Health and Safety Act.
- 7.6 A Provincial Health and Safety Committee shall be established at Head Office with the Deputy Manager : Occupational Health and Safety as the Chairperson. Such committee shall meet at least twice a year.
- 7.7 The Provincial Health and Safety Committee shall develop a Health and Safety Statement to be displayed in all offices of the Department.

### 8. **COMPOSITION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES**

#### 8.1 **HEAD OFFICE/HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS/DISTRICT OFFICE's HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES**

The Local Health and Safety Committee will consist of all Health and Safety Representatives appointed for the Programme/ Directorate/Office with one person appointed from the health and safety representatives as a Chairperson.

#### 8.2 **PROVINCIAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The Provincial Health and Safety Committee will consist of one Health and Safety Representative per Local Health and Safety Committee with the Deputy Manager : Occupational Health and Safety as a Chairperson.

### 9. **FIRST AID, EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES**

- 9.1 The employer shall take reasonable steps that are necessary under the circumstances, to ensure that employees at work receive prompt first aid treatment in case of injury or emergency.
- 9.2 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 which includes

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at least the equipment listed in Annexure A of the General Safety Regulations in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- 9.3 For every group of up to 100 employees the relevant Hospital Manager/Institution Manager/District 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, issued either by –
- (a) the SA Red Cross Society;
  - (b) the St John's Ambulance;
  - (c) the SA First Aid League; or
  - (d) a person or organisation approved by the Health and Welfare Sector for Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) and / or Chief Inspector : Occupational Health and Safety as contemplated in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- 9.4 Such first aid person shall attend a course to update/refresh his/her first aid knowledge/skills.
- 9.5 The name(s) of the first aid person as indicated in paragraph 8.3 as well as where the first aid box or boxes are kept shall be written on or next to each first aid Box.
- 9.6 Each injury on duty shall be written on the prescribed forms as indicated in the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act and shall be reported to the Health and Safety representative as well as the local Human Resources Management component. The relevant Human Resources Management component shall forward the forms to the Compensation Commissioner in order to register the injury on duty. Copies of all reported work related injuries shall be submitted to the Programme : Occupational Health and Safety : Head Office .
- 9.7 Should the circumstances determine, any injured person shall be provided treatment to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS ,HEPATITIS B and or any other similar disease.

### 10. WORK IN ELEVATED POSITIONS

- 10.1 No employee such as health and safety representatives, Maintenance employees, Cleaners, etc shall work in an elevated position, unless such work is performed safely from a ladder or scaffolding, or a position where such person has been made as safe as if he/she was working from scaffolding.

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### 11. PROVISIONING OF PROTECTIVE CLOTHING/EQUIPMENT

- 11.1 The employer shall provide personal protective clothing/equipment where necessary for the face, eyes, ears, hands, feet, legs, body where necessary
  - 11.1.1 to comply with legislation or a collective agreement
  - 11.1.2 to safeguard the employee's health;
  - 11.1.3 to prevent the transmission of an infection; or
  - 11.1.4 to protect the employee's private clothes or uniform from excessive dirt or wear.

### 12. EMERGENCY/EVACUATION PLAN

- 12.1 The Manager : Security Services/ Disaster Management shall develop a comprehensive emergency/evacuation framework. The Local Health and Safety Committee shall thereafter develop an Health and Safety Plan for each office. Such plan shall conform to the framework regarding action to be taken in case of fire, gas, floods, bomb threats, robbery, etc. provided by the Manager : Security Services./Disaster Management
- 12.2 Implementation drills shall be conducted in accordance with the comprehensive emergency/evacuation framework developed by the Manager :Security Services / Disaster Management to ensure that each employee knows how to react in events of emergency.
- 12.3 Emergency telephone numbers of the health and safety representatives, the police, the fire department, the ambulance services, etc shall be made available to all members of staff.

### 13. SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL

- 13.1 A security and access control framework shall be developed by the Manager : Security Services for each work place of the Department to ensure the safety of all employees and shall be implemented by all offices of the Department.
- 13.2 The plan shall include measures with regard to the safe handling of money within the workplace and outside the workplace.

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14. **EXPOSURE TO AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS REGARDED AS A HEALTH RISK**

- 14.1 If an employee is exposed to an environment, which is regarded as a health risk, e.g. leaking gas , possible risk of asbestos exposure, tuberculosis etc in her or his workplace, the employee's absence may be covered by the granting of special leave.
- 14.2 Employees who are suffering from communicable diseases or any illness for which they are put in quarantine shall inform their supervisors immediately so that the spreading of the disease to other employees can be prevented, normal sick leave/temporary disability leave can be granted and colleagues that might have been infected may be tested and assisted with treatment.

15. **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

- 15.1 The employer shall, as far as reasonably practical, ensure that the workplace is violence free.
- 15.2 If, however, an employee is attacked in the workplace, he/she shall be entitled to treatment to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS.

<b>DISCUSSED AND ADOPTED AT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>APPROVED</b>	<b>DDG:DHS SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>SUPERINTENDANT -GENERAL SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>

POLICY OHS 01-04-2003/B.C. MABASO