



**higher education  
& training**

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

# **SAFETY, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, RISK AND QUALITY (SHERQ) MANAGEMENT POLICY**

<b>POLICY CUSTODIAN</b>	Employee Health and Wellness
<b>POLICY VERSION</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Version
<b>APPROVAL DATE</b>	
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## A. Acronyms

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>COIDA</b>	Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act
<b>DEL</b>	Department of Employment and Labour
<b>DG</b>	Director-General
<b>DoH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DPSA</b>	Department of Public Service and Administration
<b>EH&amp;WSF</b>	Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework
<b>EHW</b>	Employee Health and Wellness
<b>H&amp;S</b>	Health and Safety
<b>HPM</b>	Health and Productivity Management
<b>HR</b>	Human Resource
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>OHS</b>	Occupational Health and Safety
<b>PILIR</b>	Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-Health Retirement
<b>QWL</b>	Quality of Work Life
<b>ROI</b>	Return on Investment
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WLB</b>	Work-Life Balance

## B. Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>BEST PRACTICE</b>	Refers to is a <u>technique</u> , method, process, activity, incentive, or reward that is believed to be more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique.
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Department of Higher Education and Training
<b>DESIGNATED MANAGER</b>	Means the official who has been appointed in writing, by the Accounting Officer of the <b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b> to, inter alia, approve all expenditure and requests for services and supplies for the relevant programme activity.
<b>DPSA</b>	Department of Public Service and Administration
<b>EMPLOYEE</b>	Means a person appointed in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994) to a post on the establishment of the <b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b> ; a person appointed on contract to provide a specific service to the <b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b> . A person working for the <b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b> in terms of an agreement entered into by or on behalf of the <b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b> ; a person who is appointed as an intern by the <b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b> and a person appointed by or on recommendation of the Minister as a member of a committee, commission or an institution which is funded by the <b>Department of Higher Education and Training</b> and consultants.
<b>FIRST AIDER</b>	Any person trained in first aid, often a member of a workforce designated to deal with minor injuries.
<b>HAZARDS</b>	Something that is potentially very dangerous.
<b>MACHINERY</b>	Means any article or combination of articles assembled, arranged or connected and which is used or intended to be used for converting any form of energy to performing work, or which is used or intended to be used, whether incidental thereto or not, for developing, receiving,

	storing, containing, confining, transforming, transmitting, transferring or controlling any form of energy.
<b>OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE</b>	Means the anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of conditions arising in or from the workplace, which may cause illness or adverse health effects to persons.
<b>PERIODIC EVALUATIONS</b>	Occurring or appearing at regular intervals or in regular cycles.
<b>PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT</b>	Preventing somebody or something from being harmed or damaged, or designed or intended for this purpose.
<b>PSCBC</b>	Refers to Public Service Commission Bargaining Council
<b>REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION</b>	Refers to the reduction of the impact a disability has on a person's capacity to discharge the essential functions of a job. It can be defined as measures taken to ensure that a person with a disability is able to discharge his/her function with minimal assistance.
<b>RESPONSIBILITY MANAGER</b>	Means the official who has been appointed in writing, by the Director-General (DG) or the relevant Deputy Director-General.
<b>RISK</b>	Means the probability that injury or damage will occur.
<b>SANITATION</b>	The study and maintenance of public health and hygiene, especially the water supply and sewage systems.
<b>STROBOSCOPIC</b>	A flashing lamp of precisely variable periodicity that can be synchronised with the frequency of moving machinery to give the appearance of being stationary. It is often used in conjunction with flash or stop-action photography.
<b>VENTILATED</b>	To provide a room or other enclosed space with fresh air or a current of air.
<b>WORKPLACE</b>	Any premises also a car or place where a person performs work in the course of his employment.

## **1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Policy Statement**

The Department of Higher Education and Training as an employer considers its employees to be its most valuable resources 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 Higher Education and Training have to work closely together with the employer in minimising any risk that might jeopardise the health and safety of employees of the Department.

Management of the Department recognises and accepts its legislative responsibility and is committed to establish and maintain a consultative environment in which management, staff and labour unions work together to continually improve health, safety and environmental matters in the Department.

The Department shall act in all matters as environmentally responsible and strive to create a minimal effect and small carbon footprint on the environment.

### **1.2 Legislative Framework**

- 1.2.1 Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993 and applicable Regulations;
- 1.2.2 Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, Act 130 of 1993;
- 1.2.3 Public Service Regulations, 2001;
- 1.2.4 PSCBC Resolution No. 3 of 1999;
- 1.2.5 The South African constitution 1996 (Act 108 of 1996);
- 1.2.6 Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995;
- 1.2.7 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Act 50 of 1997; and
- 1.2.8 Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1997.

**1.2.9 Other Documents:**

- (a) Handbook on Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities in the Public Service – 2007;
- (b) Emergency/evacuation plan. To be developed in conjunction with the relevant Local Government, be tested annually and reviewed at least every three years; and
- (c) Occupational Health and Safety Terms of Agreement regarding Representatives and Committees within the Department.

## **2. POLICY PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES**

### **2.1 Purpose**

This Policy serves as a guide to the Department in addressing Safety, Health, Environment Risk and Quality in the workplace.

### **2.2 Objectives**

The objective of the Policy is to provide guidance to ensure a Healthy and Safe working environment.

### **2.3 Principles**

- 2.2.1 Equity;
- 2.2.2 Integrity;
- 2.2.3 Honesty;
- 2.2.4 Transparency;
- 2.2.5 Responsiveness; and
- 2.2.6 Confidentiality.

## **3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This Policy applies to all the employees of the Department of Higher Education and Training.



## **4. POLICY PROVISIONS**

### **4.1 Policy Implementation and Operationalisation**

This Policy should be operationalised in collaboration with auxiliary functions (e.g. HR, LR, EE, EHWP, Finance Management, Facilities Management, et cetera).

### **4.2 Provision and maintenance of safe offices, systems and equipment**

- 4.2.1 The employer shall ensure that all working areas are kept in a clean, hygienic, safe, whole and leak free condition and in a good state of repair.
- 4.2.2 The Department shall put a proper notice board to indicate when floors are washed/polished to indicate that such floors are wet/slippery.
- 4.2.3 The Department shall ensure a structural integrity through applicable maintenance of buildings and structures.
- 4.2.4 The Department shall prohibit unauthorised access of employees to areas of maintenance/repair/building/excavation/demolition.

### **4.3 Provision and maintenance of Lighting**

The Department shall ensure that sufficient lighting levels and visibility is provided and maintained under all operating circumstances by ensuring that:

- 4.3.1 vision requirements for employees that are partly sighted are identified and addressed;
- 4.3.2 glare in any workplace is reduced to a level that does not impair vision;
- 4.3.3 lighting on rotating machinery is such that the hazard at stroboscopic effect is eliminated; and
- 4.3.4 Luminaries and lamps are kept clean and, when defected, are replaced or repaired forthwith.
- 4.3.5 With a view to emergency evacuation of indoor workplaces without natural lighting, emergency sources of lighting shall be provided.

#### **4.4 Provision and maintenance of Ventilation**

- 4.4.1 The Department shall ensure that every workplace occupied is ventilated either by natural or mechanical means in such a way that the air breathed by employees does not endanger their safety and/or health.
- 4.4.2 The Department shall ensure that Central air conditioning and humidifier systems are tested annually for the presence of bacteria and pathogenic organisms.
- 4.4.3 The Department shall keep maintenance records up to date in accordance with the OHS Act & regulations.

#### **4.5 Provision of Sanitation**

- 4.5.1 The Department shall ensure that sufficient sanitary facilities in relation to the number of users (employers and clients) are provided.
- 4.5.2 The Department shall ensure that the hygienic conditions of such facilities comply with the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Facilities Regulations as well as with SABS 0400.
- 4.5.3 Sanitary bins shall be provided in the ablution blocks.
- 4.5.4 Facilities management section shall implement usage of segregated waste management policy.

#### **4.6 Provision and maintenance of Lifts**

- 4.6.1 The Department shall ensure that the Landlord of the building designate a competent firm(s) to examine and maintain all lifts in buildings occupied by the Department at regular intervals as prescribed by its manufacturer.
- 4.6.2 The Department shall keep Records made available by the Landlord and kept in accordance to the Lift, Escalator and Passenger Conveyor Regulations under the OHS Act.

#### **4.7 Provision and maintenance of Machinery**

- 4.7.1 The Department shall safeguard machinery used by ensuring that it is installed, operated and maintained in such a manner as to prevent the exposure of persons to hazardous or potentially hazardous conditions or circumstances.
- 4.7.2 Supervisors of employees that utilise machinery shall ensure that such employees are fully aware of the dangers attached thereto and is conversant with the precautionary measures to be taken or observed to obviate such dangers.
- 4.7.3 The Department shall ensure that only competent employees with regards to training and experience are permitted to utilise machinery.

#### **4.8 Provision and maintenance of electrical equipment/installation**

- 4.8.1 The Department shall ensure that all electrical installations meet all legislated standards. A certificate of compliance from an accredited authority shall be kept on record.
- 4.8.2 The Department shall ensure that all electrical distribution boards are duly numbered/labelled and only authorised persons may open such distribution boards.
- 4.8.3 The Department shall ensure regular inspections of switches, plugs, jointing, fuse boxes, distribution boards, et cetera are conducted to ensure that they are in a safe condition.

#### **4.9 Provision and maintenance of Fire emergency equipment**

- 4.9.1 The Department shall ensure that all fire emergency equipment is visible and accessible at all times.
- 4.9.2 The Department shall ensure that all fire extinguishers and other fire-fighting equipment are inspected and tested regularly to ensure that they are in good working order.
- 4.9.3 The Department shall ensure that all escape routes shall be clearly identified and shall be unobstructed at all times.

#### **4.10 Provision of Computer equipment**

- 4.10.1 The Department shall, where necessary, provide computer screen protectors in case of an employee who can demonstrate, by means of a fully motivated submission that he/she inherently requires such a screen.
- 4.10.2 The Department shall encourage regular changing of work form keyboard to other functions.

#### **4.11 Prohibition of Work in Elevated Positions**

- 4.11.1 The Department shall ensure that no employee such as Maintenance employees, Cleaners, et cetera 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 safe as if he/she was working from scaffolding.
- 4.11.2 The Department shall ensure that all activities comply with the OHS Act and relevant regulations.

#### **4.12 Provision of Protective Clothing/Equipment**

The employer shall provide, protective clothing/equipment for the face, eyes, ears, hands, feet, legs, body to employees where necessary:

- 4.12.1 To comply with legislation or a collective agreement;
- 4.12.2 To safeguard the employee's health;
- 4.12.3 To prevent the transmission of an infection; or
- 4.12.4 To protect the employee's private clothes or uniform from excessive dirt or wear.

#### **4.13 Provision of Environmental Maintenance**

The Department shall ensure the following:

- 4.13.1 Buildings and Offices are well maintained;
- 4.13.2 Safe Waste Disposal is maintained; and
- 4.13.3 Maintain and practice good housekeeping methods.

## **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5.1 The Head of Department**

#### **The Head of Department shall:**

- 5.1.1 Be responsible for approving the implementation of the Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality Management (SHERQ) Policy in the workplace;
- 5.1.2 Appoint designated Senior Manager in writing to champion SHERQ programmes in the workplace;
- 5.1.3 Assign, in terms of subsection 16(2) of the OHS Act, the duties as contemplated in subsection 16(1) of the said Act to designated manager.

### **5.2 The Designated Manager**

#### **The Designated Manager shall:**

- 5.2.1 Provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of employees;
- 5.2.2 Ensure that there is a written policy concerning the protection of the health and safety of employees at work, and the safety of the general public;
- 5.2.3 Designate in writing for a specified period; health and safety representatives for the workplace, or for different sections thereof;
- 5.2.4 Establish health and safety committee and consult with the committee with a view to initiating, developing, promoting, maintaining and reviewing measures to ensure the health and safety of employees at work;
- 5.2.5 Ensure Total Quality Management Systems are in place;
- 5.2.6 Develop capacity building programmes;
- 5.2.7 Promote competence development of practitioners;
- 5.2.8 Improve capacity development of auxiliary functions (OD, HR, LR, Skills, Development, and Change Management et cetera) to assist with SHERQ promotion at an organisational level; and
- 5.2.9 Establish e-Health and Wellness information systems.

### **5.3 The Occupational Health and Safety Committee**

**The Occupational Health and Safety Committee shall consist of the following:**

- 5.3.1 Designated Senior Manager 16(2);
- 5.3.2 Safety and Health representatives;
- 5.3.3 Evacuators;
- 5.3.4 Fire marshals;
- 5.3.5 Incident investigators; and
- 5.3.6 Labour Representatives.

The Occupational Health and Safety Committee shall:

- (a) Make recommendations to the employer regarding health and safety in the workplace;
- (b) Investigate and discuss incidents in the workplace;
- (c) Report in writing to the Department of Labour, if necessary, on any incident that occurred at the workplace;
- (d) Perform any other function agreed upon by all committee members;
- (e) Keep minutes of all committee meetings as well as all records of reports made to either employer or any inspector.

### **5.4 The employees**

The responsibilities of each employee are the following:

- 5.4.1 Take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/her and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions.
- 5.4.2 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.
- 5.4.3 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.

5.4.4 If any situation which is unsafe or unhealthy comes to his/her attention, as soon as practical report such situation in writing 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.

5.4.5 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, and to his/her health and safety representative, 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.

## **6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

This Policy shall be monitored by the directorate responsible for Employee Health and Wellness Programmes in the Department.

## **7. POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed every three (3) years or as and when a need arises.

## 8. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Any dispute arising out of the interpretation and/or application of this Policy shall be dealt following applicable legislations and policies.

## 9. POLICY APPROVAL SIGNATURE

Signed at Pretoria on this 30<sup>th</sup> day of March 20 22

  
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**Dr Nkosinathi Sishi**

**Director-General: Department of Higher Education and Training**