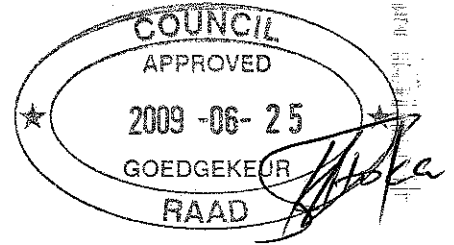


HR: 18/P

Mamma Mokaba (012 358 4300)

COUNCIL: 25 June 2009



7. CORPORATE AND SHARED SERVICES DEPARTMENT (STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT)
POLICY ON HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL AGENTS
(From the Special Mayoral Committee Cluster: Economic Development: 14 April 2009 and the Portfolio Committee: Corporate and Shared Services: 14 May 2009)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a policy on the management of hazardous biological agents in the City of Tshwane, and to make provision for its subsequent implementation by all departments and regions of the City of Tshwane.

2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Strategic Objective 5: To ensure good governance, financial viability and optimal institutional transformation with the capacity to execute the City of Tshwane's mandate.

3. BACKGROUND

In terms of section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act 85 of 1993) (OHS Act), as amended, the employer has a duty to provide a workplace that is as far as reasonably practicable safe and without risk to the health of employees or other persons who might be affected by the activities of the employer. In line with this duty the Regulations for Hazardous Biological Agents were promulgated under the OHS Act. Since many activities are taking place throughout the City of Tshwane which expose its employees to biological agents, the institution requires a Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Each departmental and regional head must evaluate the City of Tshwane's Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents for its applicability to their area of responsibility. This requires the completion of hazard identification and risk assessments (HIRAs) on all tasks carried out. HIRAs must be conducted in accordance with the City of Tshwane's Policy and Procedure on HIRAs. Once exposure or a possible exposure to a biological agent has been identified by means of a HIRA, this policy becomes applicable to that particular section, area or activity.

The management of biological stressors will differ from one scenario or area to the next and this calls upon departments or divisions to formulate procedures to manage the specific risk in line with this policy.

5. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY ON HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL AGENTS

In the light of the above it is recommended that the Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents be approved in principle by the Mayoral Committee and that all procedures that could possibly arise from it be approved and signed by the City Manager.

6. COMMENTS OF THE STAKEHOLDER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 COMMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CORPORATE AND HARED SERVICES (LEGAL SERVICES)

(Unaltered)

The purpose of the entire content of the report is noted and acknowledged.

A municipality exercise its legislative or executive authority by developing and adopting policies, plans, strategies and programmes.

Section 11(3)(a): Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000

Furthermore, a municipality is required to promote a safe and healthy environment in terms of section 11(3)(L) of the Municipal Systems Act.

The aforesaid policy complies with the provisions of section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993 and Section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996.

Therefore, the recommendations comply with the CoT's legislative obligations and authority in this regard and are supported.

It must be noted that should the Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents be approved, it must be implemented.

6.2 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

(Unaltered)

Cognisance is taken of the contents and recommendations of the report.

Any financial implication emanating from the implementation and training of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System must be managed within the respective department's Medium- Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework.

6.3 COMMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY SAFETY

Cognisance is taken by this department on the content of the report and after clarification on concerns raised support the recommendations.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 HUMAN RESOURCES

The implementation of the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents will not require the appointment of additional staff.

7.2 FINANCE

Expenses on the implementation of the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents will be managed within the operational budget of each department.

7.3 CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL

Section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that every person has the right to an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or well-being. The working environment forms part of the broader concept of "environment".

In terms of section 8 of the OHS Act the employer has a duty to make provision for a workplace that is as far as reasonably practicable safe and without risk to the health of employees or other persons who might be affected by the activities of the employer.

The Regulations for Hazardous Biological Agents promulgated under the OHS Act direct the management of hazardous biological agents.

Biological agents are an occupational health stressor that must be managed, once identified. The management of the other occupational health stressors such as noise, chemicals, temperature, illumination, ventilation, lead and asbestos has already been dealt with by means of City of Tshwane policies on them.

7.4 COMMUNICATION

A corporate circular will be issued to inform all departments about the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents, appropriate guidelines and other related documents. This information will also be distributed via the respective Key Account Specialists to the relevant departments.

All the above documents will also be made available on the OHS webpage on the City of Tshwane intranet.

7.5 PREVIOUS COUNCIL AND MAYORAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

None

8. CONCLUSION

The successful implementation of the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents will ensure legislative compliance, the effective management of workplace stressors and a resultant reduction in absenteeism. It will also put the City of Tshwane at the forefront in ensuring a better workplace and life for local government employees.

ANNEXURE:

A. City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents

IT WAS RECOMMENDED (TO THE MAYORAL COMMITTEE: 3 JUNE 2009):

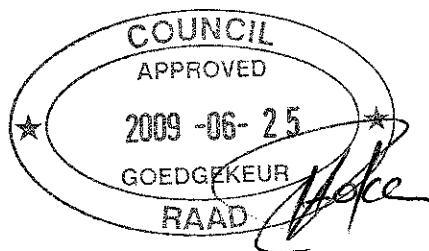
That it be recommended to the Council:

1. That the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents be approved.
2. That the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents be implemented throughout the City of Tshwane.
3. That all departments should ensure successful implementation of this policy.

During discussion of this item by the Mayoral Committee on 3 June 2009, it was agreed that the Corporate and Shared Services Department investigates if the "Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents" can form an Annexure to the Occupational Health and Safety Policy and advise the Mayoral Committee accordingly at its next meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents be approved.
2. That the City of Tshwane Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents be implemented throughout the City of Tshwane.
3. That all departments should ensure successful implementation of this policy.
4. That the Corporate and Shared Services Department investigates if the "Policy on Hazardous Biological Agents" can form an Annexure to the Occupational Health and Safety Policy and advise the Mayoral Committee accordingly at its next meeting.



logical
place
wene
mont

ANNEXURE A

POLICY ON HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL AGENTS

POLICY

To provide for a safe and healthy workplace for all City of Tshwane employees, and interested and affected parties.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to identify all individuals in the City of Tshwane who may come into contact with a hazardous biological agent, quantify the extent of exposure and provide for proactive and reactive mitigatory measures.

2. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all departments of the City of Tshwane, and all its employees, supervisors and managers.

The policy further applies to –

- a) existing activities, work practices, facilities, premises, buildings and areas related to the activities of the City of Tshwane; and
- b) planned workplace changes, new plants or facilities that may affect the health of employees, contractors, visitors or customers of the City of Tshwane once they are operational.

3. OBJECTIVE

To ensure that the risk associated with hazardous biological agents is managed effectively in the City of Tshwane.

4. REFERENCES

- Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act 85 of 1993) (OHS Act), as amended
- Regulations for Hazardous Biological Agents promulgated under the OHS Act

- Mine Health and Safety Act and Regulations, 1996 (Act 29 of 1996) (MHS Act), as amended

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- City of Tshwane Policy on the Prevention and Treatment of Occupation-related HIV or Hepatitis B
- City of Tshwane Policy on Ventilation
- City of Tshwane Procedure on the Cleaning of Blood and Body Fluid Spills in the Workplace
- City of Tshwane Procedure on Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

6. DEFINITIONS

biological agent – of vegetable or animal origin, including any micro-organism or cell culture, vegetable scrap, biological allergen, toxin or human endoparasite that may cause an infection, allergy, toxicity or other illness or disease, or otherwise create a hazard to human health at the workplace.

Biological agents are divided into the following categories:

- a) Micro-organisms and their associated toxins (viruses, bacteria, fungi and their products), infection, exposure or allergenic reaction
- b) Arthropods (arachnids, insects and crustaceans): bites and stings, transmission of infectious agents, or allergenic reaction
- c) Allergens and toxins from certain plants: dermatitis from skin contact, and rhinitis or asthma from inhalation
- d) Allergens from certain animals (from urine, faeces, hair or saliva)
- e) Plants and other fungi: lichens, liverworts and ferns
- f) Animals and other arthropods: parasites such as protozoa, flatworms and roundworms

decontamination – to remove all inanimate objects by sweeping, cleaning, washing, ventilating or any other process aimed at removing the contaminant.

disinfect – to render non-viable virtually all recognised pathogenic micro-organisms, but not necessarily all microbial forms.

hazard – something with the potential to cause harm to a person.

hazardous biological agent (HBA) – as categorised in Appendix B of the Regulations for Hazardous Biological Agents and meaning hazardous biological agents that are micro-organisms, including those that have been

genetically modified, pathogens, cells, cell cultures and human endoparasites that have the potential to provoke an infectious toxic effect, subdivided into the following groups:

- a) Group 1 HBAs are HBAs that are unlikely to cause human disease.
- b) Group 2 HBAs are HBAs that may cause human disease and be a hazard to exposed persons, but are unlikely to spread to the community, and for which effective prophylaxis and treatment are usually available.
- c) Group 3 HBAs are HBAs that may cause severe human disease that presents a serious hazard to exposed persons and may spread to the community, but for which effective prophylaxis and treatment are available.
- d) Group 4 HBAs are HBAs that cause severe human disease and are a serious hazard to exposed persons and are highly likely to spread to the community, but for which no effective prophylaxis and treatment are available.

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) – the process of identifying occupational hazards and evaluating the likely severity and probability of harm arising from the identified hazard.

micro-organisms – microbiological entities, cellular or non-cellular, capable of replication or of transferring genetic material.

monitoring – the planning and carrying out of the measurement programme and the recording of the results.

occupational illness – illness arising from daily exposure to biological agents at the workplace.

standard precautions – a synthesis of the major features of universal precautions (UPs) and body substance isolation (BSI). Standard precautions are used in respect of all persons coming into contact with potentially infected persons, animals or animal products and potentially contaminated blood and other body fluids in health care facilities or elsewhere and –

- a) apply to –
 - i) all blood;
 - ii) all body fluids, secretions and excretions, except sweat, regardless of whether they contain visible blood or not;
 - iii) non-intact skin;
 - iv) mucous membranes; and
 - v) tissues; and

- b) are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of HBAs from recognised and unrecognised sources of infection in workplaces.

new – plants, processes or substances that have not been introduced previously within a specific section under review in Tshwane.

risk – a combination of the likely severity of the hazard and the probability of harm arising from it.

risk assessment – the process of evaluating the likely severity and probability of harm arising from a hazard.

risk control – the process of implementing measures to reduce the risk associated with a hazard. The control process must follow the control hierarchy in the order as described in labour legislation and must feature the standard precautions principle. It is important that control measures do not introduce new hazards and that the ongoing effectiveness of the controls is monitored regularly.

risk control hierarchy – ranks risk control measures aimed at the prevention of occupational illness in decreasing order of effectiveness:

- Elimination of hazard
- Substitution of hazardous processes or materials with safer ones
- Engineering controls
- Administrative controls, which include written safe work procedures (WSWPs), training, reduction in exposure time, cleaning schedules, disinfection and decontamination procedures, and periodic monitoring of employees and the working environment
- Personal protective equipment

supervisor and manager – apply to any employee of the City of Tshwane who –

- plans, organises or supervises the activities of other employees, contractors, students or visitors on behalf of the City of Tshwane; and
- designs or organises the design of new facilities, processes or activities for the City of Tshwane.

7. EXECUTION

7.1 New plant or process, substance and any other changes

- Before any new plant, process or substance is introduced in the City of Tshwane, an HIRA must be conducted in accordance with

the City of Tshwane's HIRA procedure to identify and assess any possible exposure to biological agents.

- 7.2 Existing activities, work practices, equipment, items of plant, materials, substances, facilities, premises, buildings and areas
- Determine the applicability of the policy to the activities being performed by employees or the areas in which they perform their daily tasks. Once the applicability of the policy in your area of responsibility has been established, record the relevant activities and assess them making use of the City of Tshwane HIRA procedure.
 - Once exposure to a biological agent has been established and the assessment of the exposure shows the existence of a possible significant risk to the health of employees, this risk must be actively managed. The management of hazardous biological agents will differ from one scenario to the next, and this could require of departments or divisions to formulate procedures to manage the specific risk in line with the policy.

8. RESPONSIBILITY

8.1 Primary

- The City Manager, in his capacity as the section 16.1 legal appointee in terms of the OHS Act, bears overall responsibility for the successful implementation of the policy throughout the City of Tshwane.
- Heads of departments and regions, in their capacity as the section 16.2 legal appointees in terms of the OHS Act, are responsible for the overall implementation of the policy in their department or areas of responsibility.
- Heads of departments and regions must report to the Specialised Unit: Strategic Occupational Health and Safety Management on the status of the implementation of the policy in all the divisions.

8.2 Secondary

- The Strategic Executive Director: Corporate and Shared Services is the top management representative for reporting the status of the implementation of the HBA Policy in each department. Input and

feedback for these reports will be the responsibility of each department.

- The Specialised Unit: Strategic Occupational Health and Safety Management is to compile (and verify on a sample basis) status reports from the feedback it receives from departments in terms of the implementation status of this policy and present the findings to the Strategic Executive Director: Corporate and Shared Services.

9. DOCUMENTATION

Departmental or regional HIRA containing HBA assessments.

10. RECORDS

10.1 Departmental reports on the implementation of the Hazardous Biological Agents Policy must be kept by the heads of departments until the policy has been implemented to the satisfaction of the Specialised Unit: Strategic Occupational Health and Safety Management.

10.2 Departmental HIRAs and/or monitoring survey reports must be kept by the heads of divisions for 40 years.

11. APPENDICES

None.