



# LIMPOPO

**PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT  
OF  
PUBLIC WORKS**

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Employee Assistance Programme Policy</b>
<b>The revision/ version of the Policy</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Employee Wellness Programme</b>

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## 1. ACCRONYMS

AIDS-AQUIRED IMMUNO DEFICIENCY SYNDROME

EAP-EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

EAPA-EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME ASSOCIATION

EAPA-SA- EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME ASSOCIATION SOUTH AFRICA'

EH&W-EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

HIV-HUMAN IMMUNO VIRUS

HOD-HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

LPDPW-LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

MEC-MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

OHS-OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

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## **2. INTRODUCTION**

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a programme that provides confidential and professional assistance to help resolve problems that are affecting employees and/or their immediate families. The EAP is designed to assist employees before personal problems negatively affect work productivity. EAP helps to create a safe, healthy and productive environment for employees and their immediate families (including assistance with physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, substance related or financial problems).

The Department of Public Works is committed to maintaining a healthy work environment and recognizes that many human problems which may affect work performance can be resolved if they are identified in the early stages and assistance is sought from an appropriate professional resource.

Employees sometimes experience personal or work-related difficulties which may impact negatively on their well-being, their work and their colleagues. This in turn usually has an adverse effect on the performance and productivity of the department. The Department of Public Works demonstrates its sincere concern for the emotional and social well-being of its employees through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

The EAP structure will be utilised to identify troubled employees at an early stage of their lowering performance due to lack of training, inadequate placement, or development of personal problems. The benefits of using an EAP for the department are thus mutually beneficial for the employee and the Department. The EAP is also structured to be a resource to assist Managers in executing their duties as well as assist all staff.

## **3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

### **3.1 PURPOSE**

**3.1.1** The purpose of this policy is to minimise disruptions in the employee's life and to return the employee to the optimal level of functioning so they may fulfil their duties at work and experience functional personal lives.

**3.1.2** To assist employees to improve work efficiency and quality of life by provision of preventative and remedial services.

#### **3.1.2.1. PROVISION OF PREVENTATIVE SERVICES**





Support is provided by identifying the factors which hamper work performance, including health-related factors. These preventative services are of a holistic nature and include social; psychological; physical and interpersonal problems.

### **3.1.2.2 PROVISION OF REMEDIAL/HEALTH PROMOTING SERVICES**

By identifying and eliminating personal factors which hinder the work performance e.g. counselling service, the employee is supported through the difficulty and may then resume their optimal level of productivity.

## **3.2 OBJECTIVES**

### **3.2.1 Primary objective**

To sustain morale and productivity and to retain the services of valued employees of the Limpopo Province Department of Public Works.

### **3.2.2 Secondary Objective**

To assist the department by means of an effective system to facilitate the early identification of performance impaired employee for professional assistance and thereby conduct itself as a caring Department.

## **4. AUTHORITY OF POLICY**

This policy is authorized by the Executive Authority.

## **5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The Public Service Regulations.1999 [chapter 1, part VI (D)] require a Head of Department to establish and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for employees of the department.
- 5.2 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa protects employees from unfair labour practice.
- 5.3 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993(Act no 85 of 1993) places specific obligations on the employer in regard to the health and safety of employees.
- 5.4 Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act no 66 of 1995) places certain obligations on the employer to take remedial actions before terminating employment.
- 5.5 Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act no 55 of 1998) requires the employment to redress the effect of discrimination and eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace.
- 5.6 Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act no 97 of 1998) requires the employer to develop and improve their employee's skills.

- 5.7 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act no 75 of 1997) places certain obligations to the employer to maintain fair labour practice.
- 5.8 Employee Assistance Programme Association- South Africa' (EAPA-SA) standards 2010, require EAP practitioners to utilise the standards as a guideline to establish and implement the programme.

## **6. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

The EAP will provide preventative, consultative and counselling services to all the employees of the Department employed in terms of Public Service Act, 1994 and their immediate families who may encounter personal problems that impair or threaten the employees' work performance.

## **7. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **7.1 EAP**

The Employee Assistance Programme Association (EAPA) defines an EAP as a work-based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns, but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance.

### **7.2 IMMEDIATE FAMILY**

Employees' parents and parents in law, spouse and children who are under your care are regarded as immediate family.

### **7.3 SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** Alcohol and/or drug abuse.

### **7.4 DEPARTMENT:** Limpopo Department of Public Works

### **7.5 COUNSELLING/THERAPY:** Assessment and treatment based on brief solution based approach of a troubled employee.

## **8. POLICY PRONOUNCEMENT**

The implementation of Employee Assistance Programme in the department will be underpinned by the following principles:

### **8.1 Confidentiality**

Any information shared during consultation or counselling shall not be disclosed to anyone (management included) without the employee's written consent, except when disclosure is required in terms of law or court order. The person posing a threat to self

or others could be one instance when the professional would utilise professional judgement to mitigate against the risk posed by the situation.

## **8.2 Eligibility and Accessibility**

EAP will be accessible and available to all employees irrespective of position or occupational level in the department.

## **8.3 Neutrality**

The programme should not become enmeshed in the traditional interface between management and employees and should not clash with the existing administrative procedures and contractual agreements.

## **8.4 Timeous intervention**

Efforts should be made to ensure early identification and treatment of problems, thus facilitating a good prognosis.

## **8.5 Impartiality**

Participation in the programme should not prejudice employee's job or security or chances of promotion or any other job related benefits.

## **8.6 Equal and dignified treatment**

Employees treated should receive the same consideration as those with medical problems

## **8.7 Prevention of abuse**

Any employee or participating party as well as the executing authority should not abuse the programme.

## **8.8 Voluntary Participation**

Participation in the programme should be voluntary without, however, denying management the prerogative of recommending some employees for assistance.

## **8.9 A balanced programme**

There should be a healthy balance between rehabilitative and preventive services in the Department.

## **8.10 Access**

Employees can use the EAP on a self-referral basis. Their supervisors may also refer employees when personal problems affect job performance.





## **9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **9.1 The Department**

**9.1.1** Since the Department of Public Works has a sincere interest in the well-being of its employees, it is therefore committed to assist employees in identifying their problems and if necessary, to make a financial contribution to their recovery through the provision of a comprehensive EAP. All employees should, however, be encouraged to contribute towards a medical aid fund, which can make such services more accessible and affordable.

**9.1.2** The Department will also see to it that the role-players are briefed on/or receive basic training on EAP to fulfil their responsibilities and / or exercise their rights.

### **9.2 The Manager/Supervisor**

**9.2.1** The primary responsibility for identifying troubled employees is that of the individual manager/supervisor. Such employees should be encouraged to seek assistance through the EAP.

**9.2.2** Early identification and referral of troubled employees to EAP is necessary in order to contribute to excellent service delivery and prevent the lowering job performance.

**9.2.3** Bring the availability of EAP to the attention of all employees before problems affect productivity.

**9.2.4** Support the programme by being part of the Advisory Committee addressing EAP related issues.

**9.2.5** Liaise with Union representatives to ensure early intervention.

**9.2.6** Maintain and encourage adherence to all EAP principles, especially the principle of confidentiality.

**9.2.7** Assist with the assessment of organisational needs and employees' needs.

**9.2.8** Discuss deteriorating work performance with employee concerned and complete documentation for formal referral of such EAP if a need arise.

**9.2.9** Ensure that employees are fully informed on EAP, its policy, objectives and functioning, make follow-ups to evaluate progress after the referral.

**9.2.10** This does not excuse the employee from the responsibility of being self aware and alerting the relevant supervisor/manager or EAP that s/he is experiencing problems and requires professional assistance.

### **9.3 EAP Unit**

**9.3.1** The EAP facility will be provided for by the Department

**9.3.2** The EAP unit will be responsible for managing EAP in the most efficient and effective way in line with best practice





- 9.3.3 Develop a strategic plan and budget of the programme and monitor the implementation and expenditure.
- 9.3.4 Design preventative programmes to address identified needs.
- 9.3.5 Regularly assess the needs of the department and its employees through research.
- 9.3.6 Establish and maintain effective and confidential record keeping data and management information system.
- 9.3.7 Develop the marketing strategy of the programme and ensure the implementation thereof.
- 9.3.8 Establish and maintain linkage with various inter-departmental functions such as Human Resources Management, Unions, as well as external resources.
- 9.3.9 Regularly evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of EAP services.
- 9.3.10 Render EAP services to all employees in the department irrespective of their occupational positions.
- 9.3.11 Provide confidential services through assessment, short term counselling/ therapy of no longer than eight sessions. Unresolved problem of employee after in-house short term session may be referred to external service provider depending on the assessment by EAP practitioner on prognosis.

#### **9.4 The Employee**

- 9.4.1 The individual employee is often in the best position to identify when she/he is experiencing difficulties which impact negatively on her/his work situation. Hence employees have the right and responsibility to report such problems to their managers/supervisors and co-operate when assistance is offered to them through EAP.
- 9.4.2 Participation in the EAP will not affect the employee's employment or career development. On the other hand, employees' participation will not protect the employee from disciplinary action for continued sub-standard work performance or misconduct.

#### **9.5 WELLNESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- 9.5.1 A Wellness Advisory Committee shall be established with representatives of all relevant stakeholders in the department.
- 9.5.2 The committee shall assist the EAP professional with the identification of trends which impact on productivity for redress.
- 9.5.3 The Wellness Advisory Committee will also recommend strategies for the implementation of EAP, HIV & OHS policies as well as monitoring the implementation thereof.

## 10. REFERRAL PROCEDURE

**10.1** Referral to EAP is not part of disciplinary process and should not be regarded as such by employees. Referral to EAP can be done in three ways:

**Self-referral:** The employee as the person who is in a best position to identify problems experienced, consults the EAP practitioner voluntarily.

**Informal referral:** The employee receives a recommendation from other people such as manager, friend, colleague, union representative, etc. to consult the EAP practitioner. No documentation is necessary.

**Formal referral:** The supervisor refers the troubled employee in writing to EAP unit for assistance due to lowering job performance. This should be done if the problem cannot be resolved internally and if the employee consent to such referral. The supervisor or the employee may arrange an appointment with the EAP practitioner.

**10.2** During initial consultation, the EAP practitioner will be responsible for intake and assessment of employee's problem as well as determination of appropriate action plan. The action plan might include referral to an internal resource or external service provider such as a psychologist, social worker etc. for further intervention.

**10.3** When the employee is referred to external service provider, it is the responsibility of both the employee and the EAP practitioner to inform the supervisor without compromising confidentiality of the consultation process. The employee in question shall give the dual consent to enable the EAP practitioner to render follow up services effectively.

**10.4** Record keeping is essential, as a result the EAP practitioner shall keep reports and progress reports of all consultation with the employee client or other role players strictly confidential.

**10.5** As the EAP practitioner only renders short-term counselling of no longer than eight sessions, if the problem is unresolved referrals to external service providers may be required.

**10.6** Troubled employees who require specialised services/ treatment will be referred to external service providers or government rehabilitation centres/ agencies. Those who require treatment at private institutions will pay for their treatment expenses.



## **11. PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE**

**11.1** The EAP offers a cost free service with regard to counselling and training

**11.2** Non-Medical AID Employees:

- (a) the department will, however, pay for a maximum of eight sessions with an external service provider, i.e. psychologist, social worker, FAMSA, etc.
- (b) If a referral to a specialist psychiatrist is deemed necessary, the department will pay for a maximum of three sessions, subject to approval by Senior Manager: EHW. The department will not be responsible for any prescribed medication or hospitalization in a private institution.
- (c) Only state resources will be utilized for any in-patient treatment for alcohol and drug abuse and rehabilitation. The department will be then responsible for this payment. A private institution may be used in case of unavailability of state resources and a motivation for the approval of the HOD shall be made. The department will be responsible for this payment.

**11.3** Medical Aid Employees

- (a) In all other instances, where illness or conditions are covered by a medical aid scheme, employees will be required to submit claims to the medical aid for payment in the normal way. Should the medical aid scheme fail to cover the full treatment costs then the employee will be responsible for the shortfall.
- (b) If the medical aid has no separate benefit for psychological counseling or rehabilitation the department may, in justifying circumstances, pay these costs with approval of the Head of Department.
- (c) Should the eight psychological sessions be deemed insufficient, a written report should be submitted in the EAP motivating reasons for further treatment. A submission should be forwarded to the HOD for consideration and approval.
- (d) In the event of the employee defaulting in the treatment programme, either voluntarily or due to poor participation (none honouring of appointments) and motivation, then any payments made by the Department of Public Works on behalf of the employee will be recovered. This does not include employees who have successfully completed treatment and suffer a relapse.

## **12. RIGHT OF REFUSAL**

The employee has the right to refuse the EAP's recommendation regarding treatment and counselling.



### **13. FEEDBACK**

- (a) Participation in the EAP is voluntary and participation does not replace standard disciplinary/incapacity procedure but complements them as a corrective measure.
- (b) In case of formal referral, refusal should be in writing by employee.

### **14. DISCONTINUATION/ DEFAULT IN TREATMENT**

Should an employee decide to discontinue the recommended treatment or counselling programme, he or she must inform the EAP division of this in writing.

### **15. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Troubled employee due to substance abuse will be referred to government rehabilitation centre/ agencies at department cost. Rehabilitation will be limited to only one rehabilitation session in accordance to the Provincial Special leave policy (Resolution No.3 of 2002). Transportation for consultation shall be covered by the department.

### **16. MONITORING EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

Monitoring and evaluation of the programme will be on its effectiveness, based on the number of the employees rehabilitated, those that had to be referred for specialist treatment and care are rehabilitated; and those that had to be released from their duties as a result of failed rehabilitation. The cost effectiveness of the programme will also be evaluated from time to time.

The Head of EAP unit will be responsible for monitoring the results of assessments and treatment conducted by public or private practitioners / institutions. Reports will be treated as confidential, with feedback limited to the relevant managers/supervisors and top management, should it be necessary provided the employee agrees to such an arrangement, of which should be done in writing.

All documents and accounts will be kept for auditing and verification purposes. These documents/accounts will not be filed in the employee's personnel file.

The Senior Manager: Wellness will supply the HOD with a confidential quarterly report containing particulars on the utilisation, results and costs of the EAP. The report will not contain any personal information, except under circumstances mentioned in subparagraph (3.2.1: those are, alcohol/ drug abuse rehabilitation cases and formal referrals) above.

**17. GRIEVANCE**

Employees who are aggrieved for any reason whatsoever within the workplace shall have resources to the prescribed Department grievance procedure and any other right they have by law.

**18. DEFAULT**

Failure to comply with this policy shall constitute misconduct

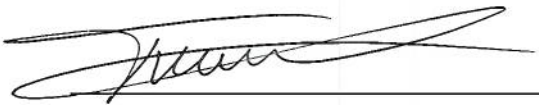
**19. INCEPTION DATE**

The inception date for this policy will be after the approval by the Executive Authority.

**20. TERMINATION AND REVIEW CONDITIONS**

This Policy shall be reviewed as and when there are new Legislative developments.

Approved by



**EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY**

25/07/13  
**DATE**