

GREATER TAUNG

Local Municipality

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE ROGRAMME
(EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME)
POLICY AND PROGRAMME

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1. PREAMBLE

Greater Taung Local Municipality undertakes to be a caring employer by ensuring that the wellness of all its employees becomes a number one priority. The municipality therefore shall subscribe to all laws and regulations governing employment relations, health and safety and the wellness of its employees. Greater Taung Local Municipality therefore upholds not to discriminate against any of its employees and treat all employees equally. The municipality also upholds to ensure the health and safety of its employees at all costs, and that employees shall be provided of health and safe working environments.

The municipality shall ensure highest standard of productivity by rendering effective and quality services to its clients as efficiently as possible. The municipality shall provide the necessary supporting environment to any employee experiencing personal, behavioural and/or work related problem affecting his/her level of productivity, thus ensuring that other employees are not burdened by their colleague's absence or poor performance as a result of such problems.

2. DESCRIPTION OF AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

- Employee Assistance PROGRAMME is an effective method to promote health and wellness amongst the members of the staff
- EAP can be explained as a counselling service for employees and their families who need help with personal and work related problems
- It is an employment-based or out sourced PROGRAMME which provides assistance to employees with psycho-social problems which are affecting their work performance
- It is an intervention strategy based in the workplace to help employees contend with life's challenges that may impact negatively on their performance

3. OBJECTIVE

- Improve the psychological health of employees and assist employees to develop coping skills and accept a greater degree of responsibility for their own wellness
- Promote wellbeing of employees
- Promote better work satisfaction and morale
- Create a supportive workplace climate and culture
- Help employees to resolve their immediate individual, family and job performance problems
- Identify hazards and develop control measures to create a safe working environment
- Encourage and maintain the well-being and productivity of employees by providing assistance and counseling to those experiencing personal or work-related problems
- Reduce absenteeism
- Improve productivity
- Reduce turnover rate

4. EAP FEATURES/ TOPICS

- HIV and AIDS
- Infectious diseases
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Domestic violence
- Stress
- Marital and/or relationship problems
- Non performance counseling
- Work related trauma de-briefing and counseling
- Sexual harassment/victimization
- Financial management capacity

5. DUTIES WITHIN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME UNIT

Amongst the duties within Employee Assistance PROGRAMME (EAP) will be:

- Educate employees about personal problems related to lifestyle and work environment, and the possible responses
- Policy development, revision, and audit
- Facilitate, in partnership with HIV/AIDS Unit, the implementation of HIV/AIDS workplace PROGRAMME
- Work closely or as a team with the Social Services Unit on issues of counseling and debrief, including guidance on referrals to external resources
- Monitor, evaluate and review employee assistance PROGRAMME strategies
- Monitor, evaluate and review employee's progress
- Ensure that employees on the PROGRAMME are not victimized or discriminated against during the period they are on the PROGRAMME
- Encourage employees' voluntary participation in the PROGRAMME by communicating the benefits of the PROGRAMME to the employees and the employer

6. PROGRAMME OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)

- Identify EAP service providers that employees would be referred to if the magnitude of their challenges requires a professional assistance. That service provider should host 24/7 toll free help-line
- Consultation with the health professionals, particularly the HIV/AIDS Unit, and management to discuss the launch of employee assistance PROGRAMME (EAP) with them
- The PROGRAMME will be communicated to the employees through sections' managers, health and safety representatives and union representatives, and by visits to sections by the Employee Safety and Wellness Officer
- Make the services available to the employees by opening the doors of communication to them

- Participation in the PROGRAMME will be voluntary
- Counseling and communication with the employees about their problems affecting their workplace performance will be confidential and will only be released

- i. by the instruction of the employee and
- ii. if required by law

7. PROCEDURE

A. Self Referrals

The employee is solely responsible for his/her actions, behaviour, conduct and work performance. Anything affecting the employee's physical and mental health, and consequently the employee's performance is known by the employee him/herself. Hence, it is the employee's prerogative to seek assistance in dealing with his/ her problems and get help.

B. Supervisory Referrals

The immediate supervisor is in the best position to detect any decline in performance of the employee, and is therefore the secondary referral of the employee. Hence, when that happens, the supervisor should refer the employee to the Employee Assistance PROGRAMME unit for intervention. Referral by the supervisor should be preceded by the supervisor's effort to assist the employee. Only then must the supervisor refer the employee to the EAP unit.

Types of Supervisory Referrals

i) Suggested Referral

Suggested referral is made by the supervisor out of the concern of his/ her employees. It stems from the knowledge that the EAP unit and PROGRAMME is in existence. It is also exercised due to the supervisor's familiarity of the experiences of employees who under perform as a result of, but not limited to, hangovers, drug and substance abuse, family problems, financial problems and work related problems. At times the section under performs because one or more employees do not pitch up for work due to similar reasons mentioned above.

ii) Recommended Referral

When a supervisor detects a declining performance of the employee, the supervisor will discuss the matter with the employee. If the problem continues, and the performance still declines, the supervisor will then recommend the employee to the EAP unit for further intervention and possible assistance.

iii) Mandatory Referral

Mandatory referral follows the failure by both the supervisor and the Wellness Officer to improve the level of performance of the employee. The employee is made aware of the declining job performance that is followed by supervisory monitoring, along with recommended utilization of EAP unit. If the performance still declines, the employee will be referred to EAP specialist, outside the municipality. All these are such that the employee can make an effort to improve his/ her performance. Along the process, the employee will be given a warning about the performance. Failure to improve on performance will be followed by disciplinary hearing that will, subsequently, be followed by dismissal, if matters get worse.

8. STAKEHOLDERS OF THE EAP

The stakeholders of the EAP within the Greater Taung Local Municipality are:

- Management (Municipal Manager, Senior Managers and Sections' Managers)
- Supervisors and Superintendents
- Health and safety committee
- Health and safety representatives
- Unions
- Employees

9. ROLES AND RESONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

a) Management

I. Municipal Manager

Representing the employer, whose duty is to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of his employees, the municipal manager, in his capacity as the chief executive officer and through delegation to his managers, shall ensure

- that the EAP is in place and functional
- that the EAP policy is in existence and implemented
- that a working and an enabling environment is in place for employees to be referred to for assistance when the need arises
- that supervisors are trained to identify declining work performance and communicate appropriately with affected employees in addressing the problem
- that all matters discussed with affected employees remain confidential as practically as possible
- that affected employees are not discriminated against

II. Senior Managers

Senior managers, who are Executive Managers,

- shall ensure that the responsibilities of the municipal manager are discharged within their respective directorates, as assigned by the municipal manager, by ensuring that all sections are well informed of the EAP and that employees experiencing declining performance as a result of either form of problems are referred for counseling
- support employees experiencing work related, family, social or behavioural problems and their families

III. Section Managers

Section managers' role would be to

- communicate the EAP intervention to the supervisors and/or superintendents
- ensure that their supervisors and/or superintendents are well equipped to detect behavioural and job related problems that impact negatively on their performance
- recommend, after unsuccessful intervention by the manager and supervisor, the employee for EAP intervention
- ensure that the employees are made aware of the EAP unit and services available thereof
- maintain contact with affected employees and their families by visiting the them at their homes and/or health institutions

b) **Supervisors and/or Superintendents**

Supervisors and/or superintendents are to,

- ensure that employees understand what is expected of them with regard to work performance
- ensure that the employees know of the existence and functioning of the EAP unit
- monitor any decline in performance and/or behaviour of the employees
- take corrective measures, including referring employees with such problems to EAP unit for assistance
- inform EAP unit of the referral
- arrange reasonable paid time off for an employee to attend EAP intervention
- maintain contact with affected employees and their families by visiting the them at their homes and/or health institutions

c) **Health and Safety Committee**

The roles and responsibilities of the health and safety committee shall be

- to report to the Local Labour Forum any occurrence of employees' declining performance as a result of problems
- to ensure that EAP unit is functional and impacts positively on employees' work performance and, thus, employer's productivity

d) **Health and Safety Representatives**

Health and safety representatives will play a critical role in the success of the EAP unit. The health and safety representatives will, amongst others,

- work together with the supervisors and/or superintendents in ensuring that employees' performance, and in particular their behaviour, do not pose danger to themselves and their fellow employees
- constantly liaise with supervisors and/or superintendents in ensuring that proper measures are taken regarding affected employees, including employee's referral for EAP intervention
- in conjunction with the supervisors and/or superintendents, report to the EAP unit any signs of problems affecting the employee's performance
- maintaining contact with affected employees and their families by visiting the them at their homes and/or health institutions

e) **Unions**

In ensuring a fair and equal treatment of all employees, and that no employee is discriminated against because of the employee's status and circumstances, and in the interest of the employee's recovery and retention in the employer's employment, unions' responsibilities will cover, amongst others,

- in conjunction with the supervisor/superintendents, monitor the performance of their colleagues and, if possible, identify the level of the performance
- if any change in behaviour or performance is detected, assist in addressing the problematic area by engaging the employee on his/her rights and responsibilities
- co-operate with supervisors/superintendents in referring the employee to the EAP unit for intervention
- ensure that the affected employee attends to his/her EAP appointments
- ensure that the affected employee is not discriminated against and that is treated fairly and without prejudice
- ensure that the affected employee is given a paid time off for his/her appointments
- ensure that the employee completes his/her PROGRAMME

- ensure that a record is kept of the employees progress/regress and that proper measures are taken to eliminate or minimise the problem
- maintaining contact with affected employees and their families by visiting them at their homes and/or health institutions

10. LEAVE TO ATTEND EAP INTERVENTION

An employer, in the interest of the employee's wellbeing, and employer's productivity, shall grant an employee a paid time off to attend EAP appointments.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

The information of the employee about his/her EAP intervention shall be kept confidential and private, and shall not be disclosed to anyone, including the management, except,

- (a) to the extent to which it may be necessary for the proper administration of a provision of Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- (b) for the purposes of the administration of justice;
- (c) at the request of a health and safety representative or a health and safety committee entitled thereto; or
- (d) by the instruction of the employee

12. BUDGET

13. BENEFITS OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)

Benefits for participating in the employee assistance PROGRAMME (EAP) to both the employer and the employees are:

- a) Less anxiety and stress at work
- b) Personal growth and learning opportunities
- c) Improved health and lifestyle
- d) Better job security
- e) Improved working relations between the employer and employees, and among the employees themselves
- f) Increase in trust between employer and employees
- g) possible solutions to problems

- h) less absenteeism
- i) higher productivity, better work performance
- j) improvement in employee morale
- k) reduced medical and other costs to both employer and employees
- l) bottom line improvement
- m) Elimination of unnecessary cost due to losses in human resources
- n) Solution of difficult personnel problems
- o) Retention of majority of the work force as satisfactory employees
- p) Cooperation from unions with rehabilitation efforts
- q) Preventative influence on troubled employees

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