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# GOVERNMENT NOTICE

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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

No. R. 986

3 December 2014

### HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACT, 1974 (ACT NO.56 OF 1974)

#### REGULATIONS DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE PROFESSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS: AMENDMENT

The Minister of Health has, under section 33 (1) of the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No. 56 of 1974) and on the recommendation of the Health Professions Council of South Africa, made the regulations in the schedule.

#### SCHEDULE

##### Definitions

1. In these regulations, “**Act**” means the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No. 56 of 1974), and any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Act shall have that meaning, unless the context otherwise indicates; and

“**Environmental Health Assistant**” means a person who is registered as such in terms of the Act;

“**Environmental Health Practitioner**” means a person who is registered as such in terms of the Act;

“**Department**” means the provincial, and national department of health and municipality employing environmental health assistants;

“**Service unit**” means an appropriate section or division in the national, and provincial department of health, and municipality; and

**“the regulations”** means the regulations defining the scope of the profession of Environmental Health Officer published under Government Notice No. R.888 of 26 April 1991, as amended by Government Notice No. R. 698 of 26 June 2009.

#### **Amendment of the heading of the regulations**

2. The following heading is hereby substituted for the heading of the regulations:-

**“REGULATIONS DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE PROFESSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS”**

#### **Amendment of the regulations**

3. The regulations are hereby amendment:-

- (a) by the substitution for the word “Annexure” of the word “Annexure A”; and
- (b) by the addition, at the end of “Annexure A”, of the following Annexure:-

#### **“ANNEXURE B**

#### **SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANTS**

Notwithstanding anything contrary contained in the regulations, the following acts fall within the scope of practice of environmental health assistant:-

#### **Water**

1. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the following duties:-
- (a) collecting water samples for laboratory analysis;
  - (b) carrying out field tests on public water supply sources;
  - (c) conducting inspections of community water supplies as part of the

health surveillance programme;

- (d) providing health education on proper and safe water usage and waste water disposal; and
- (e) carrying out surveys in both residential and informal settlements so as to determine the provision of water supply and sanitation in these areas.

### **Food control**

#### **2. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the following duties:-**

- (1) Conducting basic health education programmes for informal food handlers with reference to personal hygiene, sanitizing of food contact surfaces and cleaning procedures and methods, the prevention of food contamination from sources such as soil, water, air plants, animals and humans;
- (2) food borne illness investigations in informal food trading;
- (3) sampling foodstuffs sold by informal traders;
- (d) carrying out surveys in informal food trading enterprises for statistical purposes; and
- (e) proper disposal of unsafe foodstuffs.

### **General environmental health nuisances and control**

#### **3. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the following duties:-**

- (1) Drafting and preparing notices and reports on public health nuisances.
- (2) Attending to public complaints and enquiries and direct non-specific complaints to the appropriate service unit to attend to.

- (3) Carrying out routine environmental health investigations, including the investigation of complaints relating to:
- (a) unsanitary yard areas;
  - (b) defective drainage and the prevalence of cockroaches, rodents, flies, mosquitoes and other nuisance;
  - (c) nuisance caused by keeping of animals and birds including but not limited to:-
    - (i) poultry keeping;
    - (ii) dogs nuisances;
    - (iii) stables, piggery, and kraals; and
    - (iv) religious events and ritual slaughtering;
  - (d) unhygienic conditions on the property including but not limited to:-
    - (i) dirty conditions;
    - (ii) unsatisfactory living conditions;
    - (iii) lack of access to basic facilities;
    - (iv) illegal dumping;
    - (v) derelict motor vehicles; and
    - (vi) overgrown vacant land;
  - (e) public and private ablutions of facilities, toilets and private sewerage disposal systems like septic or vacuum tanks and soakaways; and
  - (f) fetes, fairs, exhibitions, flea markets, etc.

#### **Vector control**

**4. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the following duties:-**

- (a) Conducting regular vector surveys and monitoring programmes and

reports thereon;

- (b) conducting the trapping and poisoning of rodents;
- (c) submitting rodent carcasses for laboratory identification;
- (d) ensuring effective destruction and control of vectors, pests, and other vermin; and
- (e) conducting vector control programmes.

### **Basic health education, promotion, and community development**

#### **5. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the following duties:-**

- (a) Identifying specific project needs;
- (b) the planning, organizing and implementation of community projects;
- (c) the training of specific target groups in the communities and implementing "train the trainer" programmes;
- (d) arranging programmes and campaigns jointly with other departments and the communities e.g. clean up campaigns, ditching of drains, T.B. campaigns and etc;
- (e) arranging and attending community meetings so as to keep communities fully informed about activities of the department;
- (f) carrying out basic health education talks at clinics, schools, workplaces and communities e.g. Tuberculosis, HIV & AIDS, Cholera, Typhoid, and diarrhea including other environmental health related diseases; and
- (g) carrying out basic health education in terms of common environmental health problems, e.g. odours, flies, disposal of waste, etc.

**Communicable disease****6. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the following duties:-**

- (a) Co-ordination of the district communicable disease surveillance programme in hospitals, clinics, mobile clinics, private medical practices and community health workers and community structures;
- (b) carrying out investigations and follow up on cases of infectious disease and epidemics notified to the department;
- (c) identifying and referring contacts and suspected cases of Tuberculosis to clinics for examination;
- (d) following up on defaulter patients at clinics, hospitals and community health centres;
- (e) advising patients, relatives and employers of environmental health related infectious diseases patients in relation to health education, and delivering talks to groups of employees as requested;
- (f) creating awareness of Directly Observed Treatment of Tuberculosis (DOTS);
- (g) educating and training volunteers on environmental health matters related to the scope of practice of Environmental Health Assistants;
- (h) liaising with community leaders, traditional healers, church organizations, and volunteers to encourage acceptability and implementation of Directly Observed Treatment of Tuberculosis (DOTS);
- (i) investigating animal bites in liaison with State Vet, District Surgeons, hospitals and clinics;
- (j) placing posters at strategic points for public awareness;
- (k) collecting laboratory specimens from cases and contacts of

notifiable disease;

- (l) applying Animal By-Laws and making referrals in accordance with the relevant procedures; and
- (m) carrying out Rabies certificate surveys.

### **Environmental pollution control**

7. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the following duties:-

- (a) The investigation of environmental pollution complaints e.g. air, water, soil, ground, noise, etc;
- (b) carrying out field surveys of industries to determine impacts on specific communities;
- (c) disseminating information to Industries and communities concerning environmental pollution;
- (d) carrying out surveys of suppliers of chemicals in both formal and informal retail premises, which deal with the manufacturing, application, transport and storage of chemicals; and
- (e) carrying out basic education programmes for safe paraffin usage for the communities at large.

### **Information for decision-making**

8. Assisting the Environmental Health Practitioner in the collection of environmental health data for decision-making purposes in one or more of the following fields of activity:-

- (a) Water quality monitoring;
- (b) food control for informal trade;

- (c) waste management;
- (d) health surveillance of premises;
- (e) surveillance and prevention of communicable disease excluding immunisations;
- (f) environmental pollution control;
- (g) the disposal of the dead;
- (h) port health;
- (i) malaria control; and
- (j) control of hazardous substances.

### **Supervision**

9. The Environmental Health Assistant must perform the acts referred to in this Annexure under the supervision of an Environmental Health Practitioner.”



DR. AARON MOTSOALEDI

MINISTER OF HEALTH

DATE: 19/11/2014