

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF BUNGOMA



COUNTY WORK ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Executive Summary

Systematic management of the work environment can help structure the County in a way that prevents causes of ill-health and promotes good health. In order to achieve this, it needs to be a daily routine aspect of work. The County needs to put into consideration whether it is possible to execute the work in a way that contributes to improving the work environment.

All the employees in the County must know how to reduce the risks involved in their work and contribute to creating a good work environment. The County needs shall ensure that all the employees get basic knowledge on the work environmental management.

A good work environment enables operations at the County to be able to function well. Efforts to constantly monitor and improve the work environment must be a matter of high priority for everyone working at the County.

Definition of Terms

Appliances- a device or piece of equipment designed to perform specific task

Authorized Officer -A Public Officer to whom the County Public Service Commission (CPSC) has delegated the human resource management function in a County Department or agency

Accounting Officer -A public officer appointed to take full responsibility on the finances, assets and liabilities of the respective County Department.

Delegated Authority-The powers of the Commission that have been assigned to any one or more of its members, officer, body or Authority to exercise on its behalf.

Drug and substance abuse – the use of chemical substances that lead to an increased risk of problems and inability to control the use of substance.

Evacuation drills – a simulation of practising how a building would be evacuated in the event of a fire or other emergencies.

Exposure- means the amount of a workplace agent that has reached an individual worker (external dose) or has been absorbed into the individual worker (absorbed dose);

Fire brigade – an organized body of people trained and employed to extinguish fire.

Fire detectors – they sense one or more of the products/phenomenon resulting from fire, i.e smoke, heat etc.

Fire fighting drills- a method of practising how a building would be evacuated in the event of a fire or other emergencies.

Fire precautions – are measures taken and the fire protection features provided in a building that are designed to minimize the risk to the occupants from the outbreak of fire.

Fire safety inspection – conduct by the fire departments to assess the potential **fire safety** hazards in a building

Hazard - a danger or risk

Hazardous occupation – a risk accepted as a consequence of a particular occupation

Injurious – causing or likely to cause damage or harm

Occupational diseases – any chronic ailment that occurs as a result of work or occupational activity.

Occupational hazards – a risk accepted as a consequence of a particular occupation i.e chemical hazards, biological hazards, psychosocial hazards and physical hazards.

Occupational hygiene- means the anticipation, recognition, evaluation, monitoring and control of conditions arising in or from the workplace, which may cause illness or adverse health effects to persons;

Occupational Safety and health – is a multidisciplinary field concerned with the **safety, health,** and welfare of people at work

Occupier - means the person or persons in actual occupation of a workplace, whether as the owner or not and includes an employer;

Protective clothing – these are helmets, goggles, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection.

Risk- means the probability of occurrence of an adverse effect from a substance on people or the environment combined with the magnitude of the consequence of that adverse effect;

Screening – the evaluation or investigation of something to assess suitability for a particular role of purpose

Stigmatized – regard as worthy of disgrace or great disapproval

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1.0 Introduction

A good work environment is one of the most important operation for the County to be able to function well. The Work Environment plan provides guidelines and standards for the prevention and protection of officers against accidents and occupational hazards arising at the work place. It also provides guidelines, procedures and modalities for the administration and payment of compensation for work related injuries and accidents contracted during and outside the course of work. It further provides for Guidance and Counselling and putting in place measures for the management of HIV/AIDS at the workplace and the rehabilitation of officers who may be facing challenges of drugs and substance abuse.

This County work environment plan is guided by the County Public Service Human Resource Policy Manual of May 2013, the Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual for the Public Service of May, 2016, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2007 and the Work Injury Benefits Act, 2007

Every activity involved in work, every attitude conveyed in the workplace and all impressions of the working day can affect the health of the workers. Systematic management of the work environment will help the County structure itself in a way that prevents many causes of ill-health and promotes good health. In order to achieve this, it needs to be an everyday aspect of work.

Supervisors will be allocated tasks involved in management of the work environment. Systematic management of the work environment allows the County to detect risks before something happens, instead of taking action after an incident or accident. In order to achieve this, it needs to be an everyday aspect of work. A systematic approach can help the County detect more of the factors that are important to the health of the employees and can reveal the measures that help.

The County resources need to be allocated in connection with budgeting for Work Environment. Efforts to constantly monitor and improve the work environment need to be given high priority for everyone working at the County.

The County will prepare a work plan that will describe the risks, how they will be dealt with, who will do this work and when it will be finished. The aim of this is to ensure that the requirements stipulated in the regulations governing management of the work environment have been met.

2.0 Guidelines to General Safety

(1) Authorized Officers shall maintain healthy and safe working environment for the officers in the County to ensure there is no personal injury caused by accidents.

(2) All officers have the responsibility to ensure safety to themselves and others when performing their duties. They should not compromise on quality, cause injury, ill health, loss or environmental damage.

(3) If it is not possible to complete a project before the conclusion of the work day, and the work site that must be left presents a potential hazard, barricade the area and place proper warning signs of the hazard.

3.0 Emergency Preparedness

(1) The County shall put in place measures to prevent and mitigate against accidents, explosions, fire, earthquakes, and bomb threats and prepare procedures to be followed in such events.

(2) The authorised officer shall have a responsibility of ensuring that all officers and visitors are informed of and are fully conversant with the emergency procedures.

4.0 Fire Precautions

1. The Public Works sector is responsible for ensuring that all buildings are fitted with fire fighting equipment and provision of refill for such equipment with advice from Fire Officers and the Occupational Safety and Health Officers.
2. The Authorized Officer is responsible for ensuring that the fire protection facilities are provided in the buildings used by the County under his control and are adequate and maintained as advised by Fire Officers and Occupational Safety and Health Officers.
3. The Authorized Officer is also responsible for enforcing all necessary fire precaution measures as directed by both the Public Works and the Fire and Safety sector. The County should conform to the provisions of Occupational safety and health Act and Regulations therein.
4. The Principal Fire Officer and the County Fire Officers are responsible for providing advice on all matters concerning fire prevention; fire fighting, fire protection and fire demonstrations in all County and Government premises.
5. Alterations should not be carried out on buildings without prior consultation with the Fire Officers and the Occupational Safety and Health Officers. Any means of escape from a building should be kept clear of any obstruction which would make it difficult for occupants of the building to escape in case of fire.
6. No hazardous or highly inflammable materials should be stored in buildings without the approval of the Principal Fire Officer or County Fire Officers.
7. Positions of fire fighting equipment must not be interfered with nor should fire fighting equipment such as hose reels and extinguishers be used for purposes other than fire fighting.
8. Fire Officers may recommend any measures which they deem necessary for purposes of safety. It is the responsibility of the officer to whom such recommendations are

addressed to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to implement the measures with minimum delay.

9. Any officer who fails to implement such recommendations will be held personally responsible for the consequences and in case of subsequent fire outbreak; the officer will be liable for disciplinary action and/or prosecution.
10. The Authorized Officers shall ensure that:-
 - (i) Health and Safety Committees are formed in the County;
 - (ii) The Committee members and all officers are trained; and
 - (iii) Fire fighting drills are conducted in all premises used by officers at least once in every twelve months in accordance with the requirement of the (Fire Risk Reduction) Rules.

5.0 Notification of Fires

1. All fires, however small, must be reported to the Principal Fire Officer or County Fire Officers or the Police immediately they are noticed. The building or premises so affected by fire must be guarded and no evidence should be interfered with until investigations are over.
2. It is the responsibility of whoever detects a fire to initiate alarm, inform the police and fire brigade, and try to control the fire during its initial stages.
3. All the County's buildings must be fitted with fire detectors, alarms, water storage tanks and pumps dedicated to fire fighting only and separate from the normal water supply.

6.0 Evacuation drills

The County shall ensure that evacuation drills take place once per year. This is determined by the Fire and Safety sector.

7.0 Fire safety inspection

The County shall ensure that once each quarter the fire safety Inspector undertakes a fire safety round.

8.0 Change of User

Any change made to an existing building must be undertaken under the approval of Chief Fire. Such changes can be allowed or not and where additional requirements are suggested they must be compiled with. Such change of user issues must be made in writing.

9.0 Medical Examination

The Authorised officer will ensure that all officers working in hazardous occupations will undergo periodic medical examination by the designated health practitioner.

10.0 Provision of Protective Equipment and Clothing

The Authorised Officer shall ensure that all officers who are employed in any process involving exposure to wet or to any injurious or offensive substances are provided with adequate, effective and suitable protective clothing and appliances.

11.0 Safe Use of Equipment

The Authorized Officers shall ensure that all plants and other equipment are properly maintained and that they undergo the statutory examinations as per the Occupational Safety and Health Act requirements.

12.0 Reporting of Accident

1. Immediately an accident or development of an occupational disease resulting in death or injury to an officer comes to the notice of the officer under whom the officer is directly deployed, the supervisor should make a claim for compensation in accordance with the procedure set out in the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2007 and Work Injury Benefits act 2007. Only injury, diseases or death arising from occupational hazards are compensable.
2. Immediately a work place accident, an accident in a County Government vehicle or development of an occupational disease resulting in death or injury to an officer comes to the notice of the officer under whom the officer is directly deployed, the Supervisor should make a claim for compensation in accordance with the procedure set out below:-
 - (i) In case of an accident resulting in the injury or death of an Officer Part I of the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services, Accident Notification form (Form DOSH 1) should be completed in triplicate;
 - (ii) The forms should then be dispatched to the Authorized Officer of the officer's County Department, the Occupational Safety and Health Officer of the region in which the accident occurred and for non fatal the Medical Practitioner who is attending to the injured officer;
 - (iii) The detailed procedures are contained in the relevant forms which are obtainable from the Director of Occupational Safety and Health Services in the State Department responsible for Labour.
 - (iv) Where the Director of Occupational Safety and Health Services finds anomalies or that the percentage given in the medical report is not in conformity with the provisions of the Work Injury Benefit Act (WIBA), the officer will decline to process the compensation. The Director will inform the Authorized Officer of the officer's County Department of that decision giving reasons as to why the

officer has taken the decision and if the officer qualifies for compensation, the officer shall advise on the action that should be taken to enable the officer's compensation to be processed.

3. Where the Director declines to process the compensation, the Authorized Officer may either request the Director of Medical Services to convene a Medical Board for reassessment of the County's liability to pay compensation or may request the Director of Occupational Safety and Health Services to appoint a medical panel for reassessment on the officer's diagnosis or injury.

13.0 Approval and Distribution of Compensation

(1) If it is considered by the Director that the County is liable to pay compensation, the officer(the director) will send a demand note to the Authorized Officer of the County Department employing the injured, sick or deceased officer indicating the amount of money to be paid to the injured/sick officer or the dependants of a deceased officer.

(2) The payment of the money due for compensation to the injured or deceased officer shall be made within 90 days.

(3) The injured officer or the dependant(s) of deceased officer will sign a certificate of acknowledgement of payment and complete agreement form in triplicate.

Copies of such certificate and of the appropriate agreement form should then be distributed as follows:

- (i) One copy to be handed to the officer or, in case of fatal accident, to the dependant(s);
- (ii) One copy to be returned to the Authorized Officer of the injured/deceased officer's County Department; and
- (iii) The other copy to be retained by the Director of Occupational Safety and Health Services.

14.0 Recourse to Court

(1) Where the officer or the County Department is not satisfied with the amount of compensation computed by the Director of Occupational Safety and Health Services, they may raise an objection to the said Director or appeal to the Industrial Court.

15.0 Compensation Payable during Sick Leave under WIBA

(1)An officer on sick leave as a result of an accident or occupational disease will be entitled to full pay.

16.0 Source of Compensation Funds

(1) Authorized Officers shall source for funds from the County Treasury to meet the compensation of officers who are injured, develop occupational diseases or die in the course of their employment.

(2) The Accounting Officer in charge of Finance will make appropriate arrangement to ensure that each County Department access adequate funds to pay Work Injury Benefits to injured officers.

17.0 Reporting Injury, Serious Illness or Death

(1) Incase of an officer's injury, serious illness or death an immediate report by telephone, or special means including e-mail should be made to the relevant Authorized Officer, stating relevant particulars of the officer.

(2) The next-of-kin must be informed immediately and be made aware of the circumstances under which the officer sustained injuries or met his death.

(3) In addition to the report referred to in paragraph (1), a Death Certificate should be submitted to the relevant Authorized Officer as soon as possible to facilitate processing of final dues.

(4) The accident should also be reported to the Director of Occupational Safety and Health Services within 24 hours in accordance with the requirement of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

18.0 Guidance and Counselling

(1) The current challenges in the workplace and family environment affects the performance and wellbeing of an officer. To address these challenges, the County will introduce guidance and counselling.

(2) Counselling Services in the County shall be free of charge and shall be limited to Public Officers. However, consultation with family members or support system may be sought when deemed necessary.

19.0 Counseling Services

(1) Officers may seek guidance and Counseling when faced with psychological challenges.

(2) A supervisor may refer an officer for Counseling when he notices signs of low productivity, when the officer is a danger to oneself and others or incase of an indiscipline problem.

(3) An officer shall have freedom to accept or reject counseling. This includes freedom to remain in the counseling relationship after it has been initiated.

20.0 HIV/AIDS as a Workplace Issue

(1) HIV and AIDS is a major challenge facing officers in and out of the office. It poses a big threat to the individual, the family and the public Service. It is in cognizance of this that the national government has put in place care and support programmes for the infected and affected officers to enable them remain productive.

(2) HIV/AIDS shall be treated like any other challenging issue at workplace. All county public officers shall have a role to play in the wider struggle to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

21.0 Fighting Stigma and Discrimination

(1) An officer shall not be discriminated or stigmatized on the basis of HIV status. It is an offence for any person to discriminate another on the ground of actual, perceived or suspected HIV status in relation to employment, access to education, credit, insurance, travel, health care, and habitation and or any other ground.

(2) The Heads of Department and supervisors will be at the forefront in providing conducive working environment for the infected and affected officers. They will be required to set up programmes that will instill positive behaviour in the management of HIV and Aids.

22.0 Safe and Healthy Work Environment

(1) It shall be the responsibility of the Supervisors to minimize the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission by adopting first aid/universal infection control precautions at workplace.

23.0 Screening for Purposes of Employment/Recruitment

(1) HIV/AIDS screening shall not be a requirement for job seekers, recruitment or for persons in employment. Screening shall be confidential, voluntary and shall be after counselling. There shall be no disclosure of HIV/AIDS test results of any related assessment results to any person without the written consent of the officers

24.0 Continuation of Employment

(1) Officers with HIV-related illness shall be allowed to work for as long as they are fit to work and HIV infection should therefore, not be a cause for termination of employment.

25.0 Drug and Substance Abuse

(1) Addiction to drugs or substance will be treated like any other disease. An officer who is determined to deal with drug and substance abuse problem by engaging in rehabilitation services will be referred by the County to a Government doctor for evaluation.

County Government will provide both in-patient and out-patient rehabilitation services within the limits provided in the Medical Insurance Scheme.

(2) The County is expected to prepare a workplace policy on drugs and substance abuse so as to control the addiction to drugs.

26.0 The Work Injury Benefits Act (WIBA)

(1) Provides for compensation for accidents and occupational diseases arising out of and in the course of an officer's employment. Only injury, diseases or death arising from occupational hazards are compensable.

27.0 Training in first aid

(1)The County has a responsibility to ensure that every other year all employees are offered an opportunity to take part in first-aid training.

28.0 Stress & conflict management

(1) The County is to offer help in the form of training to help employees to deal with their work situation, especially in relation to conflicts and stress.

(2)The County strives shall provide facilities, equipment and training that will minimize risk to its employees, the general public, the environment. To do this, the County shall initiate programs to address the issues of safety, occupational hygiene, security, emergency preparedness, and environmental protection.

29.0 Rights and Privileges of Persons with Disabilities

(1)The County shall provide facilities and effect such modification, whether physical, administrative or otherwise, in the workplace as may be reasonably required to accommodate persons with disabilities.

30.0 Employee Welfare and Wellness

(1)Authorized Officers shall develop and implement employee welfare and wellness programmes in the work place.

31.0 Health and Safety Committee

1. The County Secretary shall ensure that the County Health & Safety Committee is constituted.
2. The Health and Safety Committee to meet at least three times annually.
3. Members of the Health and Safety Committee will be:
 - i) Fire safety representatives,
 - ii) Heads of the department and
 - iii) Other representatives appointed by the Authorised Officer

The Health and Safety Committee shall be charged with the following functions;

- a) Coordinating the County's work environment efforts;
- b) Disseminating information about them;
- c) Make preparations for the annual revision of the Action Plan for Work Environment Efforts.

(2) This is to ensure that routines for crisis support are in place at the County and to disseminate clear information about this.

(3) The Authorized Officers shall ensure that: -

- (i) Health and Safety Committees are formed in the department;
- (ii) The Committee members and all officers are trained; and
- (iii) Firefighting drills are conducted in all premises used by officers at least once in every twelve months in accordance with the requirement of the (Fire Risk Reduction) Rules.

Annexures

32.0 ACTION PLAN FOR WORK ENVIRONMENT

S/NO	RISKS	HOW TO ADDRESS THE RISKS	WHO TO ADDRESS THE RISKS	DATE LINE

33.0 WORKFORCE PLANNING RISK ASSESSMENT SHEET

S/NO	RISKS	LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE	CRITICALITY	MITIGATION STRATEGIES