

# CENTRAL KAROO

## DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



### SECTION: MUNICIPAL HEALTH SERVICES

## SANITATION



The Section aims to create an environment supportive of good health and minimize those factors detrimental to our health in the Central Karoo district

The Section is focused on the needs and expectations of our communities in the Central Karoo. We seek a good relationship between the municipality and its inhabitants, with a collective responsibility for the environment to ensure that all communities will live in an environment that is beneficial to their health

## OUR FUNCTION

The National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003) defines Municipal Health Services as Environmental Health. In terms of Section 1 of the Act Municipal Health Services are defined as:

- Water Quality Monitoring;
- Food Control;
- **Waste Management and Monitoring;**
- Health Surveillance of Premises;
- Supervision and Prevention of Communicable Diseases;
- Vector Control;
- Environmental Pollution Control;
- Management of Human Remains; and
- Safe handling of Chemical Substances.

The Air Quality Management & Integrated Waste Management functions are also performed by the Section Municipal Health.

EHP's act as public arbiters of EH standards, maintaining close contact with the communities they serve. We act as advisers, educators, consultants, managers and enforcement officers (enforcing health policies), ensuring people are able to live, work & play in safe, healthy environments.

## STAFF & AREA OF SERVICE DELIVERY

EHP's are employed at our Head Office in Beaufort West as well as our Prince Albert & Laingsburg Offices

Services are rendered in ten (10) communities in the Central Karoo Region, namely Murraysburg, Beaufort West, Nelspoort, Merweville, Prince Albert, Leeu-Gamka, Klaarstroom, Prince Albert Road, Laingsburg & Matjiesfontein, as well as in the rural areas of the Beaufort West, Prince Albert & Laingsburg Districts.

## WHAT IS MEANT BY SANITATION?

Sanitation includes infrastructure (sometimes called 'the hardware') to safely remove human waste e.g. technology options like Ventilated Improved Pit latrines (VIPs) or waterborne sanitation, as well as ongoing services e.g. emptying pit latrines, supplying water for flushing waterborne toilets etc. Sanitation also refers to practices or behaviour (sometimes called 'the software') and includes the promotion of sanitation as well as health and hygiene education in households and communities. In terms of the latter, personal, family and cultural hygiene practices and habits are important to take into consideration.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF A WATER SERVICES AUTHORITY (WSA)

A Water Services Authority (WSA) refers to any municipality (district, local or metropolitan) deemed responsible for ensuring access to water services.

WSAs derive their authority from the Municipal Structures Act. There can only be one WSA in any specific area; however, WSAs may contract with different Water Services Providers (WSPs) to deliver water services in an area.

The WSA has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that everyone has access to water and sanitation services within its area of jurisdiction.

## ACCESS TO ADEQUATE SANITATION

Access to adequate sanitation is fundamental to personal dignity and security, social and psychological well-being, public health, poverty reduction, gender equality, economic development and environmental sustainability.

Poor sanitation promotes the spread of preventable diseases like diarrhoea and cholera, places stress on the weakened immune system of HIV positive people and has a major impact on the quality of life of people living with AIDS.

While the right to have access to adequate sanitation is not expressly provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Constitution), there are a number of clauses which directly or indirectly imply the right to basic sanitation.

The 2001 White Paper on Basic Household Sanitation explicitly acknowledges that “government has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that all South Africans have access to adequate sanitation.”<sup>38</sup> The Water Services Act 108 of 1997 (Water Services Act) - the primary legislation relating to water and sanitation in South Africa – also refers to a “right to basic sanitation.”

## **DEFINITION OF ADEQUATE BASIC SANITATION**

**The 1994 White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation Policy defines adequate sanitation as follows:**

*The immediate priority is to provide sanitation services to all which meet basic health and functional requirements including the protection of the quality of both surface and underground water. Higher levels of service will only be achievable if incomes in poor communities rise substantially. Conventional waterborne sanitation is in most cases not a realistic, viable and achievable minimum service standard in the short term due to its cost. The Ventilated Improved Pit toilet (VIP), if constructed to agreed standards and maintained properly, provides an appropriate and adequate basic level of sanitation service. Adequate basic provision is therefore defined as one well-constructed VIP toilet (in various forms, to agreed standards) per household*

## **WHY FOCUS ON SANITATION?**

Wherever humans gather, their waste also accumulates.

Progress in sanitation and improved hygiene has greatly improved health, but many people still have no adequate means of disposing of their waste.

This is a growing nuisance for heavily populated areas, carrying the risk of infectious disease, particularly to vulnerable groups such as the very young, the elderly and people suffering from diseases that lower their resistance.

Poorly controlled waste also means daily exposure to an unpleasant environment. The buildup of faecal contamination in rivers and other waters is not just a human risk: other species are affected, threatening the ecological balance of the environment.

The discharge of untreated wastewater and excreta into the environment affects human health by several routes:

- By polluting drinking water;
- Entry into the food chain, for example via fruits, vegetables or fish and shellfish;
- Bathing, recreational and other contact with contaminated waters;
- By providing breeding sites for flies and insects that spread disease.

## **REPORTING HEALTH NUISANCES**

**The owner, occupier or user of land or premises must –**

- Ensure that a Health nuisance does not exist or occur on his or her land or premises;
- Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the existence of a health nuisance on the land or premises, eliminate the Health nuisance, or if he or she is unable to eliminate the health nuisance;
- Take steps to the satisfaction of the municipality to reduce the risk to municipal health; and
- Report the existence of the health nuisance to the municipality.



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