

Molemole Municipality

COVID-19 AND ASSOCIATED ALLOWANCE POLICY

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POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy framework is to properly inform the basis upon which a municipality may pay a danger allowance as goodwill of the municipality in appreciation and recognition of the employees who may, on occasion or continuously, be subjected to life-threatening situations in the course of duty during the lockdown and associated period as a result of the COVID – 19 pandemic crisis. This policy framework is a special purpose instrument for the COVID 19 period and nothing else.

Note: *There is no legal obligation on the Municipality to pay employees a Danger Allowance or Danger Pay.*

POLICY SCOPE

The policy applies to municipal employees who would be deemed eligible for payment of danger allowance by the outcomes of the risk assessment to be conducted by the municipality to determine the level of risk exposure to danger.

FRAMEWORK OF DANGER CLASSIFICATION AS PER THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES

The Department of Employment and Labour Workplace COVID-19 Preparedness Guidelines envisage an assessment and classification of employee risk or occupational exposure to danger from Very High to High, Medium or Low Risk. The level descriptors are outlined below:

A. VERY HIGH RISK EXPOSURE JOBS

These are jobs with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during specific medical, post mortem or laboratory procedures. Workers in this category include:

Healthcare workers (e.g. Doctors, Nurses, Dentists, Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians performing aerosol-generating procedures (e.g. intubation, cough induction, bronchoscopies, some dental procedures and exams or invasive specimen collection) or known or suspected COVID-19 patients.

Healthcare or laboratory personnel collecting or handling specimens from known or suspected COVID-19 patients (e.g. manipulating cultures from known or suspected COVID-19 patients).

Morgue workers performing autopsies, which generally involve aerosol-generating procedures, or the bodies of people who are known to have, or suspected of having COVID-19 at the time of their death.

B. HIGH RISK EXPOSURE JOBS

These are jobs with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19. Workers in this category include:

Healthcare delivery and support staff (e.g. Doctors, nurses and other hospital or clinic staff who must enter patients' rooms and get exposed to known or suspected COVID-19 patients. NOTE: When such workers perform aerosol-generating procedures, their risk levels become very high.

Medical transport workers (e.g. Ambulance personnel and porters) moving known or suspected COVID-19 patients in enclosed vehicles.

Mortuary workers involved in preparing (e.g. for burial or cremation) the bodies of people who are known to have, or suspected of having COVID-19 at the time of their death.

C. MEDIUM EXPOSURE RISK JOBS

Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/ or close contact (i.e. within 2 meters) of people who may be infected with COVID-19 but are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients (the asymptomatic type). In areas without ongoing community transmission, workers in this group may have frequent contact with travellers who may be returning from international locations with widespread COVID-19 transmissions.

D. LOW EXPOSURE RISK JOBS

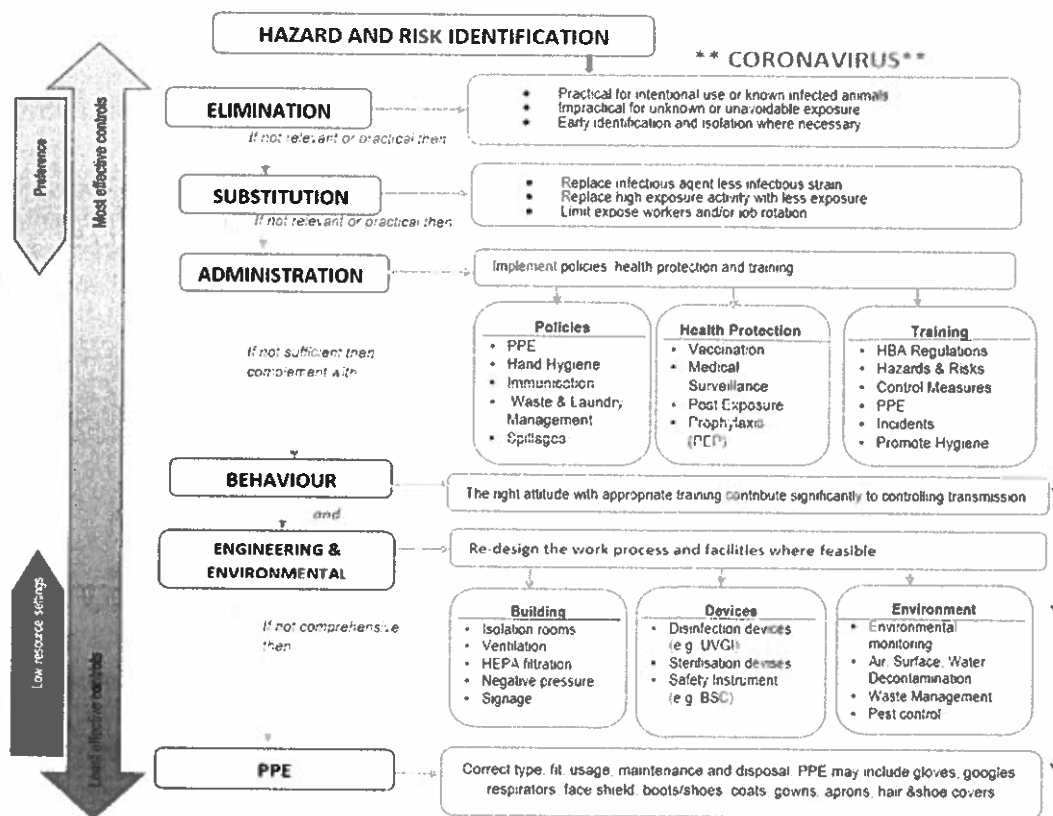
Low exposure risk jobs are those that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being infected with COVID-19, nor frequent close contact (within 2 meters of) the general public. Workers in this category have minimum occupational contact with the public and other co-workers.

Notwithstanding the list of examples illustrated above in the different categories of risk exposures, **it is advisable for the municipality to adopt a progressive and contextual interpretation and application of this instrument with due regard to how municipal**

jobs are being performed on a day to day basis in the prevailing COVID – 19 environment, when deploying the ¹COVID – 19 DES Danger Risk Exposure Assessment and Classification Matrix, which is an annexure to this policy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Regardless of whether a municipality adopts this policy framework or not, all the obligations of each municipality as an employer as set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993 apply even more stringently and instructively during period as a condition precedence. The infographic below serves as a guide and makes a distinction between two broad controls namely, administrative and engineering controls. Over and above the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and undertaking other administrative controls, municipalities are called upon to reconsider possible redesign of physical workspaces and process flows to also eliminate ergonomic risks.



¹ COVID 19 Designated Essential Services Employee Danger Risk Exposure Assessment And Classification Matrix

Each municipality shall at all times comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure that potential health and safety hazards are identified and eliminated.

Municipality undertakes to provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees by:

- ensuring that safety takes priority over matters of production, quality or efficiency;
- appointing qualified specialist staff to oversee health and safety matters at depots where the Municipality operates;
- ensuring that a Health and Safety Committee is appointed in terms of the Occupational Health & Safety Act and performs its functions effectively;
- ensuring that employees receive appropriate safety training;
- providing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety equipment to employees where required;
- taking a firm, fair and consistent stance on the handling disciplinary matters involving deviations from safety rules and procedures;
- Identifying situations which represent a significant risk to the health and safety of employees.

HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENT MEASURES

- a. Notwithstanding each Municipality's efforts to eliminate health and safety risks, the municipality recognises that, from time to time, situations which pose life-threatening risks, might occur which are beyond its ability to control;
- b. From an ethical point of view, the Municipality finds there to be moral conflict in incentivising employees to work in situations where there is life-threatening risk.
- c. Therefore, should an employee be required to work in an area where there is a significant life-threatening risk, such work shall be voluntary.
- d. No employee shall be coerced into working in a situation where the employee reasonably believes that there is a significant threat to his or her health and/or safety.

- e. It is impossible to remove all risk from life. Every activity in a municipality has a potential threat to life. For example an employee may trip and break his/her neck falling down stairs or a driver may die in a motor accident. These are however, not deemed to be life-threatening situations for purposes of this policy.
- f. Life-threatening situations are those where an employee may be required to enter an area where there is:
- political upheaval accompanied by violence and arson;
 - serious criminal activity with risk of violence;
 - a serious threat of being electrocuted;
 - a serious threat of fire or explosion;
 - a serious threat of inhaling poisonous life-threatening chemicals or smoke;
 - a serious threat of tunnel/building/infrastructure collapse;
 - a serious threat of viral infection (e.g. COVID-19 infection);
- g. Where employees are required to work in a potentially life-threatening situation, the official in the municipality designated with the responsibility of managing occupational risk and or health and safety shall be required to assess the risks and to determine whether their level of danger classification in order to inform the appropriate posture in a municipality.

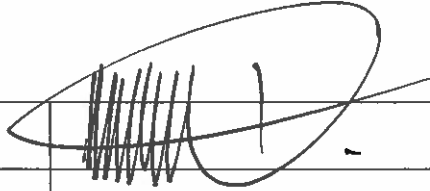
The danger allowance quantum shall be determined on the same basis as provided for in the DPSA² determination document follows:

- h. The danger allowance shall be paid as flat or uniform rate, regardless of the hours worked and occupational level of the affected employee.
- i. The Standard Danger Allowance of R450.00 per Month shall only be paid for the period in which the employee is exposed to danger **subject to budget availability**.
- j. Employees claiming a Danger Allowance must submit a Timesheet for approval to their Line Manager. This is to avoid a danger allowance being automatically paid on the salary of an employee without the requisite preventative controls being put in place,

- k. Once approved the Line Manager shall forward the timesheet to the Accounts Department who will arrange for payment to be made in the month after the work was performed. (i.e. the Danger Allowance shall be paid in arrears in the next payroll after the work has been completed).
- l. The municipality shall pay a danger allowance on the date an eligible employee receives his or her salary. The municipality shall stop paying the allowance when the employee stops being eligible.

APPLICATION PERIOD AND DURATION OF THE POLICY

This policy framework applies from the date the council approved the policy for COVID 19 regulations until they are lifted or discontinued. This policy framework should under no circumstance endure beyond the period for which it is intended, hence it is designed as a special purpose policy instrument.

Signature:	
Initials and Surname:	M. E PAJA
Designation:	MAJOR
Council Resolution Number:	OC / 7.1.2 / 27/05/22
Council Date:	27 / 05 / 2022