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Department:  
Roads and Public Works  
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **DEPARTMENTAL BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

**Version 2  
(February 2019)**

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## 1. DEFINITIONS

Accounting Officer	A person in terms of section 36 of the PFMA, also known as the Head of Department (HOD).
Casual Worker	A person employed on a day-to-day basis who is paid a daily wage and who does not work more than 24 hours a month.
Contract Worker	A person employed for a fixed term but excluding a casual worker or an employee to whom retirement age applies.
Department	Department of Roads and Public Works, Northern Cape Province.
EHWP	Employee Health and Wellness Programme, which refers to those workplace programmes that are designed to assist and empower employees in a number of respects/situations.
Employee	Any person, excluding an independent contractor, who works for the state and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration from the state including contract workers, casual workers, interns and learners.
Immediate Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A spouse, including same sex relationships.</li> <li>b) Biological children/step children/ legally adopted children/ a child through foster care.</li> <li>c) Mother/ step-mother/ legal guardian.</li> <li>d) Father/ step-father/ legal guardian.</li> <li>e) Siblings (sister/ brother/ step-sister/ step-brother).</li> <li>f) Parents-in-law.</li> </ul>

Interns	A person who is contracted with the Department to engage in an internship programme.
Learner	A person who is contracted with a Department to engage in a learnership programme.
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act, Act 1 of 1999, as amended.
Programme Manager	The Senior Management Service (SMS) Member who are responsible for managing a certain Departmental Programme / Directorate.
Responsibility Manager	The Senior Management Service (SMS) or Middle Management Service (MMS) Member who is responsible for the management and budget of a certain programme or sub-programme.
SCM	Supply Chain Management.
Spouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A partner in a civil marriage.</li> <li>b) A partner in a customary marriage.</li> <li>c) A partner in a relationship in which both partners have cohabited for a period exceeding six (6) months.</li> </ul>

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Employees spend most of their time in the workplace and with their colleagues. Together they celebrate the good times with the bad. The wellness of each individual contributes to the productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of any organization. Challenging times such as sickness, accidents and death happen when you least expect it. It is therefore important for employers to support employees during these trying times; hence the need for a bereavement policy. The aim of this policy has a dual dimension, i.e. firstly, to where possible, relieve the emotional and financial burden an employee has to bear

during these challenging times and secondly, to provide the guidelines according to which the support is to be rendered.

### 3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), section 215 and 217.
- 3.2 The Public Finance Management Act no.1 of 1999 (as amended by Act no 29 of 1999):
  - Section 38 dealing with general responsibilities of accounting officers and specifically subsection 38 (1)(a)(i), 38(1)(b),38(1)(d),38(1)(h) and
  - Section 45 dealing with the responsibilities of other officials.
- 3.3 The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 75 of 1997.
- 3.4 The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, *Batho Pele* (People First) 1997.
- 3.5 Government Motor Transport Circular 6 of 2007.

### 4. OBJECTIVE

This policy is intended to regularize and determine equal support for a bereaved employee in case of death in his or her family or determine the extent of support provided to the family of the employee in the event of his/her passing.

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## 5. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 5.1 This policy applies to all the employees of the Department of Roads and Public Works in the Northern Cape Province, as defined in section 3: Conceptual Orientation.
- 5.2 The bereavement policy covers, the eligibility for assistance, the categories of assistance, death incurred while on duty, and death incurred while off duty.

## 6. PROCEDURES

### 6.1 Procedure in case of death of a staff member:

- a) Ascertain the true state of affairs on behalf of the office by visiting the family and thus the Senior Manager of the programme / directorate involved shall serve as a vital link between the office and the family from day one.
  - b) Send a message of condolence to the family soon after receiving the news. A wreath together with a card not exceeding the amount of R500,00 should be sent on the day of the funeral. The amount of R500,00 will escalate annually on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April with 10%.
  - c) Inform the Human Recourses Management (HRM) unit in writing so as to ensure that procedures and processes are followed but more importantly to get HRM involved in terms of conveying information regarding possible benefits payable and the information and documentation required for these to be paid. HRM should support the family in this regard in a manner that is empathic and efficient, to prevent unnecessary economic hardship for the family of a deceased employee.
  - d) Send out a notification to inform all staff members about the death of their colleague including residential address and also the arrangements regarding paying of respects to the family by fellow staff members, prayer sessions, memorial service,
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date and time of funeral. The Senior Manager of the programme / directorate involved shall also take responsibility for the contributions from the office.

## 6.2 Use of state vehicles

The usage of Government Motor Transport for Memorial and Funeral Services shall be managed in accordance with Government Motor Transport Circular 6 of 2007, which states the following:

*“The criteria as set out in this circular is expected to be implemented and will serve as a policy that will be uniform to all Departments in as far as sympathizing with the bereaved families is concerned, and must be implemented to ensure that the mode of transport for funerals and memorial services that will be provided will be uniform for the whole of government”.*

**Please note that the Department will not provide official government transport to any family member of the deceased or of an official or employee under the employment of the State.**

Government motor transport can however be utilized under the following conditions:

- Government officials that are nominated to represent their relevant department at a funeral or memorial service in the instance of an official(s) from their department passing away.
  - Where officials act on behalf of government.
  - Officials nominated to represent the Department after donations have been collected and officials that will on behalf of the Department deliver speeches of condolences and sympathy can be provided with a sedan.
  - Nominated officials who are in possession of subsidised motor vehicles will utilise their vehicles officially to perform all memorial and funeral functions as set out above and all trips incurred will be regarded as official trips. This will need to be authorized by the Head of Department or her/his delegate.
  - For all officials who will be attending the memorial service or funeral, a sixty (60)-seater bus will be made available.
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The following requirements need to be adhered to when official transport to a funeral or memorial service is approved:

- No additional human resources are needed.
- All arrangements of transport provisioning need to be approved by the Head of Department or a designated official appointed by the Head of Department.
- Should approval for the use of government motor transport be granted, such transport is only to be utilised within the boundaries of the Republic of South Africa.
- In the approval of the Request for Transport to a funeral or memorial service, the cost for a stand in or replacement vehicle (should it be required to ensure service delivery), should be taken into consideration in the approval of transport to a funeral or memorial service.
- The provisioning of a bus; or any vehicle in excess of a normal sedan will need to be approved by the Head of the Department (or her/his delegate). Should a bus/busses not be available the respective Directorate could arrange for alternative suitable transport.
- Should the use of government transport be approved for the purposes of attending a funeral or memorial service, a Request for Transport and associated trip authorization will need to reflect all the names of the individuals making use of the government provided transport (including the individuals not in the employ of the state).

Directorates are in no way obliged to provide transport to officials attending funerals or memorial services. Since each Directorate is responsible to manage and control its budget, it is therefore imperative that all costs with regard to funeral transport be borne by the Directorates themselves taking into account the number of kilometres travelled and be authorised by the Head of Department or her/his delegate.

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### **6.3 Accommodation arrangements**

No accommodation arrangements will be made for employees attending a memorial and/or funeral of an employee outside of the borders of the town in which the office is situated, unless an employee becomes a representative of the Department at the memorial/ funeral.

No accommodation arrangements will be made for employees attending a funeral of a family member of an employee outside of the boarders of the town in which the office is situated, unless in the case where an official/s will be representing the Department.

### **6.4 Memorial service**

The Department will arrange a memorial service for the employees of the Department to attend in the case of the death of an employee. This shall be done in liaison with the bereaved family.

### **6.5 Funeral service**

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to nominate a Senior Manager to talk at the funeral of the deceased employee on behalf of the Department.

Employees of the Department who wish to attend a funeral service held during ordinary office hours may be authorized to do so, subject to proper arrangements with regard to the operational requirements of the Department.

The Department shall authorize transportation for the employees attending the service in accordance with Government Motor Transport Circular 6 of 2007 as quoted in the section *Use of State Vehicles*, above. This gesture shall be viewed as a courteous act on the part of the Department and shall by no means be seen as an authorization of a trip for official purposes. The Department shall consequently not be vicariously liable for any act or omission (whether wilful or negligent) on the part of the driver of any vehicle or any other person which may cause any employee or such other person to suffer loss, damage or harm as a result of such an act or omission.

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## **6.6 Voluntary contributions**

It will be deemed appropriate, in the event of the death of an employee, to circulate a list requesting for voluntary contributions to be made.

The total amount collected from the contributions will be handed over to the bereaved family on or before the day of the funeral.

Voluntary contributions will be collected in the case of the death of a member of the family of an employee.

The head of the unit is responsible for seeing to it that the contributions get to the bereaved family or the concerned employee. The donations must be given to the bereaved family or the employee on or before the day of the funeral.

## **6.7 The death of an immediate family member of an employee**

In case of a death of an immediate family member the Senior Manager of the programme / directorate shall do the following:

- a) Shall ensure, in cooperation with the EHWP unit, that a message of condolence is sent to the employee and his/her family a day after receiving the sad news.
- b) Homage should be paid by the head of the unit to the bereaved family before the funeral if the family is within the vicinity of the office.
- c) See to it that a wreath and a card not exceeding the amount of R500,00 will be sent to the bereaved family on or before the day of the funeral as a sign of compassion.

## **7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.1 Programme managers are responsible for the implementation of the policy.

7.2 The Directorate Policy and Planning will monitor and evaluate compliance and impact of these guidelines by all programs and sub-programs in the Department.

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7.3 An annual report by the unit responsible for the EHWP, informed by the inputs from the unit heads, should be submitted to the Senior Manager: Corporate and Management Services.

The bereavement committee has both an evaluation and monitoring function. These functions include the following:

- a) The Committee shall consist of two (2) representatives from each Directorate.
- b) The Committee shall have the duty to:
  - Report to the Head of Department on requests for assistance received.
  - Investigate and make recommendations to the Head of Department in *inter alia* the need for the extent of assistance to be provided.
  - Provide advice on the financial implications for the Department.
  - Assist the family with the arrangement for the service, where required.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATION

All costs relating to the implementation of this policy should be provided for annually by the concerned programme / directorate in its budget.

## 9. POLICY ADOPTION AND REVIEW

9.1 This policy is effective from the date of its approval.

9.2 This policy shall be reviewed in five (5) years from its effective date to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. This policy may be reviewed before that

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time as necessary to reflect substantial organisational etc. changes at the Department or any change required by law.

9.3 Deviations from this policy must be approved by the Accounting Officer.

## 10. APPROVALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Approved / Not Approved*

*Comments:*

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ACCOUNTING OFFICER

5.3.19  
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DATE