



**CAPE WINELANDS DISTRICT**  
MUNICIPALITY • MUNISIPALITEIT • UMASIPALA

---

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE POLICY**

**POLICY ADOPTED BY COUNCIL ON 25 APRIL 2012  
AT ITEM C.14.5**



## **CAPE WINELANDS DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Cape Winelands District Municipality cares about the health and wellbeing of its employees and recognizes that a variety of personal problems can disrupt their personal and work lives;
- 1.2 Serious personal or family problems are usually amenable to treatment and rehabilitation. For instance, alcoholism is a treatable disease which has devastating effects on one's personal health, family and work life. Drugs, gambling, family problems and emotional distress can have similar effects. Most people solve their problems either on their own or with the advice of family and friends, however, sometimes people need professional advice;
- 1.3 Cape Winelands District Municipality, through its Employee Assistance Programme, provides access to professional counseling services for its employees and those employees in need of professional assistance are encouraged to use the Programme.

### **2. Purpose of the Employee Assistance Programme**

- 2.1 The purpose of the Employee Assistance Programme is to offer confidential assistance to employees who have the potential to be adversely affected by personal and work related problems. Through the Employee Assistance Programme, employees are assisted to resolve personal problems that affects job performance, motivated to seek help and directed to the best assistance possible.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Employee Assistance Programme is also to meet with the relevant legislative requirements.

### **3. Basic Principles**

- 3.1 Early intervention is desirable in dealing with any personal or family problems. Management and unions working co-operatively through the Employee Assistance Programme can help employees deal with personal problems;

- 3.2 In formal referrals, the Employer's concern with employee problems is limited to efforts to address deteriorating work performance. The supervisor or manager is responsible for identifying with the employee when job performance is below standard. The supervisor is not responsible for diagnosing the nature of a personal problem and the Employee Assistance Programme is not designed to interfere with an employee's private and social life;
- 3.3 The Employee Assistance Programme applies equally to all CWDM employees, dependents and significant others;
- 3.4 The Employee Assistance Programme encourages employees to voluntarily seek help (self referral) for personal problems. The Employee Assistance Programme is strictly voluntary, even when strongly recommended by the management, mandatory referral is not used;
- 3.5 Confidentiality is the cornerstone of the Employee Assistance Programme. All client related information will be regarded as confidential and the release of information will only be done in compliance with a court order, a subpoena or with a written permission and consent of the employee;
- 3.6 Legally, "**confidentiality**" refers to the obligation to refrain from willingly disclosing information that has been received in confidence and not to situations in which a court or statute compels a person to disclose information;
- 3.7 No employee shall be prejudiced as a result of using the services of the Employee Assistance Programme;
- 3.8 The Employee Assistance Programme recognizes the need for granting of leave for the purpose of counseling and or treatment; within the existing Collective Agreements dispensation and/or policies;
- 3.9 The Employee Assistance Programme does not alter management's responsibility to maintain discipline or the right to take disciplinary measures within the framework of the agreement, nor does it alter the union's prerogatives;
- 3.10 The Employee Assistance Programme is not designed to assist in "conflict resolution" between employees and/or managers. These matters should be resolved through established procedures and/or Collective Agreements. The Employee Assistance Programme can help the employee deal with personal consequences of conflicts which may be work related.

#### **4. Access to the CWDM Employee Assistance Programme**

4.1 Employees of Cape Winelands District Municipality;

4.2 Where necessary, with the involvement of:

4.2.1 Spouses or life partner;

4.2.2 Children; and or

4.2.3 Significant others who will contribute to the wellness of the employee.

#### **5 Areas of Assistance**

5.1 The Employee Assistance Programme provides assistance with a broad range of personal concerns, including, but not limited to:

5.1.1 Marital, family and relationship problems;

5.1.2 Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, prescription medication) and other addictive behavior such as gambling;

5.1.3 HIV / AIDS Counseling;

5.1.4 Workplace Violence and Trauma Counseling;

5.1.5 Workplace discrimination or victimization, for example, discrimination against people with disabilities or from designated groups;

5.1.6 Personal debt and financial management problems;

5.1.7 Stress (family, social, job);

5.1.8 Family violence;

5.1.9 Sexual harassment;

5.1.10 Work related conflicts or any other; and

5.1.11 Psycho-social problems.

#### **6 Eligibility for the Programme**

6.1 The Programme is available to all employees of CWDM, and where necessary, their spouses / significant others and their dependents.

## **7 Programme Operation**

- 7.1 The Employee Assistance Programme acts as an intake and referral system, using agencies and services in the community to provide ongoing assistance as appropriate and required. Early recognition of a problem is an important objective, to enable an employee to receive help before a crisis develops. Whenever possible, public community services will be used initially;
- 7.2 Participation in the Employee Assistance Programme is not an alternative to discipline nor is it to be used by management as a disciplinary measure. The EAP shall not be drawn to testify or witness in any labour disciplinary proceedings;
- 7.3 Any employee can consult, on a confidential basis, with the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator concerning access to the Programme or to ask general information;
- 7.4 An Employee Assistance Programme Advisory Committee shall be established comprising of three (3) members from management, two members from Union and with the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator;
- 7.5 There is no cost for employees to consult with the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator. If further counseling is necessary, the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator will outline community and private services available. Any costs associated with private services are the responsibility of the employee unless otherwise advised.

## **8. Rights and Responsibilities**

### **8.1 Preamble**

- 8.1.1 Maintenance of acceptable job performance is a shared responsibility. Performance goals must be set by the manager along with the employee and achievements measured against these goals;
- 8.1.2 The employee, coached by the manager, responds by accepting responsibility for maintaining satisfactory job performance.

### **8.2 Employee Rights and Responsibilities**

- 8.2.1 Personal information concerning employee participation in the Employee Assistance Programme is maintained in a confidential manner. Access is limited to Employee Assistance Programme staff. An employee may review the Employee Assistance Programme file at any reasonable time;
- 8.2.2 The Employee Assistance Programme file is destroyed after seven years following closure of the case, unless prescribed by the relevant legislative arrangements;

- 8.2.3 Participation in the Employee Assistance Programme shall not jeopardize an employee's job nor prejudice any opportunity for promotion or advancement;
- 8.2.4 Leave may be granted in accordance with the Collective Agreement and/or terms and conditions of employment for professional assessment, counseling and treatment, unless otherwise determined;
- 8.2.5 It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain satisfactory job performance. In the event that personal problems cause deterioration of work performance, the employee has a responsibility to obtain the necessary help to bring job performance up to an acceptable level. The Employee Assistance Programme offers a means to obtain this help.

### **8.3 Manager's Responsibilities**

- 8.3.1 Address work performance problems through normal procedures;
- 8.3.2 Be consistent and treat employees fairly;
- 8.3.3 Make employees aware of the Employee Assistance Programme in instances where declining job performance has been determined, if appropriate;
- 8.3.4 Do not attempt to diagnose personal problems of the employee or offer a personal opinion;
- 8.3.5 Provide follow-up and support to employees upon return to work, if appropriate;
- 8.3.6 Do not require the employee to divulge the nature of the problem when requesting leave for an appointment with the service providers under the Employee Assistance Programme, unless necessarily for some valid operational reasons. If necessary, the employee can provide verification of attendance through the Employee Assistance Programme Coordinator;
- 8.3.7 Maintain a strict level of confidentiality with all cases.

### **8.4 Union's Responsibilities**

- 8.4.1 Be knowledgeable about the Programme and the referral procedure;
- 8.4.2 Encourage members to use the Employee Assistance Programme if appropriate;

8.4.3 Maintain a strict level of confidentiality with all cases.

## **8.5 Employee Assistance Programme Coordinator's Responsibilities**

- 8.5.1 Oversee the Employee Assistance Programme to ensure effective and consistent application of the policy and procedures;
- 8.5.2 Provide information sessions to management and union personnel regarding the Employee Assistance Programme;
- 8.5.3 Promote the Employee Assistance Programme in the workplace;
- 8.5.4 Develop and maintain an accurate, current data bank on "helping" resources and services in the community including a brief description of services available and the cost, if any, of the service;
- 8.5.5 Liaise with service providers to ensure service standards are acceptable and meet the requirements of clients;
- 8.5.6 Conduct screening and preliminary assessment for persons contacting the Employee Assistance Programme for assistance. Provide full information regarding participation in the Programme;
- 8.5.7 Referral to a professional counselor for detailed assessment and treatment as appropriate;
- 8.5.8 Follow-up as and when required with the individual to ensure assistance was beneficial;
- 8.5.9 Assist the employee in his or her return to the work environment as and when required;
- 8.5.10 Provide consultation to managers regarding the Employee Assistance Programme services;
- 8.5.11 Advise or organize and/or facilitate, on an ongoing basis, educational programs for employees about the Employee Assistance Programme's services;
- 8.5.12 Maintain all information on employees participating in the Employee Assistance Programme in a confidential, secure manner;
- 8.5.13 Provide feedback to management as to areas where special attention or training is required.

## **8.6 Advisory Committee's Responsibilities**

- 8.6.1 Review established policy to ensure agreement and understanding of procedures and practices;

- 8.6.2 Develop and recommend changes in Programme policy as necessary after receiving input from interested parties;
- 8.6.3 Develop strategies in conjunction with the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator to ensure that employees are aware of the Employee Assistance Programme;
- 8.6.4 Ensure that the relevant role-players contribute to the effective design and operation of the EAP;
- 8.6.5 Oversee an evaluation of the Programme;
- 8.6.6 Prepare a report on the activities of the committee as deemed necessary or required;
- 8.6.7 Review statistics and trends on the utilization and make the necessary recommendations on the enhancement and alignment of the program.

## **9. Access, Referral and Offers of Assistance**

- 9.1 Access to the Employee Assistance Programme can either be self initiated or employer initiated. The decision to seek assistance through the Employee Assistance Programme is always voluntary. When an offer of assistance is made by the employer, it is not mandatory for the employee to accept the offer;
- 9.2 The contact details of the designated Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator(s) and Committee members may be obtained from Human Resources.

### **9.3 Self-Referral**

- 9.3.1 An employee recognizes that a problem exists and seeks help through the EAP on his or her own by contacting the EAP Co-ordinator directly;
- 9.3.2 These self referrals are treated with strict confidentiality. The employee's supervisor will not be informed of the nature of the problem, unless the employee requests this to happen. The employee is responsible for obtaining approval for any required time-off associated with the use of the Employee Assistance Programme and the Employer shall not unreasonable deny such time-off.

### **9.4 Employer Initiated**

- 9.4.1 The manager is responsible to address with the employee deteriorating work performance and provide guidance to help the employee improve work performance. An employee accepts responsibility for keeping job performance at a pre-established acceptable level.



- 9.4.2 If job performance does not improve or shows continuing deterioration, then the manager may initiate a formal offer of assistance, it is not mandatory for the employee to accept this offer. Prior to initiating a formal offer of assistance, the supervisor should consult with the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator concerning the appropriateness of the offer.

## **9.5 Informal**

- 9.5.1 The supervisor/manager advises the employee to seek help through the EAP when observing a decline in work performance. Employees maintains the right to use or refuse the EAP. Informal referral is an early intervention strategy to assist employees. Certain workplace behavior could result in an employer initiated formal offer of assistance without there being previous informal offers.

## **9.6 Formal**

- 9.6.1 The formal employer initiated offer of assistance is to be in writing on the prescribed form (section 13 "Appendix 1"). The employee has the right to refuse the offer;
- 9.6.2 A formal offer of assistance is to be delivered confidentially to the employee, with a confidential copy to the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator and a copy retained in a confidential departmental master personnel file.

## **10. Referral by the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator**

### **10.1 Assessment**

- 10.1.1 The employee is responsible to make contact with the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator. During the initial contact, the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator will explain the Employee Assistance Programme, including confidentiality of the Programme and the exceptions, the employee's rights and responsibilities and full information about participation in the Programme;
- 10.1.2 The Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator and the employee will conduct a preliminary assessment of the problem. The coordinator will provide information and, if appropriate, encourage the employee to accept referral for counseling and treatment. Upon completion of the preliminary assessment, the Co-ordinator and the employee will discuss the options which appear to be most realistic and attainable for the employee in resolving the problem. The employee will choose the treatment service and a referral will be facilitated.

## **10.2 Referral**

- 10.2.1 The Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator will conduct a preliminary assessment of the problem with the employee. The Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator will be knowledgeable about the appropriate services in the community and will assist the employee with making referral arrangements.

## **10.3 Coordination and Follow-up**

- 10.3.1 The Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator will maintain an informal but planned follow-up procedure. The Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator will work with the employee to ensure appropriate services are received in a timely manner. Contact with any treatment agency or the employer, will only be at the request of the employee.

## **11. Confidentiality**

- 11.1 A primary principle of the Employee Assistance Programme is to maintain confidentiality throughout every level of the Programme. An employee accessing the Employee Assistance Programme needs confidence in the privacy of this relationship;
- 11.2 An Employee Assistance Programme worker who is subpoenaed to surrender records or to testify in court is not in breach of his or her confidentiality obligations;
- 11.3 An Employee Assistance Programme worker would not be in breach of confidentiality obligations by complying with the mandatory reporting provisions of the provincial child abuse legislation or the obligation to warn the intended victims of violence;
- 11.4 The Employee Assistance Programme Staff will ensure proper and accurate management of records. The minimum amount of information required to assist the employee will be maintained. Client records will at all times be secured under lock and key. Files will be available for review by the employee at any reasonable time. Employee Assistance Programme files shall be destroyed after seven years following closure of the case;
- 11.5 In many cases the employee contacting the Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator will wish to remain anonymous. Personal identifying information will not be required to carry out preliminary assessment and referral to a helping resource in the community;
- 11.6 All persons employed within the Employee Assistance Programme are bound by conditions of strict confidentiality.

## 12. General

- 12.1 The Employee Assistance Programme can benefit everyone. Employees obtain help with personal problems which may be affecting their well being, family life or work performance;
- 12.2 The employer benefits by retaining employees with valuable skills and knowledge. Early use of the Programme can contribute to the prevention of serious problems for the individual employee, family and employer.

### Forms

- Form X      Formal Offer of Assistance (Company Initiated)  
Form Y      Formal Request for Assistance (Employee Initiated)



FORM 1

**CONFIDENTIAL FORMAL OFFER OF ASSISTANCE**

---

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

On \_\_\_\_\_ we discussed your job performance and the opportunities available with the EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME.

If you decide to accept this offer, an appointment is scheduled for you at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Read and Understood

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

This is not a mandatory referral and the employee is not obligated to attend.

A copy of this form is to be delivered to the departmental master personnel file maintained in a separate, confidential manner by the Human Resource Director.



FORM 2

CONFIDENTIAL REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

---

TO: Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby request an interview with the Employee Assistance Programme Coordinator.

I acknowledge that the matter I wish to address falls within the scope of the Employee Assistance Programme. I further undertake to make the necessary arrangements directly with my supervisor for time-off from work to attend the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Name

A copy of this form is to be delivered to the departmental master personnel file maintained in a separate, confidential manner by the Human Resource Director.

## **Appendix**

### **Directory of Agency Services**

An employee may wish to approach an institution directly for assistance without referring the matter to the Employee Assistance Programme Coordinator. In such an instance, an employee may make use of the following agency services.

#### **Family Violence Court**

Agency:  
Telephone:  
Address:

#### **AIDS / HIV**

Agency:  
Telephone:  
Address:

#### **Maintenance Court**

Agency:  
Telephone:  
Address:

#### **Alcohol or Substance Abuse**

Agency:  
Telephone:  
Address:

#### **Personal or Behavioral Addictions**

Agency:  
Telephone:  
Address:

#### **Psychological**