DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

POLICY ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Public Works is committed to consistent and effective service delivery through empowered employees. A challenge facing the Department is the high vacancy rate which has occurred through natural attrition, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, transfers and promotions of employees to other Departments and the difficulty of recruiting employees in the Department's line function.

In order to reduce the high vacancy rate and to ensure an improved and sustained service delivery the Department commits to adopting a proactive approach towards the retention of employees.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to facilitate the retention of competent employees within the Department, who are in possession of a proven and consistent employment track record. Retention of employees shall not be automatic and will be at the discretion of the MEC or her/his delegate, aligned to the Appointment Delegations in the Human Resource Delegations of Authority, 2006.

3. MANDATE

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
Public Service Act, 1994, as amended.
Public Service Regulations, 2001, as amended.
Employment Equity Act, 1998
Skills Development Act, 1998.

4. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Department of Public Works – KwaZulu-Natal, appointed in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994, as amended.

5. REASONS WHY EMPLOYEES LEAVE

5.1 Employees leave the Department for various reasons. Some reasons are unavoidable and beyond the control of the Department, examples being the death of an employee or for personal reasons such as retirement, the employee's health or family relocation.

5.2 On the other hand employee turnover is avoidable and can be managed. These avoidable reasons for staff turnover include;

Financial considerations, where employees leave because they are offered better salaries and/or benefits elsewhere.

Work Environment, where a poor work environment leads to unhappy employees and makes other job opportunities attractive to them. Examples of poor work environment are;

- Low morale amongst employees and line managers,
- Little or no motivation of employees,
- Lack of or limited strategic direction
- Lack of leadership or communication,
- Poor work challenges and
- Lack of empowerment opportunities for employees.

Career Development, where employees cannot grow within their existing work environments and pursue career opportunities elsewhere.

Affirmative action and employment equity, due to skills shortages amongst historically disadvantaged groups, there is competition and even poaching for those employees who have the acquired skills to ensure compliance to the employment equity targets.

Resistance to change, where employees leave the Department as they do not agree or cannot adapt to the changes in the Department.

Leadership and management style, where employees leave the Department as they believe the management style is stifling growth or where managers are not people-focused. In some situations employees growth are stifled due to inaccurate performance assessments and the failure to identify appropriate development opportunities.

Lack of effective communication and grievance procedures, also result in employees becoming disillusioned and frustrated resulting in employees leaving the Department.

6. IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE LOSSES

The impact to the Department resulting from employees leaving cannot be measured, yet the costs to the Department can be substantial when considering the following;

1) Loss of efficiency and impact on service delivery during the employee's notice period.
2) The loss of organizational memory.
3) The costs incurred from recruitment and selection.
4) Increased training costs.
5) Loss of efficiency and impact on service delivery during the new employee's orientation and induction period.

7. CRITERIA FOR THE RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES

In order for retention to be applied consistently across the Department, employees must comply with the following criteria, which must be approved by the MEC or her/his delegate as per the Appointment Delegations in the Human Resource Delegations of Authority, 2006. It must be emphasized that the retention of employees shall not be automatic and shall be at the discretion of the Department.

7.1 All requests for an employee to be retained must be made in writing, accompanied by relevant motivation and supported by the respective responsibility manager, prior to the employee assuming duty in the new position. Applications for retention shall not be entertained if the employee has already assumed duty in the new position.

7.2 Requests to retain employees on higher notches within the employee's existing salary levels shall apply when the employee has been offered a position where the salary notch falls within the existing salary level. In this situation, the retention offer shall constitute an additional eight notches from the employee's existing notch or the maximum notch of the salary range in respect of those employees who are less than eight notches from the maximum notch of the salary level. Notch progression shall not exceed the maximum notch of the salary range and shall be applicable from the 1st day of the month after approval has been obtained from the MEC: Public Works or her/his delegate.

7.3 Requests to retain employees on higher salary levels shall be considered subject to the availability of equivalent posts on the approved organizational structure, on condition that the vacant posts are funded and have been subjected to job evaluation and that the employee being retained meets with all appointment requirements specified for the higher graded post. The effective date shall be applicable from the 1st day of the month after approval has been obtained.

7.4 All requests for retention of employees must be subject to written confirmation of the availability of funds to address the additional expenditure that will be incurred

through the retention, provided by the respective responsibility manager.

7.5 Preference should be given to those retention applications which would promote transformation and representivity in the Department, with priority being given to occupations classified as scarce skills.

7.6 In a case where retention is required for an employee who has attained the compulsory retirement age, such retention shall be addressed through an additional to the establishment arrangement where the employee shall enter into a fixed term contract with the Department not exceeding two years in duration.

8. ADDITIONAL RETENTION STRATEGIES OVER AND ABOVE REMUNERATION

Employees are individuals who have different priorities and requirements, thus remuneration is not the only strategy that can be adopted to retain the services of an employee. Thus the following retention strategies can also be adopted by respective line managers to retain the services of an employee.

8.1 ORIENTATION

Both formal and informal orientation is important to an employee to help them form impressions of the Department and the people with whom they will be working, it provides the employee with a sense of security and belonging resulting in the employee wanting to remain in the Department and to make a positive contribution.

8.2 EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (EPMDS)

8.2.1 The timeous and correct implementation of the Approved Employee Performance Management and Development System may also serve to retain employees.

8.2.2 It is important that clear and realistic key performance areas, activities, performance measures and outputs are identified which will also be associated with timeous and fair assessments of all employees.

8.2.3 EPMDS shall also be used to identify and address employee development interventions which support the employee in becoming a productive unit within the shortest period of time possible.

8.2.4 Lastly, where employees have been identified as deserving of recognition for awards and progression, such recognition should be accorded timeously and in a manner appropriate to the recognition.

8.3 PROVISION OF A CONDUCIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

8.3.1 Employees provided with the appropriate and reasonable equipment, facilities and amenities in the workplace will be less frustrated as they will be able to undertake the duties expected from them, thereby eliminating the reason for them wanting to leave the Department due to poor working conditions.

8.3.2 The consistent and appropriate implementation of prescripts in the Departments, results in all employees being treated equally, thus preventing employees from feeling as though they are being prejudiced..

8.3.3 The provision and implementation of appropriate skills development interventions and bursary opportunities aligned to the applicable human resource development policies can also serve to retain employees as employees realize and appreciate the Department's commitment to employee development.

8.3.4 The management styles of line managers also play a major role in the retention of employees. Line Managers are encouraged to;

a) Develop and maintain open channels of communication and promote information sharing,
b) Develop and maintain clear performance standards and job descriptions,
c) Respect employees as individuals including their cultural diversities,
d) Recognise high achievers by awarding non-monetary awards through;
   - Certificates/letters of appreciation,
   - praise and allocation of more challenging duties
   - delegation of authority were necessary.
e) Develop and implement career management strategies,
f) Applying discipline consistently and fairly.
g) Exercise reasonableness and trust in the employee.
h) Deal with complaints and grievances in a prompt, fair, consistent and progressive manner.

8.4 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS (EHWP)

As additional strategies to retain employees, the Department shall also commit to undertake and host various employee health and wellness programmes providing information and awareness to employees on wide ranging social issues ranging from financial planning and entrepeneurship skills to healthy lifestyles, health awareness and alcohol and substance abuse awareness sessions.

8.5 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)

The Department is also committed to supporting and assisting employees through the Employee Assistance Programme, whereby personlised services and interventions are rendered to employees in need of assistance. All referrals shall be confidential in nature and in terms of relevant prescripts.

8.6 TEAM BUILDING

To improve morale and team work within the Department, the Department shall also undertake appropriate team building sessions, subject to the availability of funds and approval from the MEC: Public Works and/or her/his delegate.

8.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF EXIT INTERVIEWS

8.7.1 To further understand why employees are leaving the Department and to try and prevent employees from leaving the Department an Exit Interview Questionnaire, attached as Annexure A shall be completed at least one month prior to the employee leaving the Department by a representative from the respective Human Resource Management Component either at Head Office or the Region dependent on where the exiting employee is based.

8.7.2 The Exit Interview Questionnaire shall thereafter be forwarded to the Manager: Human Resource Management at Head Office within five working days of completion thereof for analysis and the development of appropriate strategies to prevent future losses of employees.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

To provide support of the retention strategies indicated in the Policy.

9.2 GENERAL MANAGER: CORPORATE SERVICES

To monitor and evaluate the implementation of retention strategies and the impact against the vacancy rate of the Department.

9.3 MANAGER: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

9.3.1 Provide advice and guidance regarding the provisions of the Policy and ensure consistency in implementing the provisions of the Policy within the Department.
9.3.2 Monitor the number of employee retained within the Department.
9.3.3 Evaluate, recommend and report on the outcome of the exit interviews.

9.4 LINE MANAGERS

As per the provisions in paragraph 8.3.4 above.

10. CONCLUSION AND REVIEW

Compliance to the provisions of the Policy shall be undertaken by the Human Resource Management Directorate at Head Office, and the necessary corrective action shall be applied where non-compliance has been observed.

This Policy shall be reviewed as and when the changes occur and shall remain valid until such time as the changes have been approved and implemented.

APPROVED

HEAD: PUBLIC WORKS 29-7-08 **DATE**

ANNEXURE A

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Department of Public Works

Exit Interviews

This form should be used during exit interviews to find out why the employee is leaving

Date: _____

Employee's Name: _____

Directorate & Division: _____

Job Title: _____

Supervisor: _____

Dates of Employment: **Start:** _____ **End:** _____

1. **What is your main reason for leaving?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. **Do you feel the Department treated you fairly during your employment?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. **Would you consider coming back to the department?**

4. **In your opinion, were you paid an adequate salary for the work you did?**

5. **Under what conditions would you have stayed?**

6. **If you were to change something in the Department, what would you have changed?**

7. **Do you believe management in the Department adequately recognised your contributions?**

8. **Did you understand the various departmental policies and the reasons for them?**

9. **Have you seen any illegal acts taking place within the department?**

10. **Do you feel your training was adequate?**

11. **Were you satisfied with your working conditions?**

12. **Are security arrangements appropriate in the Department, if not, how could they be improved?**

13. **Do you have any suggestions for improving employee morale?**

14. **What did you like:**

    (a) **Most about your position?**

    (b) **Least about your position?**

15. **Could anything have been done to prevent you from leaving?**

16. Did you find that the goals and targets of your role were clear during your employment?

17. Could your qualifications and skills have been used to better advantage?

Signature of person conducting the interview