

ESKOM'S COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

“Eskom will ensure that no operating condition or urgency of service can justify endangering the life of anyone or cause injury, and will strive to prevent occupational illness”. This commitment applies not only to the safety of Eskom's employees and contractors, but also to the safety of the public.

Eskom, as a state-owned enterprise, has a greater role to play in addition to the supply of electricity. Eskom generates, transmits and distributes electricity to industrial, mining, commercial, agricultural and residential customers and redistributors. Eskom supports South Africa's growth and development aspirations. To do this effectively, Eskom must consistently provide stakeholders with confidence that its activities are managed sustainably, effectively, and efficiently for the benefit of the South African economy. This can be achieved by adopting safety, health, environmental and quality (SHEQ) management as a business imperative for sustainable business performance and improvement.

Safety Standards

Eskom's Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Policy (32-727) and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993 provide the guiding principles for the organisation's health and safety objectives. Safety, health and environmental standards are assessed internally by measuring annual performance against targets. A risk audit system ensures compliance with legal requirements and the identification and management of risks to people, machinery and the immediate work environment.

Emergency Planning

All Eskom's power stations are required to have comprehensive emergency preparedness plans in place to deal with hazardous situations and incidents.

Koeberg Nuclear Power Station has detailed emergency plans for its surrounding areas, covering a 16 km radius. The plan is tested approximately every 18 months by means of a scenario that is set by the National Nuclear Regulator. This is a requirement in terms of Koeberg's licence to operate. Koeberg Nuclear Power Station's high level of safety is also measured against the requirements of the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO).

Improving Safety Performance

Eskom's business requires the construction, operation and maintenance of high and low voltage electrical equipment. In addition, personnel and equipment have to be transported great distances to carry out work on the company's extensive generating, transmission and distribution network. As a result, electrical contact and vehicle incidents respectively account for the majority of incidents.

Eskom has introduced public safety programmes to educate people on the proper use of electricity, the dangers of illegal connections and the hazards involved with vandalising equipment and stealing copper and aluminum cables.

Eskom works closely with suppliers and contractors to integrate safety, health and environmental issues into their operations. Contractors working under Eskom supervision or on Eskom premises are expected to comply with Eskom's Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Policy and support the zero tolerance approach to safety management.

Internally there is a strong and ongoing focus throughout the organization on compliance with safety procedures and regulations such as those dealing with high voltage apparatus. The Eskom “Switched on to Safety Excellence” programme has been implemented and is aimed at building a sustainable foundation for excellence in safety performance. To eliminate injury and loss of life and to achieve Eskom's goal of ZERO HARM, critical behaviors and actions have been identified. These actions or behaviors have a high probability of causing incidents resulting in severe injuries or fatalities. In order to prevent these unacceptable consequences, Eskom leadership made a decision to reinforce and roll out five Cardinal Rules that apply to employees and other persons performing work for Eskom. The Eskom Cardinal Rules are different from regular safety rules in that they are considered higher order rules that, if violated, will result in a disciplinary process.

The five Cardinal Rules are:

- Open, isolate, test, earth, bond and/or insulate before touch
- Hook up at heights
- Buckle up
- Be sober

- Ensure that you have a permit to work

Fleet safety campaigns include driver training and improved controls over use of company vehicles such as onboard computers and Eskom driver evaluation permits.

Across the board, safety training receives high priority and employees are encouraged to volunteer as safety representatives in their working areas.

**Produced by: Generation Communication
 ES 0002 Revision 5 (February 2011)**

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