

MUNICIPAL HEALTH SERVICES (MHS)

Service Overview

Municipal Health Services is the assessment, correction, control and prevention of factors in the environment that can adversely affect human health.

It is concerned amongst other things with the investigation of outbreak of diseases and monitoring of factors in the environment affecting health. Health Promotion is an integral part of MHS as it has an important role to play in mitigating preventable diseases through improvements in managing the environment.

Environmental Health Practitioner

Municipal Health Services (MHS) is rendered by Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) using various legal prescripts among which are the following:

- Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974)
- National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003)
- Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectant Act, 1972 (Act 54 of 1972)
- Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977)

Municipal Health Functions

Section 32 of the National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003) defines Municipal Health Services in terms of nine key components:

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Food Control
- Waste Management
- Health Surveillance of Premises
- Environmental Pollution Control
- Surveillance and Prevention of Communicable Diseases
- Vector Control
- Disposal of the Dead
- Chemical Safety

1. Water Quality Monitoring

This function is concerned with ensuring provision of hygienically safe and adequate supply of potable water by responding to complaints on contaminants/impurities; water sampling; mapping of water sources and conducting awareness and education campaigns.

2. Food Control

This component concerns matters relating to safety during production, storage, transportation, processing, retailing of food intended for human consumption including food handling and processing in establishments.

3. Waste Management

This relates to matters of handling, storage, transportation, and disposal of industrial and domestic solid waste, including health care risk waste, hazardous waste and effluents.

4. Health Surveillance of Premises

This concerns identification and monitoring of health risks, nuisances and hazards and instituting remedial actions. It also includes scrutinizing building plans for their structural compliance.

5. Environmental Pollution Control

This relates to matters of prevention of water, air, soil and noise pollution including radiation hazard control.

6. Surveillance and Prevention of Communicable Diseases

This is concerned with the surveillance of communicable diseases, conducting investigations aimed at prevention of disease outbreaks in communities.

7. Vector Control

This component involves routine surveillance, identification and eradication of vector breeding areas.

8. Disposal of the Dead

This component is concerned with the control and inspection of funeral undertakers, embalmers, crematoria and mortuaries. It also includes regulation and control of graves, cemeteries, crematoria and management of exhumations.

9. Chemical Safety

This component relates to matters of safe handling, use and disposal of chemicals. Also the identification and control of premises dealing with manufacturing, transport and storage of chemicals.

Public Information