

Community Services Department Profile



**MMC: Community Services Department
Cllr. MR Shongwe.**

MUNICIPAL HEALTH SERVICES (MHS) UNIT

The Municipal Health Services Unit plays a pivotal role in assessing, correcting, controlling, and preventing environmental factors that affect human health. Guided by the nine key competencies described in the National Health Act 61 of 2003, municipal health aims to prevent diseases and create health-supportive environments.

The functions defined in the Act are as follows:

1. Water Quality Monitoring

- Monitor water quality through sampling and analysis, including mapping water sources.
- Enforce Acts and Regulations related to water quality management.
- Ensure a hygienically safe and adequate supply of potable water.
- Monitor effective wastewater treatment and water pollution control, including sewage treatment and the surveillance of surface water quality for waterborne diseases.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

2. Food Control

- Ensure compliance with relevant regulations and issue certificates (COA) to food premises.
- Conduct routine inspections of food handling in both formal and informal establishments to ensure compliance.

- Implement measures for the recall, condemnation, and proper disposal of unfit or unwholesome foodstuffs.
- Promote the safe transportation, handling, storage, and preparation of foodstuffs used in the Primary Schools Nutrition Programme (PSNP), prisons, health establishments, etc.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

3. Waste Management

- Monitor waste management systems, including refuse, health care waste, hazardous waste, and sewage.
- Advocate for proper sanitation.
- Ensure that all types of waste are effectively and efficiently stored, collected, removed, and disposed of, and that proper facilities and containers are provided.
- Monitor compliance of garden refuse sites, refuse transfer sites, landfill sites, incinerators, recycling sites, sewage, and water works, instituting remedial and preventative measures as needed.
- Ensure the safe usage of treated sewage sludge and health safety of reclaimed waste.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

4. Health Surveillance of Premises

- Regularly monitor residential, business, and public premises to identify and evaluate health risks, hazards and institute remedial and preventative measures.

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- Conduct inspections and issue health certificates to compliant premises such as Early Childhood Development Centres, schools, accommodation establishments, clinics, hospitals, old age homes, and disability centres.
- Scrutinisation of building plans.
- Conduct Environmental Health Impact Assessment (EHIA) to assess aspects such as ventilation and indoor air quality, lighting, moisture-proofing, thermal quality, structural safety, and floor space. Prevent and abate conditions on any premises that may constitute a nuisance or health hazard. Assess overcrowded, dirty, or unsatisfactory conditions in residential, commercial, industrial, or other occupied premises.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

5. Surveillance and Prevention of Communicable Diseases (excluding immunizations)

- Promote health and hygiene to prevent environmentally induced and communicable diseases.
- Determine sources of infection, contacts, and carriers of diseases (case investigation) and report findings.
- Collect and analyse epidemiological information on communicable diseases.
- Collaborate with stakeholders and departments regarding outbreaks.

- Take samples and specimens for analysis and further action if necessary.
- Institute remedial and preventative measures.
- Conduct education and awareness.

6. Vector Control

- Identify vectors, their habitats, and breeding places, and institute remedial and preventative measures.
- Remove or remedy conditions favouring the prevalence or increase of rodents, insects, and vectors.
- Carry out routine surveillance actions and surveys to determine the prevalence of vectors.
- Implement eradication/control measures such as spraying premises, baiting, fumigation, applying pesticides, and placing traps.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

7. Environmental Pollution Control

- Ensure hygienic working, living, and recreational environments.
- Identify polluting agents and their sources in air, land, and water, and institute corrective measures where nuisances, risks, or hazards occur.
- Approve Environmental Health Impact reports and comment on Environmental Impact Assessment applications.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

8. Disposal of the Dead

- Control, restrict, or prohibit the business of undertakers or embalmers, mortuaries, and other places or facilities for the storage of dead bodies. Issue certificates of competency to funeral undertakers' premises complying with legislation.
- Monitor practices at cemeteries, crematoria, and other facilities used for the disposal of dead bodies.
- Manage, control, and monitor exhumations and reburials or disposal of remains.
- Investigate and monitor pauper burials.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

9. Chemical Safety

- List all operators, fumigation firms (formal or informal), and retail premises dealing with the manufacturing, application, transportation, and storage of hazardous substances.
- Permit and audit all hazardous substance premises and issue health certificates.
- Ensure compliance and enforcement in accordance with the Health and Safety Act.
- Provide advice, education, and training on pesticides and chemical safety.
- Conduct education and awareness campaigns.

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**General Manager: Community Services Department
Dr ENM Mkhathswa.**

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES (EMS) UNIT

The Environmental Management Unit supports local municipalities through compliance monitoring and enforcement. The unit investigates environmental non-compliance in cases of suspected breaches of conditions under licenses or environmental authorizations. It is mandated to perform legislative functions in line with national, provincial, and local legal frameworks within its jurisdiction. The district is responsible for the following functions:

1. Air Quality Management

The Ehlanzeni District Municipality is the Licensing Authority for the Atmospheric Emission License under the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act No 39 of 2004 and further monitors premises for compliance with the licensing requirements. The district developed

an Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) in 2019, which is currently in use. The district supports the municipalities in conducting education and awareness.

2. Waste Management

The district supports local municipalities in waste-related matters, including the development and management of regional and local landfill sites. Develops the District Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP). It further aids in capacity-building and awareness campaigns for improved waste management services.

3. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The unit analyses studies on proposed developments, conduct site inspections and give technical inputs. Conducts community and stakeholder capacity-building and empowerment.

4. Climate Change

Supports climate change mitigation programs and coordinates environmental capacity building on climate change.

5. Biodiversity Management and Conservation

Promotes and supports the implementation of land use and water management strategies and supports initiatives for the sustainable use of land and water resources.

6. Compliance, Monitoring, and Enforcement

Conducts compliance monitoring of environmental management in local authorities as per the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 and its Specific Environmental Management Acts (SEMAS). This includes routine inspections and audits of relevant sites such as landfill sites, buy-back centres, recycling facilities, and wastewater treatment works. The unit also investigates environmental nuisances and incidents and provides feedback on complaint resolution.

LABORATORY SERVICES UNIT

The Laboratory Services Unit supports local municipalities through the Municipal Health and Environmental Management Services units. Its services are informed by the need for improved water quality within the Ehlanzeni District as mandated by section 9(1) of the Water Services Act No. 108 of 1997. The unit provides microbiological and chemical analysis of water and wastewater samples for local municipalities and identified private water treatment works and end-user points. Additionally, the laboratory aims to become the second government-owned SANAS-accredited water quality laboratory in Mpumalanga, known for its integrity and quality of results, and to support a culture of scientific learning.

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DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY UNIT

The Disaster management Act 57 of 2002 provides for the following:

- An integrated and coordinated disaster management policy that focuses on prevention, reduction of disaster risks and mitigation of the severity of the risks, emergency preparedness, rapid and effective response to disasters and post disaster reconstruction.
- The establishment of national, provincial and municipal disaster management centres.
- Disaster management volunteer training programs;
- Or any other matters relating to disaster risk management.

The Act also recognizes a vast range of opportunities in South African communities for risk reduction and risk avoidance through a multi-sectoral concerted effort, comprising of all spheres of government, civil society and the private sector. The act also acknowledges the need and importance of uniformity in the approach on involving such a diverse group of role players and partners. This then necessitated the establishment of a Disaster Management Framework to provide a coherent, transparent and inclusive policy on disaster management appropriate for the Republic of South Africa as a whole.

The framework makes provision for four key performance areas and three enablers to guide a coherent and uniform approach to disaster risk management in South Africa and to streamline disaster management efforts in all spheres of government.

The four key performance areas and their associated three enablers are inscribed in the National Disaster management Framework (2005) as follows:

- Integrated Institutional capacity for disaster management.
- Risk assessment and monitoring.
- Disaster risk reduction planning and implementation.
- Disaster response and recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The key performance areas are dependent on following three enablers:

1. Information management and communication.
2. Public awareness, education, training and research.
3. Funding arrangements.



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Ehlanzeni District Municipality's Disaster Management Unit, centers its activities around the four pillars (KPA's) of this framework and their three enablers for disaster prevention, preparedness, effective response, mitigation and reconstruction.

The Public Safety function also plays another pivotal role in the implementation of White-paper on Safety and Security of 2016.

As local government we also have a role to play, as far as safety and security of our communities is concerned. White paper on safety and security of 2016 seeks to promote an integrated approach to safety and security.

The local government's responsibilities for provision of safety and security, crime and violence prevention are derived from the Constitution, national legislation and other policy frameworks.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety is the cornerstone of local development. It is therefore our role as local government to strengthen and implement crime prevention strategies and policies of both government and other role-players.

Ehlanzeni District Municipality utilizes community forums as a mechanism for a multiple-agency and multi-sectoral governmental approach on safety and security in our communities. Through reducing and containing the social, environmental and intimidation factors, which affect citizen's right to live without fear of crime and violence which impact upon their quality of life.

As an institution of government we are mandated to ensure that safety and security policies in place will yield the desired results for our communities.



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2024 WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY COMMEMORATION, HOSTED AT EDM DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE

The main purpose of celebrating the day is to create environmental awareness and sustainability within the district working in collaboration with different spheres of government and private sector. This year (2024), the theme was “Land Restoration Desertification, and Drought Resilience”.



GREENING, CLEANING AND BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT

The objective of the programme is to drive towards a cleaner South Africa (including Ehlanzeni District Municipality) which is free of litter and illegal dumping. The expected output is pollution prevention to maintain environmental health and improved municipal waste management and awareness in the district. The aesthetic visibility indicator of cleanliness will be used as a measure of the effectiveness of the Programme.

2024 GLOBAL HANDWASH COMMEMORATION, HOSTED AT NKOMAZI

The purpose of this initiative is to raise awareness about the importance of washing hands to improve hygiene as well as to prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases such as diarrhea and cholera.

The theme for the year 2024 is “Promoting knowledge and capacity building of health care workers through innovative and impactful training and education on infection prevention and control, including hygiene.”



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VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAMME

The purpose of the programme is to control pests through the use of safer alternatives of control and to ensure that the communities do not get affected by the use of chemicals.

The use of botanicals and issuing bait stations with attractants to trap the rats are the predominant forms of pest control.

Ehlanzeni District Municipality's Community Services Department conducted awareness on pest control in collaboration with the local municipalities targeting vulnerable communities.



MULTI STAKEHOLDER FOOD SAFETY JOINT OPERATIONS

The objective of the multi stakeholder food safety joint operation is to ensure compliance of food premises with the legislation governing food safety. Furthermore, the awareness conducted during the operation is empowering the shop owners in the prevention of foodborne diseases and promoting food safety practices throughout the district.

The output being compliance of food premises with the prescribed health legislation to prevent food poisoning and disease outbreaks.



DISEASE OUTBREAK RESPONSE AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

The aim of the disease outbreak campaigns is to educate the public about the preventative measures which they need to apply in order to prevent and control the spread of diseases.

The campaigns mainly focus on the importance of boiling and disinfecting water before consumption, washing hands after visiting the toilet, before food preparation or handling, safe food preparation measures, keeping the environment clean and hygienic.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMMES

A. PARTNERSHIP WITH SANTAM AND SASRIA.

Ehlanzeni district municipality disaster management partnered with SANTAM and SASRIA through an MOU, which involved many successful projects and programs that included amongst others, the Social Risk Assessment (SRA) provided by SASRIA, the quick win projects sponsored by SANTAM comprising of the patching of Potholes in Thaba-Chweu local municipality and provision of a fully resourced (with laptops and printers) youth centres in Lydenburg and Casteel, together with the Green-book project.

B. PARTNERSHIP WITH SANBI ON DONGA-GABION REHABILITATION.

Ehlanzeni District Municipality Disaster Management Unit also partnered with SANBI for the Donga-Gabion rehabilitation Project of Motlamogatsane River at Casteel in Bushbuckridge local municipality.

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C. PARTNERSHIP WITH SASOL FOR MHI

We also partnered with one of our major stakeholders which is SASOL, on public awareness and education campaign on the encroachment of the Sasol Major hazard installation (MHI) gas-pipeline, that cuts through our border from our neighbouring country Mozambique, through Nkomazi Local Municipality and the City of Mbombela in our district.

D. INTEGRATED INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT THROUGH DISASTER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY FORUMS.

Ehlanzeni District Municipality's Disaster Management Unit also has a continuous stakeholder engagement activity through our quarterly Disaster Management Advisory Forum meetings. As part of our institutional arrangements, specifically targeting at addressing the principle of cooperative governance for disaster risk

management and therefore the established forum comprises of stakeholders such as the South African Police Services (SAPS), Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison (DCSSL), South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Inkomati - Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA), Department of Home Affairs, Department of Health and South African Weather Services (SAWS).

E. PARTNERSHIP WITH RED-CROSS ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS.

We have also partnered with RED-CROSS in developing non-accredited and accredited education and training programmes for disaster risk management for different role players, including disaster management volunteers and community members.

F. PARTNERSHIP WITH WORKING ON FIRE (WOF), FOR AWARENESS AND TRAINING ON FIRE SAFETY AT SCHOOLS.

We have intensified our awareness campaigns and training on fire safety, in partnership with Working on fire (WoF), focusing on schools and Early Childhood Development centres (ECD).

While we have intensified our efforts through one strategic plan approach as a district, towards disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction, climate change and its impacts, remains a call for concern for all of us for now, and even for many decades to come. This requires more robust disaster risk reduction and development planning to adapt to higher disaster risks associated with the climate change.