

# CENTRAL KAROO

## DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



### SECTION: MUNICIPAL HEALTH SERVICES

#### HOUSING



The Section aims to create an environment supportive of good health and minimize those factors detrimental to our health in the Central Karoo district

The Section is focused on the needs and expectations of our communities in the Central Karoo. We seek a good relationship between the municipality and its inhabitants, with a collective responsibility for the environment to ensure that all communities will live in an environment that is beneficial to their health

## OUR FUNCTION

The National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003) defines Municipal Health Services as Environmental Health. In terms of Section 1 of the Act Municipal Health Services are defined as:

- Water Quality Monitoring;
- Waste Management and Monitoring;
- Food Control;
- Environmental Pollution Control;
- Health Surveillance of Premises;
- Communicable Diseases Control;
- Vector Control;
- Chemical Safety; and
- Management of Human Remains

The Air Quality Management & Integrated Waste Management functions are also performed by the Section Municipal Health.

EHP's act as public arbiters of EH standards, maintaining close contact with the communities they serve. We act as advisers, educators, consultants, managers and enforcement officers (enforcing health policies), ensuring people are able to live, work & play in safe, healthy environments

## STAFF & AREA OF SERVICE DELIVERY

EHP's are employed at our Head Office in Beaufort West as well as our Prince Albert & Laingsburg Offices

Services are rendered in ten (10) communities in the Central Karoo Region, namely Murraysburg, Beaufort West, Nelspoort, Merweville, Prince Albert, Leeu-Gamka, Klaarstroom, Prince Albert Road, Laingsburg & Matjiesfontein, as well as in the rural areas of the Beaufort West, Prince Albert & Laingsburg Districts.

## DID YOU KNOW...

Proper housing can be regarded as one of the most important "health priorities". Poor housing conditions can lead to the death of occupants and can cause illnesses such as diarrhea and other diseases.

Although there are still a few informal houses in the Central Karoo Region, the overall housing conditions are relatively good. The overcrowding of some houses remains a problem.

Sections 26(1) and (2) of the Bill of Rights state that "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing" and that "the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of this right". In the landmark *Grootboom* case, the Constitutional Court interpreted the right to housing to include sanitation:

*The right of 'access to adequate housing'...recognizes that housing entails more than bricks and mortar. It requires available land, appropriate services such as the provision of water and the removal of sewage and the financing of all of these, including the building of the house itself. For a person to have access to adequate housing all of these conditions need to be met: there must be land, there must be services, there must be a dwelling.*

## THE ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE DELIVERY OF HOUSING

Section 26 of the Constitution of South Africa says that "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing". In this regard the "State must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realization of this right." Thus, the Constitution creates obligations for government to take all reasonable actions to ensure that all its people have the opportunity to acquire a home.

Since 1994, the government has taken several steps to address its responsibilities towards housing. These measures include the Housing Act of 1997, which sets out Government's visions and key principles underlying the provision of housing; the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000, which puts in place mechanisms and principles to ensure all of government to move towards social and economic upliftment and to ensure access to essential services; and further plans such as the National and Provincial Spatial Development Frameworks and the National Development Plan.

Schedule 4 of our Constitution stipulates what functions each sphere of government is responsible for. It states that housing is a function of our National and Provincial Governments. But in reality, although the finance for housing development is provided by National Government, through Provincial Government, the management of the implementation of housing projects has become the responsibility of Municipalities. Because of the resources required to take on this responsibility, this is often referred to as an under-funded or unfunded mandate, which are mandates or responsibilities where a sphere of government performs certain functions or activities for which they do not have any clear source of funds. In particular, Municipalities are expected to carry out functions that are not specified or not allocated in the Constitution, such as housing, libraries and museums.

Municipalities have thus become the implementing agency for the roll-out of housing projects, and the housing program is an under-funded mandate which creates additional burdens and challenges on the strained resources of a Municipality.

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## **HOUSING & HEALTH**

Though often overlooked as an important determinant of health, housing quality has important impacts on health of adults and children alike. Housing quality has been shown to be associated with a wide range of health effects. These include:

### ***Infectious disease:***

Poor housing quality may include a contaminated water supply, poor waste disposal, and insect and rodent infestation, all of which have been shown to contribute to the spread of infectious disease.

Crowding of tenants in housing units also facilitates the transfer of disease between people. Tuberculosis and respiratory infections are not uncommon in overcrowded living environments, such as housing for the homeless.

### ***Injuries:***

The link between housing quality and risk of injuries is well established. Substandard housing has been associated with increased risk of injuries, such as falls and burns. The common attributes of poor housing include “exposed heating sources, unprotected upper-story windows and low sill heights, slippery surfaces, breakable window glass in sites with a high likelihood of contact, and poorly designed stairs with inadequate lighting”

### ***Chronic illness:***

Indoor air quality and exposure to dampness are contributors to asthma and other allergic reactions, particularly among children.

It is hypothesized that damp environments are hospitable to mites, roaches, viruses, and molds, which affect respiratory disease. Indoor air pollution is affected by inorganic sources, for example carpeting, floor covering, and heating. Paints used in homes may be contaminated with lead, contributing to neurodevelopment problems in children.



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