

NEW CATEGORIES TO RECEIVE DANGER ALLOWANCE AND MOTIVATION

In terms of the provisions of PSCBC Resolution 5 of 2015, it was agreed that sectors will identify and agree on new categories that may be included under the new danger dispensation. Resolution 2 of 2016 has extended the period for parties to conclude an agreement.

The following are the categories to be agreed as new categories to receive danger allowance;

Witness protection unit

Members from the Office for witness protection were previously identified as qualifying for danger allowance in line with both resolution 3 of 1999 and 1 Of 2007. The policy was consequently drafted by the employer, and the agreement was reached by the NPA and PSA on 21 August 2012, that the NPA as the employer may carry on and pay the said allowance. It is with deepest regret that as of to date, OWP members never received any payment in respect of this allowance, regardless of the agreement reached. The fact that it is known by both discharged and current witnesses who mostly turned section 204, is a risk on its own because history has shown that most of these witnesses go back to re-join the gangs where they could easily divulge names of Protectors as well as descriptions of vehicles they drive. Most Protectors drive the same cars for more than five to seven years (5-7) years.

The protectors are compelled to work directly with Prosecutors, court Security and investigating officers with their details being given to them for Identification and parking arrangements. It is a known fact that South Africa has some elements of corrupt law enforcement officers who could do anything for money, and some of them are being arrested and prosecuted daily. Corrupt elements within our stakeholders could at any time assist accused persons with information that may lead them to witnesses and that information will always start with the protector and the description of the vehicle he/she uses.

Family members could at any time be kidnapped and harmed because criminals who are mostly drug lords, gangsters and police officials who are of the opinion that any person who is attached to Witness Protection must know where all witnesses are hidden, so, for them to get to the witnesses they may target our dependents so that we could cooperate with them in telling them where witnesses are hidden. If criminals are of the opinion that you don't want to cooperate with them, they could easily eliminate the Protector and his /her loved ones.

Bullet taking operating and training model; majority of Protectors received VIP/Executive Protection course where they were trained in terms of the Witness Protection best international practice, which trained Protectors to become bullet takers, which is the acceptable model used to protecting witnesses.

The best international practice directs that protectors should actually take bullets that are meant for witnesses and that is the model adopted by Office for Witness Protection South Africa in executing its operations. Implications of bullet taking are that, a bullet that is meant to kill the witness should instead kill the protector. Accused persons, who often are Police Officers, Drug Lords, Gang leaders and members have all kind of resources at their disposal and they could easily use them to eliminate Protectors and the witness at any time.

It is known fact that protected stated witnesses are always escorted by armed Protectors and for them to kill witnesses; they should eliminate obstacles (Protectors) first.

Operations; court dates are normally communicated in court to all parties involved including friends and family members of accused persons. This gives them enough time to devise their plans of eliminating witnesses because they shall have known well in advance that the witness will be brought to court on a specific date. One should always remember that these people as mentioned on paragraph two (2) above, have all resources money can buy and they could use them to devise their plans of eliminating the witness long before the communicated court date. One should also bear in mind that for witnesses to be eliminated, the stumbling block, in the form of Protectors, must first be eliminated.

At small town courts, Protectors are easily identifiable because they are always seen with the witness and local people know one other. Accused persons could easily identify us when they meet us elsewhere, be it on or off duty. They could also identify our vehicles easily because they have some operational features that differentiate them from few local court and police cars parked at a specific court building. Exposure to dangerous working conditions and the fact we are becoming known and associated with OWP by many people during court protections, is a direct fact that needs no motivation for them to be considered for special danger allowance.

Funeral Operations; Some Operations involve taking the witness to their family houses and/or homes to attend funeral of relatives or parents. If there will be a funeral of an individual in the area, the whole area, including neighbouring townships and villages will normally know about it. This could easily extend to accused persons as they often close friends and/or relatives of the witness who are from the same or neighboring areas. Accused persons know that chances that witnesses may come to pay their last respect are high because it is very important, especially in the African culture. They get enough time to plan their possible ways in which they may eliminate witnesses, starting by protectors as they will be deemed obstacles to their plans. Protectors' faces and cars are once again, exposed to accused persons and their (accused persons) relatives, who could easily identify them (Protectors) at a later stage on or off duty, and sometimes off duty, in the company of their immediate family members. This clearly shows that threat and dangerous working condition that protectors face could easily affect their family members and this once again qualifies them for special danger allowance.

Traditional ceremonies; Traditional ceremonies are also communicated months in advance to all the people in the area and neighboring villages and townships. This makes it easier for plans on possible attacks to witnesses and Protectors to be devised in advance and endanger both witnesses' and Protectors' lives.

Family visit; This process is often communicated in advance to family members who are not in the programme so that they could arrange for leave at their places of work. Though effort is added to ensure that they are made aware of the sensitive nature of the operation and that they should not tell anyone, we still have no control over them and they could out of excitement share it with their friends and neighbours long before the commencement of the visit. Information could end up reaching accused persons who may still use their resources to have protectors followed and/or use one of their friends to find out from visiting family members as to where the visit may be. This once again, reflects dangers associated with protecting state witnesses and is evidence enough for Protectors to qualify for special danger allowance.

Removal of witnesses from Danger areas; This is a critical time where Protectors could be followed and where possible, be eliminated. If Protectors suspect that they are been followed by unknown vehicles, they normally drive at a dangerously high speed to get the witness away

from a possible attack. This increases chances of being involved in accidents that may at times be fatal and it's a motivation enough for protectors to qualify for special danger pay.

Summary

OWP Protectors should be considered for special danger allowance because of the following factors:

- They are bullet takers who could be killed at anytime
- They could be eliminated during operations as people know because the people, including the accused with all resources and money at their disposal.
- Protectors and their vehicles which they drive for many years, are exposed to many people during operations
- Corrupt stakeholder could 'sell us out' as we have no control over them.
- Transporting witnesses to and removing them from danger area could be fatal to protectors as they could be harmed at any time

Diving and diving supervisors

Many years ago divers received R200, 00 per month danger allowance which was basically used to also assist in paying up diving activity and life premiums. Currently divers in the SAPS receive some danger allowance. Divers are required to stay fit and healthy due to the risk and dangerous activities that they are expected to perform when required. Divers are exposed to decompression sickness syndrome, Air embolism or shark attack that potentially could be fatal scenario.

Scientists, Scientific Technicians, Laboratory assistants, and/or any other personnel working in the laboratories.

Laboratory work involves many manipulations that are potentially dangerous, such as handling glassware and work with hazardous chemicals (also known as hazardous substances) or other sharp instruments.

Hazardous chemicals, mixtures or articles in the laboratories usually have the potential to present a risk during transport, either through their physical and chemical hazards, acute toxicity or hazards to the environment or storage as they pose an immediate threat to people, property or the environment due to the possibility of fire, explosion, chemical reaction or release of toxic, flammable or corrosive materials during storage or handling, Hazardous chemicals or substances are those that, following worker exposure, can have an adverse effect on health.

Toxic Chemical Exposure, one of the least predictable, most dangerous risks in a laboratory is the toxicity of various chemicals. No substance is entirely safe, and all chemicals result in some toxic effects if living systems are exposed to a large enough amount of the substance. For example, some chemicals can cause a harmful effect after a single exposure, such as corrosive nitric acid. Others cause an effect after repeated or long-duration exposure, such as carcinogenic chloromethyl methyl ether.

Flammable, Explosive, and Reactive Chemicals, Flammable chemicals are those that readily catch fire and burn in air, such as gasoline. Reactive chemicals are substances that react violently in combination with another substance, such as water-reactive alkali metals or incompatible strong acids and bases. Explosive chemicals include a variety of substances that can explode under certain conditions, such as oxidizing agents and certain powders and dusts.

Hazardous Waste, virtually every laboratory experiment generates some waste. Waste is material that is discarded or intended to be discarded, or is no longer useful for its intended purpose. It includes abandoned chemicals and spilled chemicals. Wastes include items such as used disposable laboratory supplies, filter media, aqueous solutions, and hazardous chemicals. Waste is considered hazardous if has one or more of the following properties: ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic.

Physical Dangers, some laboratory operations pose physical hazards to personnel because of the substances or equipment used, such as compressed gases, non-flammable cryogenics, high-pressure reactions, vacuum work, radio-frequency and microwave hazards, and electrical hazards. Personnel also face general workplace hazards that result from conditions or activities in the laboratory, such as cuts, slips, trips, falls, and repetitive motion injuries.

Some of the considerations to take into account when evaluating risks/dangers are:

1. The possibility of aerosol formation should be especially taken into consideration when handling fluid samples or, for example, during grinding, homogenisation and centrifugation.
2. The physical state of the employees. For example, in the case of pregnancy, immunodeficiency or allergy, special precautions may be required. Sometimes certain individuals have to be excluded from particular types of work that would be especially hazardous to them.
3. Nitrogen evaporating from liquid nitrogen storage in poorly ventilated rooms can lead to depletion of oxygen with fatal consequences.
4. A wide range of chemicals are used in analytical laboratories, many of which may be toxic or mutagenic, and some may be carcinogenic. It should be remembered that it is the dose that makes the poison. Vapours are especially hazardous and dangerous, and some chemicals can be absorbed by penetration of intact skin.
5. Chemicals can enter employees bodies are ;
 - Inhalation
e.g. breathing in vapours, particles or gases
 - Ingestion
e.g. swallowing residues after failing to wash hands after using chemicals and before eating
 - Absorption
e.g. through the skin or eyes
 - Injection
e.g. unintentional skin penetration by broken glassware, needles or other sharp objects

In conclusion, some of the diseases cannot be detected on the immediate spot but can be detected after a long period of time (e.g. after 10 to 20 years) of which it will make it difficult to prove that you contacted the disease in the work place while working in the laboratory with hazardous substances.

Presidential Hotline

Presidential Hotline staff should be categorised as risky and dangerous because during marches, employees interface directly with violent demonstrators. The Public Liaison component requires Presidential Hotline to interface directly with citizens who are often irate, violent and rude. The fact that Presidential Hotline is escorted by police personnel to receive the petitions and memos stands to reason that the job is risky and dangerous. The job has potential to cause a long-term post-traumatic stress.

Fraud Awareness and Investigation (DHA and DPW)

The nature of work: Investigating allegations of fraud and corruption. During collection of documentary evidence for investigation sometimes officials and service provider becomes aggressive not want to co-operate. When a service providers complain that they are being defrauded by criminals using DPW's name by requesting them to submit their quotations to deliver the goods. Service providers sometimes deliver goods and employees must respond to such incidents by investigating such. Sometimes service providers are willing to form a trap in order to catch criminals together with the involvement of Police, as Fraud Awareness & Investigations officials form part of such trap. Investigators job entails verifying the alleged fraud and corruption in order to decide the next course of action to be taken.

Impact on the safety of the employee, in previous years there had been a number of incidences of officials involved in investigations that were threaten and some killed. Other officials sometimes are being followed by strange cars to their homes as if someone is targeting their lives. The risk is every day during the course of employment.

Directorate: Civil and Structural Engineering

The nature of work, Laboratory and water care Facilities (Water and Sewage works).

Exposure to hazardous chemicals such as Sulphuric acid and chlorine in the laboratory and at the water care works. Coming in contact and inhaling chemicals on daily basis may cause diseases such as cancer, kidney and liver failures. Exposure to hazardous microorganisms such as protozoans, viruses, bacteria and other human parasites in the laboratory and at the water care works. If you are infected by these microorganisms they can causes rash or itchy skin, nose bleed, diarrhoea, hepatitis A and B, typhoid fever and dysentery and cholera.

Impact on the safety of employee, employee can be hospitalized or killed if infected or affected by these microorganisms and chemicals.

Frequency of the risk, risk is every day during the course of employment.

Control Measures, Safety clothes are worn, like lab coat, gloves, and safety shoes and face mask. No medical check-ups and vaccination of hepatitis A and B. No training on hazardous chemical substances.

DIRECTORATE: CIVIL AND STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING: SUB DIRECTORATE: WATER MANAGEMENT

The Sub-Directorate: Water Management has two units: Laboratory Services and Monitoring Services

The nature of work done by laboratory services, Handle wastewater and drinking water samples for water laboratory tests. Handle dangerous chemicals used for the testing of water and wastewater samples. The instruments used for these testing are also dangerous, for e.g Flame Photometer which emits flames during the testing of these water samples.

The nature of work done by monitoring services, Inspect waste and water treatment facilities. Handle wastewater and drinking water samples during collection of these samples. Handle chemicals during the preservation of these samples and onsite testing.

The nature and extent of the risk, exposure to hazardous chemicals such as Sulphuric acid and chlorine. Coming in contact and inhaling chemicals on daily basis may cause diseases such as cancer, kidney and liver failures. Exposure to hazardous microorganisms such as protozoans, viruses, bacteria and other human parasites in the laboratory and at the water care works. If you are infected by these microorganisms they can causes rash or itchy skin, nose bleed, diarrhoea, hepatitis A and B, typhoid fever and dysentery and cholera.

Impact on the safety of employee, you can be hospitalized or killed if you are infected or affected by these microorganisms and chemicals.

Frequency of the risk and control measures, the risk is every day during the course of employment and Safety clothes are worn (laboratory coat, gloves, safety shoes, safety goggles and face masks. Beside the safety clothes provided, the employer has to provide medical check-ups and vaccination of hepatitis A and B once or twice a year and should have continuous training on hazardous chemical substances.

Here is a list of some of the dangerous chemicals we are exposed to everyday:

1. Mercuric Sulphate
2. Ammonium Ferrous Sulphate
3. Potassium dichromate
4. Potassium chromate
5. Sulphuric Acid
6. Boric Acid
7. Magnesium Oxide
8. Methyl Red
9. Ferrous Sulphate
10. Bromocresol green
11. 1,10-Phenanthroline Hydrate
12. 1,10 Phenanthroline Monohydrate
13. Devarda's Alloy
14. Hydrochloric Acid
15: Nitric Acid
16. Sodium Hydroxide

17. Ethanol
18. Ammonium Solution

Correctional Services

Members working at community corrections should be included for the special danger allowance as 2(c) “employees working with parolees and probationers” or 2(c) “employees working with parolees and probationers and that need to visit these parolees and probationers in areas identified by SAPS as “hot spots” and “red” areas”).

Offenders that are placed out on parole or probation are categorized according to their risk factor, High Risk, Medium Risk and Low Risk. Currently about ± 50% of the parolees and probationer is classified as a high risk. Many High profile offender gang leaders, murders, etc are placed out to community corrections and are escorted to community corrections offices by reaction units (who qualify for special danger allowance). They are then left their and the reaction unit leaves. Our members working at community corrections must then deal with this offender further and we do not qualify for the special danger allowance. Community corrections members are working 2 members in a vehicle doing visits of these offenders on a daily basis. Members working at community corrections are more exposed than any of the other categories of members in DCS to danger. They must do monitoring in areas classified by SAPS as “hot spot” or “red” areas. They are exposed to community where gang violence is currently very high. They are not working in a controlled environment and are exposed to various dangerous weapons, which are freely available, on a daily basis. Various threats have been made by gangsters against members working at community corrections. Attempts to hijack officials doing monitoring with state vehicles have been reported, shooting incidents on members have been reported.

Resolution 5 of 2016 of the PSCBC directed sectors including GPSSBC to identify and agree on new categories that may be included under the new danger allowance dispensation. NEHAWU is thus presenting the following for consideration:

1. Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

(a) At-sea operations

Research staff conducting work on both small inshore craft and large vessels are exposed to extremely high levels of risk. Every effort is made to ensure that risk is minimized as far as possible. In operating at sea, safety is always a primary concern. Sea-going personnel are required to demonstrate medical fitness, and to complete survival-at-sea training (these are requirements under the South African Maritime Safety Authority). In all operations at sea personnel are required to wear prescribed safety equipment and to be familiar with emergency procedures.

Operating cumbersome equipment on moving craft and vessels, operating heavy equipment and plant (such as winches, cranes, cables, etc.) will always present a risk to personnel. Operations at sea carry a wide range of risks, from slipping on wet surfaces on pitching craft or vessels, to loss of limbs from entanglement in equipment being deployed over-board, to being swept overboard in extreme circumstances, etc.

(b) Diving operations:

Research staff whom are Divers regularly participate in high-risk activities as part of their jobs when performing under-water diving. Under-water diving is generally considered to be a high-risk activity. Every effort is made to ensure that diving operations are carried out with the highest safety standards. All diving personnel are trained to the standards specified by the Department of Labour, and diving is conducted under this Department's diving regulations. Since the inception of the new diving regulations in 2007, Divers now operates under the Code of Practice for Scientific Diving. This Code requires the Diving Supervisor to complete a thorough risk assessment before each diving operation and to manage the risks accordingly.

Despite efforts to reduce risk, diving operations always carry a very real potential for both debilitating and life-threatening accidents. Such accidents may occur due to vagaries of the sea and weather (such as tides, currents, etc.), accidental contact with harmful marine life (which may range from such events as stings from jellyfish, to shark attack), equipment malfunction and failure, entanglement, and human error.

(c) Motivation for Harbour Masters, Dock masters and Dockers that performs slipway duties and engineering duties:

Harbour Masters, Dock masters and Dockers who performs slipway duties and maintenance of mechanical equipment and machinery, are exposed to high risk of danger which could lead to death of an official, loss of limbs, asthma and/or lung infections, and loss of hearing and/or sight as well as spinal injuries.

These officials are expected on daily basis to conduct preparations for dry-docking where they cut wood portions to size with chain-saw, adjust manually gantry tower arms, and carry power packs (80-100kg) up onto 6m ladder. Furthermore, these officials are expected to launch vessel

into sea utilizing bulldozer where they mount steel H frame onto bulldozer, manually balance a vessel on its kriel and push vessel into sea depth above 2meters.

The tasks performed by Harbour Masters, Dock masters and Dockers are a 24hour task therefore officials involved are exposed to high risk especially at night due to poor visibility.

Risk assessments to the above-mentioned categories of occupations are available if needed for ease of reference and it is our view that the risk associated with the identified categories of occupations cannot be mitigated and hence we request that these categories of occupations be added on occupational categories identified on Annexure of the PSCBC Resolution 4 of 2015.

(d) Motivation for Employees working with Pesticides, Herbicides & inside Quarantine facilities:

Employees who are working in in quarantine greenhouses are regularly required to participate in pest management practices that involve the application of pesticides and herbicides in and around quarantine station. This is a measure to control pests within the quarantine facilities as per Agricultural Pest Act: 36/1983. During pesticide applications, dangerous chemicals are issued, weighed and mixed by related personnel wearing the prescribed Personal protective clothing as prescribed in the Occupational Health and Safety Act; 181/1993.

Due to the intensity of spraying and other treatment operations carried out in quarantine facilities, quarantine imports are received and treated using pesticides and during their stray under quarantine greenhouses . Regular chemical pest control by employees whose job description involves issuing, handling and application of these chemicals work under potential life treating conditions as some of the effects of these chemicals can be latent due to their ability to build up for years before their presence in the body can be detected. Immediate dangers whose effects are not PPE dependent can be due to equipment malfunctions and failure, human error, slippery surfaces during the execution of these duties & prolonged working conditions under facilities where these chemicals are being sprayed.

