

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT BEREAVEMENT POLICY	Doc Nr	
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BEREAVEMENT POLICY

Signatories

The signatories hereof, confirm acceptance of the contents, recommendation, and adoption hereof.

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INDEX

1.	DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS	4
2.	POLICY STATEMENT	5
3.	PREAMBLE	5
4.	PURPOSE	5
5.	OBJECTIVES	5
6.	SCOPE	6
7.	APPLICATION MECHANISMS	6
8.	DEATH OF A FAMILY MEMBER OF AN EMPLOYEE	8
9.	BENEFICIARIES OF THE POLICY	9
10.	DEATH BENEFITS ALLOCATIONS	9
11.	CONTRIBUTIONS	9
12.	CLAIMS	9
13.	RETIRED AND RESIGNED MEMBERS	10
14.	LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	10
15.	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (if applicable)	11
16.	MONITORING AND EVALUATION	11
17.	IMPLEMENTATION: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	11
18.	DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM	12
19.	CONCLUSION	12
20.	EFFECTIVE AND REVISED DATE	12
21.	ANNEXURES	12

1. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

1.1 Statutory and Regulatory

This Procedure applies to the following meanings and interpretations:

#	TERM	DESCRIPTION
1.1	Bereavement	means the loss of an employee and immediate family member by virtue of death.
1.2	Compassion	This is support provided to staff members in the event of a domestic emergency or bereavement. This period may exceed the time of burial.
1.3	Domestic emergency	Any stressful circumstance that the staff member may be faced with including but not limited to an accident involving the staff member or his or her dependents, burglary at the home of the staff member, flood or fire at the home of the staff member. The Accounting Officer or MM can use his or her discretion to classify the domestic emergency.
1.4	Employee	This refers to members of staff permanent workers, contract workers, interns, and learners employed by the municipality.
1.5	Family members	Immediate members of the staff affected by the death of a loved one or domestic emergency, including and limited to spouses and children.
1.6	Immediate Family	Refers to the spouse/life partner, children (biological or legally adopted)
1.7	Mourner	a person attending a funeral service or memorial service
1.8	Staff member	Someone who is in the employ of the municipality on a permanent or contract basis.

1.2 ACRONYMS

#	TERM	DESCRIPTION
2.1	LLF	Local Labour Forum
2.2	SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers' Union

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Thulamela Municipality is committed to render support to a bereaved employee in case of death in his or her family and determine the extent of support provided to the family of the employee in the event of his or her death.

3. PREAMBLE

- 3.1 The policy proposal follows the decision by SAMWU workers, LLF and shop steward committee meeting of Thulamela Municipality Bereavement Policy. The policy seeks to assist workers when they pass on by helping them financially for their funeral processes or arrangements.

4. PURPOSE

- 4.1 To provide emotional support as well as practical and uniform measures through which Thulamela Local Municipality will assist families of the employees who passed on and employees who have lost their loved ones.
- 4.2 To build a caring environment within the Municipality.
- 4.3 To give clear guidelines on what needs to be done when an employee or family member who has passed on.
- 4.4 To provide guidelines for the administering of the bereavement in line with family responsibility leave programme.

5. OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 To ensure a smooth collection and distribution of condolences funds to bereaved family members.
- 5.2 To ensure uniformity, consistency and to encourage solidarity amongst Thulamela Municipality employees during the bereavement period.
- 5.3 To assist the bereaved employee or family with the financial burden incurred by the funeral expenses.

6. SCOPE

- 6.1 This policy will apply to all employees of the Thulamela Local Municipality including contract workers and interns.

7. APPLICATION MECHANISMS

7.1 DEATH OF AN OFFICIAL

- 7.1.1 In the event of death of an official, the bereaved family shall inform the direct Supervisor of the employee, who will in turn inform the relevant unit of the death.
- 7.1.2 The relevant unit will, on behalf of the Thulamela Municipality, send a message of condolence to the bereaved family soon after receiving the news.
- 7.1.3 The relevant unit must inform the Human Resource Management unit in writing so as to ensure that all procedures and processes are followed but more importantly to get Human Resource Management involved in terms of conveying information regarding possible benefits payable and the documentation required for these to be paid.
- 7.1.4 The same relevant unit must send out a notification to inform all staff members about the death of a colleague including the arrangements regarding the paying of respect to the family by staff members, prayer session, memorial service and date of the funeral.
- 7.1.5 The Head of the unit shall also take responsibility for the contributions from the employees.
- 7.1.6 The Thulamela Municipality will then pay a family visit to the bereaved family on a day agreed upon.
- 7.1.7 The unit/section of the deceased will be responsible to arrange a memorial service for the deceased, and it is encouraged that all employees must attend including Management regardless of the unit/section that the deceased is from.

7.2 USE OF STATE VEHICLES UPON DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE

- 7.2.1 State vehicles will be utilized by officials nominated to represent the Thulamela Municipality at a memorial service and funeral.
- 7.2.2 Nominated officials who have subsidised vehicles will utilise their vehicles officially to perform all memorial and funeral functions, and all trips will be regarded as official trips.
- 7.2.3 In the case of memorial and funeral service, the Thulamela Municipality (Fleet Section) will ensure that transport is made available to transport employees where necessary.
- 7.2.4 For all other officials who will be attending the funeral or a memorial service, transport may be made available based on the request. This should be based on the availability and as approved by the Accounting Officer or his/her delegate.
- 7.2.5 The Thulamela Municipality must at all times take the different cultural practices into consideration when interacting with the families.
- 7.2.6 Officials attending the funeral will be regarded as on official duties.
- 7.2.7 The Thulamela Municipality will be responsible for providing transport to the bereaved family to and from the memorial service.
- 7.2.8 In the case of Traffic officers, because of the nature of their work and employment conditions, their funerals will be conducted in a semi military style.
- 7.2.9 Official transportation for family members will be provided for the duration of the memorial and funeral service. Transport to attend funerals outside the province must be approved by the Municipal Manager and officials are requested to share transportation to limit costs.

7.3 MEMORIAL SERVICE

- 7.3.1 The Thulamela Municipality will arrange the memorial service for employees to attend in case of death of an employee.
- 7.3.2 This will be done in consultation with the bereaved family.
- 7.3.3 Duration of the memorial service must not exceed 2 hrs and the memorial service can take place any day of the week. Discretion to extend may be

granted to Management depending on the proximity between work and place of memorial service.

7.4 FUNERAL SERVICE

- 7.4.1 It is the responsibility of Senior Manager of the respective department to ensure that an official representing the Thulamela Municipality speaks at the funeral service.
- 7.4.2 Attendance by Management of the Thulamela Municipality is encouraged in both memorial and funeral services of Thulamela Municipality employees.
- 7.4.3 In cases of employees living outside the province, only nominated officials shall attend and the Thulamela Municipality shall provide transport and accommodation.

7.5 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

- 7.5.1 It will be deemed appropriate in the event of a death of an employee to circulate a list requesting voluntary contributions. This is by no means compulsory.
- 7.5.2 The contribution list will need to be duly endorsed by Senior Manager of the respective component.
- 7.5.3 The total collected from the contributions will be handed over to the family by the designated official on or before the funeral.

8. DEATH OF A FAMILY MEMBER OF AN EMPLOYEE

The Supervisor of the employee shall:

- 8.1 Ensure that a message of condolence is sent to the employee and his /her family a day after receiving the news.
- 8.2 Notify all employees about the bereavement of their colleague and arrange visit by fellow employees to pay respect. Preferable the department responsible shall pay home visit to the bereaved family. Interested employees may accompany the department of the deceased, provided proper arrangements are made between the respective Supervisors and the employees.

8.3 The section where the bereaved employee works, shall take responsibility for voluntary contributions.

8.4 Any list to be circulated shall be endorsed by Senior Manager of the relevant Department.

8.5 The contributions collected will be handed over to the bereaved family by the delegation paying a visit to the bereaved family.

9. BENEFICIARIES OF THE POLICY

9.1 The following members shall be the beneficiaries of the policy:

9.1.1 Main Member or Municipality permanent employees.

9.2 Beneficiaries shall be defined as follows:

9.2.1 Main Member shall be an employee of Thulamela.

9.2.2 Municipality who have signed the prescribed consent form.

10. DEATH BENEFITS ALLOCATIONS

10.1 Death benefit allocations shall be made as follows:

10.1.1 In the event of death an amount of R25, 000 shall be paid to the family of the deceased.

11. CONTRIBUTIONS

11.1 Monthly contribution shall be R50.00 per month and shall be debited from a salary of a member.

11.2 The R50 monthly contribution by employees shall be deposited in the bank account by designated employees to ensure that the account has in its balance an amount not less than R75 000 at any given time.

12. CLAIMS

12.1 In the event of death, the family of the deceased shall be required to submit the following:

12.1.1 Original Death Certificate of a member.

- 12.1.2 Original Identity Document of a beneficiary who is registered in the main member's registration form.
- 12.1.3 Confirmation letter from the mortuary
- 12.1.4 An authorised letter from the family for a person who is to receive money.
- 12.2 Claim form shall be completed in full and signed by the claimant and approved by the Bereavement committee.
- 12.3 Approved claims shall be paid electronical transfer within two working days of submission of claims.
- 12.4 Approved claim shall be paid only to authorized member of the family
- 12.5 The authorised person will be confirmed by HR (human resources)
- 12.6 Where the account balance is insufficient to finance a claim shall be arranged with the banking institution and a meeting of general membership shall be arranged to address a deficit in particular.
- 12.7 Exceptional cases shall be dealt with by a bereavement committee before payment can be made.

13. RETIRED AND RESIGNED MEMBERS

- 13.1 A contributing member who resigns, is dismissed or retires shall forfeit membership and benefits immediately.

14. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 14.1 Constitution of Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Chapter 2.
- 14.2 Municipal Systems Act.
- 14.3 Labour Relations Act.
- 14.4 Employment Equity Act.
- 14.5 Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended.
- 14.6 The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, Batho Pele 1997.

14.7 The promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000.

14.8 Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997.

15. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (if applicable)

15.1 All the relevant stakeholders internal and external will be consulted through the development and implementation of this policy.

16. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

16.1 The Manager: Human Resource will monitor the implementation of this policy and will submit a report to the relevant stakeholders as and when required.

16.2 On a continuous basis this policy will be assessed to determine its relevance and effectiveness and to assess whether it has achieved the intended objectives.

17. IMPLEMENTATION: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

17.1 EMPLOYEE

17.1.1 Has a responsibility to ensure that his/ her immediate supervisor is informed of the loss of a family member.

17.2 SUPERVISOR

17.2.1 Should assist employees when they go through the bereavement period by giving necessary support.

17.3 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS UNIT

17.3.1 Employee Wellness Unit to conduct trauma debriefing / counselling services where necessary.

17.3.2 This unit will ensure that spiritual support is provided during family visits/memorial services and funeral services.

17.4 BEREAVEMENT COMMITTEE

17.4.1 The committee will be guided by its terms of reference.

18. DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM

18.1 Any dispute which emanates from the application of this policy must be referred by the employee concerned to Labour Relations Section for resolution after the internal (unit) remedies have been exhausted without success.

19. CONCLUSION

19.1 In conclusion, the Bereavement Policy outlines critical matters raised in the purpose and the objectives. The provisions in the policy highlights the need for municipality to adhere to the key issues narrated which will address challenges encountered and lead to effective and efficient implementation of the policy.

19.2 The Municipality commits to make resources available, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, thus encouraging all relevant stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the policy and take necessary actions to fully participate and ensure compliance of the policy.

20. EFFECTIVE AND REVISED DATE

20.1 The policy shall be reviewed by the relevant stakeholders to improve effectiveness and efficiency every 3 years or as and when necessary.

21. ANNEXURES

21.1 Terms of Reference for Bereavement Committee.

21.2 Claim Form.

21.3 Business process map.

21.4 Standard operating procedure.