

INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE BASE

ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN PRACTISES

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"I'm so clever, sometimes I don't understand a thing I'm saying." – Oscar Wilde

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ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN PRACTISES

17.1 Acts to Consider

There are various environmental acts (refer to paragraph 3.41 of this guide) and municipal by-laws to consider and consider when operating your governing body lawfully as far as the environment is concerned or when taking the extra step to become 'greener' orientated.

17.2 Policies

The governing body needs to take a stance as far as environmental policies and living "green" is concerned. The policy does not need to be long winded and can easily be incorporated into the general policies of the governing body. The issues and depth of each issue to be covered depend very much on the level of seriousness to participate in the "green living" drive.

17.3 Areas of Environmental Responsibility

The following areas should be evaluated for policy and implementation by the governing body.

17.3.1 Water use

The use of water in a water-scarce country like South Africa is not sustainable and ways of reducing water use must be investigated and plans set to reduce the use thereof measured. The best way for limiting the consumption is to make residents and internal departments pay for their water. Free use of this scarce commodity is not an option.

Things like rainwater harvesting, more effective water use equipment like special shower heads, etc., fixing leaks and water-wise gardens are only a few examples in lessening the use of water. The treatment of grey water for garden use must be considered as well.

The use of boreholes is regulated by laws and by-laws, and these must be respected. Unlimited use of the resource is also not sustainable.

17.3.2 Water Pollution

Water pollution is caused by what is discharged through the sewerage system and includes what

the residents flush down through their toilets and wash basins and other connections to the sewerage system. The governing body's other facilities like the canteen and the laundry and other connections are even more important when committing to reduced effluent to be discharged into the system. Prohibition on the discharging of certain fluids, products and waste needs to be defined and the reduction of other less harmful products must be identified, and a plan devised to reduce this.

Storm water is a lesser problem but what is used and left on the paving and roads is all washed down into our rivers and dams.

Use of environmentally unfriendly pesticides must be investigated, and the necessary changes made.

17.3.3 Electricity

Most of our electricity is fossil-based and it is high time that we cut back on consumption. This is good for the environment and your pocket. The following must be seriously considered in cutting back consumption and use:

- All residents and departments must pay for their use. Meters are to be installed to measure consumption.
- Use of energy efficient appliances including lighting.
- The use of alternatives like gas and/or solar thermal geysers.
- The use of photovoltaic technology to generate own electricity.

17.3.4 Air Quality

Healthy and clean air is becoming an increasing problem. Burning of rubble and fossil derivatives must be prohibited and alternatives put in place. Burning of rubble is in any case prohibited by by-laws and special permission is required if really needed. The planting of extra indigenous trees needs to be actively pursued.

17.3.5 Use of Pesticides and Herbicides

The unnecessary use of pesticides must be curtailed. There is nothing wrong with a few weeds here and there. The facility's organic food garden in any case operates without any pesticides or herbicides.

17.3.6 Recycling

Recycling must be taken more seriously. Separating paper and carton, tin, plastic, glass, and decomposable waste is not as difficult as we think. It is a mind change. There are many governing bodies that can assist with the removal and re-use thereof. Buying the right products in the right packaging is just as important. Reduce, recycle and re-use!

Having compost producing facilities or a 'worm farm' is a must and with modern methods this is not a smelly business any longer. All of this is not only applicable to residents but also to all the departments within the governing body.

Hazardous waste needs special attention and a policy.

17.3.7 Others

Other matters to be looked at are:

- Fauna and flora protection and promotion of indigenous plants and animals.
- Transportation on the premises and to other facilities outside the premises. Electric vehicles may be an option.
- Obstruction of natural water flow. This is also covered by by-laws.
- Building rules. The latest energy efficient methods and rules must be followed with new buildings but easy changes to buildings should be investigated with the view of saving energy.
- Medical waste from residential areas and health care facilities must be disposed of in separate containers in line with the *Environmental Management Act* and removed by a registered company.