

DISASTER MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR THE NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The implications of the Disaster Management Act (2002) for the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality: A strategy for Disaster Management and Communications.

1. Terms

➤ **The Term Disaster**

The term “disaster” has been defined in the Disaster Management Act, as follows:

*“**disaster**” means a progressive or sudden, widespread or localised, natural or human-caused occurrence which –*

- (a) causes or threatens to cause –*
- (i) death, injury or disease;*
- (ii) damage to property, infrastructure or the environment; or*
- (iii) disruption of a community; and*
- (b) is of a magnitude that exceeds the ability of those affected by the disaster to cope with its effects using only their own resources;*

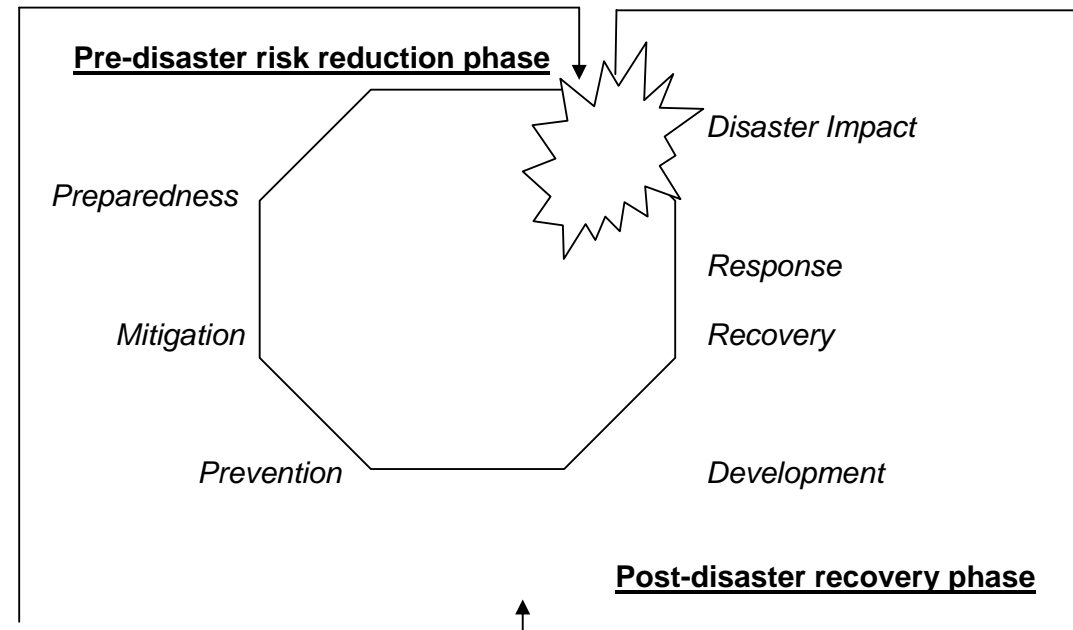
➤ **Disaster Management**

The term is defined in the act as;

*“**disaster management**” means a continuous and integrated multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary process of planning, and implementation of measures, aimed at:*

- a) preventing or reducing the risk of disasters;*
- b) mitigating the severity or consequences of disasters;*
- c) emergency preparedness;*
- d) a rapid and effective response to disasters; and*
- e) post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation;*

Disaster Management therefore refers to programmes and measures designed to **prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover** from the effects of all disasters.



From the above diagram it becomes clear that this is a continuous or cyclic process.

Disasters, however, are fundamental reflections of normal life. They are consequences of the ways societies structure themselves, economically and socially, the ways that societies and states interact, and the ways that relationships between the decision makers are sustained.

Disasters stem from the fact that certain communities or groups, especially the poor, are, for example, forced to settle in areas susceptible to the impact of a raging river. It is essential to make a distinction between hazards and disasters, and to recognise that the effect of the former upon the latter is essentially a measure of the society's vulnerability.

2. The Progression Of Vulnerability

The measure of vulnerability referred to in paragraph 1 can be best described by the so-called crunch model:

The progression of vulnerability is seen in three stages:

2.1. Underlying Causes

A deep-rooted set of factors within a society that together form and maintains vulnerability.

2.2. Dynamic Pressures

A translating process that channels the effects of a negative cause into unsafe conditions. This process may be due to a lack of basic services or provision or it may result from a series of macro forces.

2.3. Unsafe Conditions

The vulnerable context where people and property are exposed to the risk of disasters. The fragile physical environment is one element - other factors include an unstable economy and low-income levels.

Disaster Management must, by means of using all resources at its disposal (Local, Provincial and National Government structures, NGO's, Commerce and Industry, Communities, Education Institutions, Churches, etc) address the **underlying causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions** to limit and, where possible, prevent a disaster from occurring and mitigate against hazards and disasters in accordance with government policy as contained in the White Paper on Disaster Management and section 6 of the Disaster Management Act.

3. Disaster Management Policy

The content of the disaster management policy is as follows:

3.1. That all Council services participate in Disaster Management issues on the following basis:

- Identify their primary roles in term of the various phases of the Disaster Management Continuum:

The Continuum comprises the following phases:

- disaster response
- disaster recovery
- development
- mitigation
- prevention
- preparedness and awareness

- Identify their secondary roles (where they could support other services, with the latter's primary role(s), should this be of critical importance)
- Identify potential (outside) resources they will require to, in particular, execute their function with regard to the response and recovery / restoration phases of the Disaster Management Continuum.
- Compilation of basic plans, checklists, aide memoirs on their roles and functions.
- Identify shortcomings and address it in conjunction with Disaster Management (e.g. additional training needs to manage an Emergency Housing Centre).

- 3.2 That those Council services involved in development projects will, in all instances, ensure that adequate risk and hazard assessments are undertaken for such projects.
- 3.3 That all Council services will involve Disaster Management whenever a development project is being planned.
- 3.4 That Disaster Management shall on a continuous basis, evaluate all its programmes.
- 3.5 That Disaster Management will assist, when requested, to help facilitate or co-ordinate any of the projects mentioned in 1 - 3 above or any other identified projects.
- 3.6 That Disaster Management shall report regularly on progress with all policy matters, to the Safety and Security Services Committee.
- 3.7 That Disaster Management will, where necessary, propose changes to legislation through the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality.
- 3.8 Results of studies undertaken by Council on vulnerability assessment, hazard and risk analysis should be made available to Disaster Management.
- 3.9 That Disaster Management will maintain a centralised resource data bank for all line function services and that all Directorates update their data banks biannually.
- 3.10 A Disaster Management Centre be established and maintained, in terms of legislation.
- 3.11 That Disaster Management will plan and implement, in accordance with community-identified needs and with community participation, Disaster Management plans and programmes.
- 3.12 That Disaster Management will develop, maintain and co-ordinate identified training programmes.
- 3.13 That Disaster Management shall provide an advisory service to commerce and industry, educational institutions, homes for the aged, hospitals, medical facilities and the like on request, and facilitate the necessary input from other services where this is required.
- 3.14 That Disaster Management shall facilitate theoretical and practical exercises with Council services as well as National/Provincial Departments and community structures biennially
- 3.15 That Disaster Management shall identify, recruit, and co-ordinate a sustainable trained volunteer structure, in accordance with legislation.

- 3.16 That Disaster Management shall maintain close liaison with NGO's, and other relief agencies.
- 3.17 That Disaster Management shall, through research, local liaison and national and international networking, ensure that they remain abreast of trends, developments and disasters.
- 3.18 That Disaster Management shall recommend to Council to enter into agreements or contracts with any local government or organisation with regard to mutual aid or assistance regarding Disaster Management.
- 3.19 The extent of humanitarian aid in circumstances that are not declared a local disaster will be decided on by the Head of Disaster Management or his deputy in accordance with legislation.
- 3.20 The extent of humanitarian aid and action necessary for the restoration of essential services, in circumstances resulting in a major incident at local government level being declared by the Head of Disaster Management, or a national disaster in terms of relevant legislation, will be decided upon by the Head of Disaster Management. The Head of Disaster Management, at his earliest opportunity, shall report the declaration of a local disaster to the Mayoral Committee and the MEC tasked with the Disaster Management function.

4. Establishment Of A Disaster Management Coordinating Committee

The White Paper on Disaster Management highlights the need for the establishment of Disaster Management Coordinating Committees at Local Government Level similar to the Inter-ministerial Committee on Disaster Management.

Amongst other issues, the White Paper examines the role that each tier of Government has to play in Disaster Management.

When one considers that at the Annual General Meeting of the DMISA held in East London during 1998, the Director-General: Constitutional Development, Mr Zam Titus, highlighted the importance of Disaster Management. In particular, he referred to the following in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1990:

- ❖ the preamble, "...Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and ..."
- ❖ Section 6 and the importance of communicating disaster management issues in the appropriate language,
- ❖ Section 10 concerning human dignity and the role disaster management has to play in addressing and ensuring it,
- ❖ Section 11 referring to freedom and security of the person, as disaster management has a vital role to play in preventing disasters,
- ❖ Section 24 referring to the protection of the environment which if not done can and will cause disasters,

- ❖ Section 26, which refers to housing, as disaster management has a role to play in both formal and informal housing and the protection of housing through adequate preventative measures against the destruction of homes,
- ❖ Section 27 which refers to health, care, food, water, and social security, as it is important and disaster management should work towards ensuring that this is maintained and that where it is not, preventative and mitigation methods are employed,
- ❖ Section 28 (1) (c) refers to the children as during disasters and in the prevention of disasters children should be a focus of planning,
- ❖ Section 41 (1) (b) and (h) refers to the securing of the people of South Africa and co-operation in mutual trust and good faith. Disaster Management here again has a vital role to play in preventing of disasters and ensuring co-operation between services and the public.
- ❖ Section 195 which refer to basic values and principals governing administration which means that all South Africans must be considered in disaster management activities, and
- ❖ Schedule 4 which refers to the function of disaster Management in particular.”

Within this context, it should be mentioned that the very business of local government is Disaster Management. For example, Local Government is responsible for ensuring that each household has access to a good health system, water, safe housing, healthy urban environments etc. Disaster Management addresses all these issues through the various line functions, attempting to ensure that these services and development initiatives are safe - and that they are sustainable.

It is therefore essential that each of the services offered by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality be represented on a Disaster Management Coordinating Committee to consider and plan for disasters and the mitigation of disasters according to risk and vulnerability assessments. The Council cannot afford disasters occurring as this will cause funding to be diverted from existing or planned development initiatives so that restoration may take place. Furthermore, it is an accepted international fact (which is supported by the United Nations) that planning to reduce and or remove the threat of disasters is less costly than attempting to recover from them.

A coordinated approach to Disaster Management can only become effective if **all** role-players are involved in the planning and execution of the plans to reduce the risk and vulnerability of the people as well as mitigate against those risks and vulnerabilities.

It is therefore with this in mind that approval will be requested for the establishment of a Disaster Management Coordinating Committee. The Municipal Manager should appoint the Coordinating Committee and the representatives be high-level officials who are able to take decisions on behalf of their respective Business Units. The chairperson should be appointed by the Municipal Manager.

4.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

- 4.1.1 To co-ordinate that Business Units participate in Disaster Management issues on the following basis:

Disaster Management Policy

- ❖ Through the identification of primary roles in terms of the various phases of the Disaster Management Continuum
- ❖ Through the identification of secondary roles in order to provide support to other Departments
- ❖ To co-ordinate the identification of critical resources which will be utilised during the response and recovery phases of the Disaster Management Continuum
- ❖ To co-ordinate the compilation of basic plans and checklists on their roles and functions
- ❖ To co-ordinate the identification of deficiencies, and address same in conjunction with the Disaster Management Coordinating Committee of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality

4.1.2 To co-ordinate the adequate undertaking of risk and hazard assessments in respect of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality development projects.

4.1.3 To co-ordinate the results of studies on vulnerability assessment, hazard and risk analysis.

4.1.4 To facilitate and monitor, in accordance with identified community needs, and with community participation, Disaster Management awareness and preparedness programmes.

4.1.5 To co-ordinate the development and implementation of vulnerability reduction programmes.

4.1.6 To maintain close liaison with Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations, South African National Defence Force and the South African Police Services and other disaster relief agencies, in order to co-ordinate Disaster Management practices and to ensure same are represented on the Disaster Management Coordinating Committee.

4.1.7 To co-ordinate the provision of humanitarian aid in circumstances, which are not declared a local disaster, but are regarded as major incidents in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality's area of jurisdiction.

The Disaster Management Coordinating Committee should meet at least quarterly with the meetings being coordinated by Disaster management Centre.