



INVESTIGATION OFFICER'S TRAINING

The increasing number of cases in the public service constituting breaches of the Code of Conduct conveys the importance of the public service having a sufficient pool of qualified Investigators to scrutinise cases. This month 14 representatives from various Ministries participated in a week long training learning how to become qualified investigators. Some of the skills these folks gained from the course included Interviewing Skills, Report Writing and Investigating Offences under the Public Service Act 2004.

Now some of you may be wondering what exactly an Investigation Officer (IO) does. If an issue involving a serious misconduct of an Officer is brought to the attention of the CEO, the CEO has the authority to appoint a Charging Officer to conduct a preliminary investigation and charge an Officer with a Breach of the Code of Conduct. In the event that the charged Officer denies the charges an IO is appointed (from a Ministry other than the Ministry in which the charged Officer is employed) to investigate the truth of the charges. Examples of misconduct (breaching the code of conduct) include misuse of government assets, monies or other offences under the Code of Conduct. A review is not done with a view to checking the CEO's decision; it is done to ensure that the grounds that the CEO has based his/her opinions or suspicions are well founded. Hence all whom are accused, are deemed **innocent until proven guilty**. In some cases an inquiry into misconduct may lead to the realisation that the grounds are less defensible than initially thought and Investigators will also need to prepare for that possibility. Well that is the role of an IO in a nutshell.

A message to keep in mind though, as public servants our performance is open to public scrutiny and as the saying goes, 'Honesty is the best policy' or for those of you who are more visually articulate, that means.....



WORKING CONDITIONS & ENTITLEMENTS MANUAL



The Commission recently approved a number of amendments to the Working Conditions and Entitlements Manual. Copies of the revised manual are now available and can be accessed on the Public Service Commission home page by using the following <http://www.psc.gov.ws/Publications.htm> Information sessions have been organised to brief relevant staff on the impact of any changes for the 8th and 9th April. It is **essential** that the ACEO Corporate Services and the Principal HR Officer attend these sessions on the nominated date. For further information contact the HR Policy and Legal Services section at the PSC.

SAFETY EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY



Determination 15K (Health Hazard Allowance) in the Working Conditions and Entitlements Manual requires Ministries to ensure that safety measures are in place to minimise any potential hazard to health of their employees. This instruction is very clear and offers **no**



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room for deviation. It was alarming to observe during recent site visits by the PSC that not all measures were being taken in the workplace to ensure the safety of employees. For example, chemicals must be stored in a **secure and safe** manner and always in accordance with specific local work rules and instructions, as well as the manufacturer's directives. Ensuring a safe work places rests with supervisors as well employees. Everyone must make sure that they work in an environment that protects not only their **own** health and safety, but the health and safety of their co-workers. On one site visit it was noted that an empty cigarette packet was on the floor of a chemical store. An indication that the employees may have been smoking in an area that they clearly should not have been because there were highly flammable chemicals kept in that location!



Furthermore, the most **shocking** observation was the negligence of employees with regards to their personal safety at work. Employees are being provided with proper personal protective equipment to either obviate or minimise any harm to their health due to the work that they do. However, many do not use all safety equipment provided, stating they feel uncomfortable in it.



Preferring instead to disregard their own safety and potentially put their own health and possibly that of others at risk. The question we ask our readers is: "*how can it be justifiable for the Commission to grant health hazard allowances if Ministries and employees appear to be negligent in regard to promoting safety?*" Ministries must **'step up to the**

plate' and take responsibility for ensuring the compliance and adherence to those procedures which are provided. Failure to do so means that Ministries are breaching their **'duty of care'** towards employees.



The point we want to get across is that it is not the Government that should be held accountable for compensating employees for work related health injuries in cases of non-compliance. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all Government Ministries to carefully examine safe work practices. That is, *all managers, senior staff, supervisors and all employees are responsible for work practices that are accountably safe and reduce unnecessary risk to self and others.*

WHY THROW MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN?



Last month's edition of the HR News reiterated the information supplied in September's edition on the need for **all** Contract Employees to submit their performance reviews on time in accordance with their contract of employment. We are all smart enough to realise that when the Commission advises us that it will invoke clause 5(d) on our employment contract they mean business! None of us want our salary and all entitlements forfeited for non-compliance. ***If it happens let it be somebody else not you!***

ON A LIGHTER NOTE - HAVE A LAUGH!!!!

Attorney: The youngest son, the twenty year old, how old is he?

Witness: He's twenty, much like your IQ!
(Taken from a book titled "Disorder in the American Courts")

APRILS HR NEWS COMING SOON!

