

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for dealing with the problems and issues related to HIV/Aids. The policy will form the basis of these guidelines but will be enhanced by a code of good practice and a code of conduct.

1. Employment

Applicants for employment are required to pass a standard pre-employment medical examination to determine fitness for the job. An HIV test does not form part of this examination. Testing for HIV is not an acceptable practice within the AECI Group of Companies. Employees who become HIV+ will continue to be employed until they become medically unfit to work. Discrimination against persons applying for advertised positions on the basis of their HIV status is illegal.

2. Employee benefits

Medical assistance will be provided for HIV+ employees in accordance with the rules of the relevant medical aid scheme. When an employee is no longer able to continue in employment due to ill-health, the company's rules regarding ill-health, medical boarding and retirement will apply.

3. Confidentiality

An employee who is HIV+ will not be obliged to inform management. The company is obliged to maintain absolute confidentiality regarding the HIV status of employees. Blatant discrimination in the workplace against those who are HIV+ by managers and fellow employees will result in disciplinary action being taken.

4. Counselling

Access to appropriate support and counselling services will be made available to all employees affected by the disease, either because of their own infection or that of a family member. It is recognised that the epidemic will have an impact on all employees. The company will ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address workplace morale, additional stress and trauma through the provision of counselling services or other services as appropriate.

5. Gender equality

The gender dimensions of HIV/Aids should be recognised. Women are more likely to become infected and are more adversely affected by the HIV/Aids epidemic than men due to biological, socio-cultural and economic reasons. The empowerment of women and equality in gender relations are vital to successfully prevent the spread of HIV infection and special focus must be placed on enabling women to cope with HIV/Aids.

6. Education

General information and education programmes on HIV and Aids will be made available to all employees. Although the risk of HIV transmission within the workplace is small, the company is committed as follows:

- training, awareness and education on the use of universal infection control procedures so as to identify, deal with and reduce the risk of HIV transmission at work will be provided;
- equipment and material to protect employees from the risk of exposure to HIV as set out in the OHS Act, GSR Annexure 3 will be made available in every workplace. Reference should also be made to the AECI Limited Group SHE department's guideline for occupational exposure to HIV and the Hepatitis B virus;
- management training on how to deal with HIV-related stigmatisation and discrimination issues in the workplace will be provided. This training would aim to eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace and promote a non-discriminatory working environment.

7. Job security and development

The job security or career development of employees will not be jeopardised by their HIV status, provided that job requirements are met, duties are fulfilled, or provided that they are medically fit to take on new responsibilities as determined by career planning.

8. Recruitment

Discrimination against persons applying for advertised positions on the basis of their HIV status is illegal.

9. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and communicated to all employees to ensure that all employees know and understand the contents of the policy.