

PARLEMENT VAN DIE REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA  
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Posbus 15  
P.O. Box 15  
KAAPSTAD  
CAPE TOWN  
8000

**DRAFT POLICY ON FACILITIES FOR MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES**

**1. Introduction and Background:**

Members of Parliament are citizens of the Republic of South Africa. In terms of our Constitution, all citizens are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship; and everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. This policy seeks to make special provisions for Members with disabilities.

**2. Definition of terms:**

Assistant	– A person assisting the Member with disabilities.
House	– The National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) of the South African Parliament as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
Interpreter	– A South African sign language interpreter that is certified by DEFGSA.
Member	– An elected representative of a political party and registered as a Member of Parliament.
Members Facilities Unit	– A Unit in the Office of the Secretary to Parliament that provides approved facilities and support to all Members of Parliament.
Official Business	– Any activity that is related to the business of Parliament.
Presiding Officer	– The Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces.
Policy Management Unit (PMU)	– A Unit in the Office of the Secretary to Parliament that is responsible for administration

policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

**Reasonable Accommodation**

- Any modification or adjustment to the working environment that will enable a person with a special need to have access to and participate in all activities of Parliament.

**Secretary to Parliament**

- The Head of the Administration of Parliament. It also means the Accounting Officer, and includes a person formally acting in that capacity.

**Special Need**

- Any degree of physical, hearing and/or visual impairment, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness, including but not limited to diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, muteness or speech impairment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition of mental impairment, a mental disorder, trauma or a mental developmental disability.
- Any chronic illness that lead to disability.

**3. Policy Statement:**

Parliament is committed to provide Members with disabilities with reasonable accommodation and facilities to enable them to participate efficiently and effectively in carrying out their parliamentary duties.

**4. Purpose**

To provide institutional support that is responsive to the needs of Members with disabilities and to ensure that they integrate and participate fully in carrying out their parliamentary duties through the identification and elimination of the effects of physical, environmental, attitudinal, communication and technological barriers.

**5. Scope of application**

This policy applies to Members with disabilities and all relevant implementing employees of Parliament.

## **6. Objective:**

- a) To foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all Members with disabilities.
- b) To provide a framework and guiding principles on facilities provided for Members with disabilities.
- c) To provide support and facilities for Members with disabilities.
- d) To ensure physical and equal access to goods and services.
- e) To provide opportunities for training and access to information.

## **7. Legislative Framework:**

- a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- b) Joint Rules of Parliament, 1999
- c) Facilities for Members of the National Assembly and Permanent Delegates of the National Council of Provinces" (generally referred to as L19)
- d) Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000)
- e) Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998)
- f) Promotions of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000
- g) Integrated National Disability Strategy
- h) South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) Code of Practice, environmental accessibility
- i) Human rights Commission Act (Act No. 54 of 1994)
- j) Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998)
- k) Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act No.85 of 1993)
- l) Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act No. 75 of 1997)
- m) Building Standard Act (Act No. 103 of 1997)
- n) United Nations Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities

## **8. Policy provisions**

### **Guiding Principles**

The Secretary to Parliament must make reasonable adjustments to the working environment for Members with disabilities to overcome practical barriers. The Secretary may provide the following facilities and support:

#### **8.1 Reasonable Accommodation:**

- a) Parliamentary Village accommodation:
  - i. Suitably adapted with ramps;
  - ii. Appropriate toilet and bathroom facilities;
  - iii. Accessible light switches and door handles; and
  - iv. Widened doorways for wheelchair access.

b) In the House:

- i. Table of correct height to accommodate wheelchairs when a Member is speaking from the podium;
- ii. Space for wheelchair users;
- iii. Access for Assistants/Interpreters to interpret on the floor;
- iv. Table microphones; microphones at the Members seat, standing or clipped microphones;
- v. Timers

c) Parliamentary Precincts:

- i. Voice activation and Braille in lifts;
- ii. Light bells at the office door;
- iii. Overhead flashing lights;
- iv. Reserved parking bays allocated close to entrances;
- v. Toilet facilities with grab rails and enough space for an Assistant and a changing bench;
- vi. On-off ramps that are accessible at entrances to all parliamentary buildings including:
  - NCOP
  - NA
  - Marks Building
  - Good Hope
  - Visitors Gallery
  - 90 Plein Street
  - 100 Plein Street
  - 120 Plein Street
- vii. Alternate ramped routes to steps;
- viii. Large offices that are easily accessible;
- ix. Clear international signposts at ramps, toilets and parking bays;
- x. Flat paved pathways for easy mobility of wheelchairs;
- xi. Demarcated steps to distinguish one from another.
- xii. Height adjustable dining tables in dining room halls.

8.2 Training and Official Meetings:

- a) All training courses and committee meetings must accommodate the special needs of Members:
- i. Presentations and course/subject material must be produced in Braille; large print and/or audio;
  - ii. Accessible venues and appropriate furniture to accommodate wheelchairs;
  - iii. Medium of training must be accessible and be interpreted if required;
  - iv. Customised training on the usage of all specialised equipment provided;
  - v. Trainers and Presenters must be sensitised to the special needs.

8.3 Equipment:

- a) Computer equipment suitable to the needs of Members:



- i. Braille printers;
- ii. Braille translation software;
- iii. Braille display notebook;
- iv. Voice recognition software ;
- v. Voice activation software;
- vi. Portable printers;
- vii. TC1100 Tablets;
- viii. 22" Large monitors (partially sighted only).

b) Tape recording facilities.

c) Phone Amplifiers.

d) Internet access and faxing facilities.

8.4 Assistive technology, device and/or service.

8.5 Transport:

- a) Transport for the Member to and from Parliamentary Villages (mobility impairment)
- b) Transport costs for an Assistant/Interpreter travelling with a Member on official business.

8.6 Furniture specification:

- a) Desks on pillar legs that are height adjustable.

8.7 Other special needs:

Facilities and /or support for other special needs may be determined on an individual basis by Presiding Officers.

8.8 Human Resources:

- a) The Secretary to Parliament must contribute on a pro rata basis to the payment of salaries of Assistants/Interpreters employed by Political Parties:
  - i. One Assistant at the Parliamentary Service grade level A1 for a Member with a physical disability.
  - ii. One Assistant at the Parliamentary Service grade level B1 for a Member that is visually impaired.
  - iii. Two South African sign language Interpreters at the Parliamentary Service grade level C1 for each Member with a special need for hearing assistance.
- b) The Secretary to Parliament must pay transport costs for an Assistant/Interpreter travelling with a Member on official business; including travelling to and from Cape Town

- i. In the Gallery,
- ii. Parliamentary Channel,
- iii. Parliamentary tours and visits

## 9. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) All Members with disabilities and relevant implementing employees of Parliament share the responsibility of adhering to and enforcing this policy.
- d) The Secretary to Parliament is responsible to ensure that the facilities prescribed by this policy are implemented.
- e) The Human Resources Section is responsible for the payment of pro-rata salaries.
- f) Political Parties are responsible for the recruitment and selection of Assistants and sign-off of fitness required for specific jobs must be compiled and continuously updated and updated as technology progresses. Environmental monitoring with regard to safety and hygiene must be maintained.

## 11. Review of Policy

This policy must be reviewed six months after coming into operation and annually thereafter.

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From the Policy Management Unit

Draft Reviewed policy on facilities for Members with disabilities – 15 June 2006

## **12. Dispute Resolution**

- a) A party that feels aggrieved by the decision of the Secretary to Parliament may submit its complaint to the Speaker of the National Assembly or the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces.
- b) Employees not satisfied with the application of this policy must follow the grievance procedure and / or dispute resolution procedure.

## **13. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Policy Management Unit (PMU) must monitor the implementation and evaluate the impact of this policy

## **14. Date of effect**

The effective date for implementation of this policy will be the date of sign off by the Presiding Officers.