

CLOSING THE DOOR TO MISUSE OF MUNICIPAL RESOURCES FOR ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DEVICES AND SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

This paper concentrates in the norms and standards for using municipal resources. Managing resources forms part of internal procedures. Municipal resources comprise anything which is paid for, owned or controlled by a council. Resources include: staff time; materials and supplies; facilities; motor vehicles; fuel, spare parts and accessories; general plant and equipment; office equipment; communication and information devices and services (such as phones, computer equipment, and internet and emails services). The paper specifically analyses the strategies implemented for upholding municipal employees when using the communication and information devices and services resources. Many of the local government related matters often address the blatant criminal acts such as theft, bribes, fraud in various forms, and manipulation of tendering processes. The misuse of communication and information devices and services resources may seem to be more subtle in nature. Yet, a municipal council remains vulnerable to resource misuse which often leads to significant direct loss to councils and gains to individuals and corporate bodies. Such conduct is unacceptable as it cheats the community whilst paying too much for the quantum and quality of services it is receiving. No organisation is immune to the opportunistic behaviour of an ill motivated employee. Management has an obligation to define the rules that apply to staff so that they have unequivocal reference points when it comes to behaviour, decision making and choices. Similarly, policies must be complemented by appropriate procedures in order to determine the attitudes, behaviour and ethical standards of the leaders of an organisation. Policies and procedures are certainly required to promote the organisational culture for upholding acceptable behaviour and to mitigate risks. In this paper the author set out to do three things: the economic impact of resources misuse; to assess the policies; procedures and information and compliance mechanism instigated in regard to resource misuse; and seeks to recommend the methods that can be applied to curtail the dilemmas often encountered by municipal councils. The outcomes of this paper is realised by means of a qualitative analysis and is supported by interviews and a visit to the Metropolitan Cities in South Africa.