# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2493**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 27)**

**Ms H Ismail (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

With reference to the guidelines stipulated in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993, (a) what safety precautions and/or plans have been implemented nationally in hospitals to manage fires, (b) how often is fire equipment serviced and (c) what is the breakdown in each province in terms of fire equipment checks in each of the past five financial years?

###### NW2914E

**REPLY:**

The following responses are as received from the nine provinces

1. **Safety precautions and/or plans have been implemented nationally in hospitals to manage fires**

* In Eastern Cape, fire safety is managed at hospital level. Fire safety has several role-players including Infrastructure/ Facilities/ Engineering and Occupational Health and Safety units in most hospitals. Some hospitals have fire safety in their disaster plans and some have unit / ward – based action cards for response to fire and/or evacuation plans.
* All Free State facilities are fitted with fire extinguishers and fire hydrants. The smaller facilities have fire extinguishers and the larger facilities e.g. Hospitals have fire extinguishers and fire hydrants.
* Safety plans and emergency preparedness plans are in place but in many facilities in Gauteng there are no approved disaster management plans by the local authority for hospitals and also no occupancy certificates. Fire and evacuation drills are done sporadically or not done at all.
* All institutions in KwaZulu-Natal have fire fighting equipment i.e. fire extinguishers (10538), fire hose reels (2756) and depending on the size of the institution fire hydrants (1152). Internal disaster management plans, which include fire evacuation plans are available and reviewed as necessary. Fire evacuation drills are conducted internally and documented. Fire departments from local municipalities are involved in major evacuation drills and also institutions acquire their inputs when reviewing fire evacuation plans. Fire safety training has been conducted for staff and some institutions have fire and alarm detection systems.
* Limpopo has trained fire wardens in every facility with the Fire departments providing support and training. Fire drills are conducted at each facility.
* Mpumalanga facilities have approved disaster and emergency evacuation plans. Risk assessments are being conducted inclusive of fire hazards and risks and control measures put in place. Local fire inspectors conduct fire inspections at facilities on invitation.
* Northern Cape has no approved disaster plan but emergency plans are in place and bi-annual fire drills are conducted at facilities.
* All hospitals in North West have floor plans and evacuation plans with trained fire wardens and fire drills performed. Inspections of hospitals were done by the Fire Departments of local authorities in 2021 and the recommendations are used to enhance the plans.
* The Western Cape has adopted the MIMMS systems for hospital preparedness for managing Major Incidents. MIMMS (Major Incident Medical Management and Support) is an internationally accepted system to manage such incidents. Hospitals have Major Incident Plans that also include managing a fire incident. The Office for Disaster Medicine at provincial level and the facility manager signs off on the plan. The plan is reviewed annually or after a major incident at the facility.

**(b) Servicing of fire equipment**

* Eastern Cape has a provincial contract for the fire safety equipment which includes the servicing of fire extinguishers and fire hydrants annually.
* In Gauteng fire equipment are serviced once a year in line with expiry dates – however there is a dependency on the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.
* The fire equipment are serviced annually in Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and North West.
* Fire equipment at all facilities in all districts of the Western Cape are serviced through service level agreement (SLA) contracts. Each district has its own SLA contract and all fire equipment are serviced every 12 months according to applicable regulations and requirements.

**(c) Breakdown in each province in terms of fire equipment checks in each of the past five financial years**

* Eastern Cape could not collate the information as it is kept at facility level.
* It varied in different hospitals in Gauteng with 27 facilities reporting annual checks; 5 facilities were last assessed in 2020 and 4 facilities did not report.
* Free State and Limpopo have annual checks on the fire equipment.
* In KwaZulu-Natal, fire equipment checks form part of the monthly inspections by health and safety representatives.
* Mpumalanga has spent on average R2m per annum on fire equipment checks and maintenance.
* Northern Cape conducts monthly checks on fire equipment.
* North West has monthly checks by Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) representatives with quarterly inspections by the provincial OHS forum.
* Western Cape has spent on average R8m per annum on fire equipment checks and maintenance.

END.