

WORKPLACE POLICY ON HIV/AIDS DEVELOPED
BY PROFESSIONAL GUARD SERVICES INC. (PGS)

Introduction:

Professional Guard Services Inc. is a private company incorporated in Guyana under the provisions of the Companies Act.

The nature of the operations of the company involves the placing of employees at various locations in Guyana. Accordingly, PGS does not have a single settled workplace and the company has recognized the need for the development of a flexible policy to meet this situation.

Policy framework and general principle

PGS recognizes the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its impact on the workplace and on the general working environment of its staffers. The Company is firmly committed in the support of national efforts for the reduction of the spread of infection and for the minimization of the impact of the disease.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure a sustained and consistent approach to the prevention of HIV/AIDS among employees and their families and to the management of the consequences of the disease, including the care, counselling and support of employees living with HIV/AIDS. The policy of the Company has

been developed in consultation with employees as all levels and will involve continued consultation with employees and with workers living with HIV/AIDS as a national level in its implementation. The Policy complies with the Occupational Safety Health Act 1997 and has been written in the spirit of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work.

The policy applies to all employees regardless of the nature and type of their contract of employment.

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

(a) **Protection against discrimination, victimisation and harassment**

PGS recognises that stigma and discrimination compromise the welfare of employees and that openness, trust and respect for basic rights conduce to HIV prevention efforts. The Company therefore will protect all HIV positive employees against discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

(b) **Employment opportunities and termination of employment**

The grounds and procedures for dismissal of employees and for disciplinary action against them are clearly set out in the Company's Code of Conduct and contract of employment. HIV infection is excluded from these grounds and shall not be the basis for the suffering of any adverse consequences by employees or for denial of alternative employment opportunities.

(c) **Testing**

HIV screening will not be required of job applicants or persons in employment as a pre-condition for recruitment, access to training, promotion or for other company benefits. The Company will however facilitate voluntary confidential testing and counselling for all employees.

(d) **Epidemiological Testing**

All testing programmes for epidemiological purposes will be subject to independent and objective evaluation and scrutiny. The results of such programmes will not form the basis of discrimination against any employee. The Company shall ensure that all testing will comply with international standards as regards counselling, informed consent, confidentiality and support. Epidemiological HIV testing shall be anonymous. However, voluntary testing is assured to any employee wishing to know his/her HIV status, as a result of his/her participation in such testing.

(e) **Confidentiality**

Job applicants and workers will not have to disclose HIV-related information. The Company, in recognition of the sensitive issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, shall handle this issue in a discreet and private manner. The identity of any employee who has contracted HIV will not be revealed without his/her consent. Employees will be encouraged to be

open about their HIV status in order to benefit from the Company's management of the consequences of HIV/AIDS. Mechanisms will be created to encourage openness, acceptance and support for those who voluntarily disclose their status within the workplace.

AWARENESS RAISING AND EDUCATION

- (a) Appropriate awareness and education programmes will be conducted to inform employees about AIDS and HIV and about measures which may be taken to protect themselves and others from contracting the infection. Employees will be involved in such programmes and also in counselling programmes.
- (b) The Company will support all practical measures to induce behavior change and risk management among employees. Affected employees will be referred to STI and TB treatment services in the community.
- (c) Reasonable time off will be given for participation by employees in education and training. Such training shall involve key staffers of both sexes and whenever possible peer educators and occupational safety and health officers.

CARE AND SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

- (a) Employees who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS will be treated with empathy and care. All reasonable assistance, including time off, sick leave and information on the virus and its effect, will be provided by the Company.
- (b) Employees infected with HIV may continue to work as long as they are able to perform their duties safely and in accordance with accepted performance standards. Employees with AIDS who are unable to perform their tasks adequately will be subject to the Company's normal procedures on poor performance and ill health.
- (c) Employees living with HIV/AIDS will continue to enjoy the normal statutory and company benefits.
- (d) The Company will assist employees living with HIV/AIDS to identify suitable medical and counselling services in the community and will give reasonable time off for treatment and counselling.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- (a) The management of the Company pledge full support to the Policy. A responsible officer of the Company has been designated to coordinate

and implement the HIV/AIDS Policy and programme. The officer will report regularly to the Board.

The implementation of the policy will involve continued consultation with employees.

- (b) This Policy and related information on HIV and AIDS will be communicated to all employees and to the Company's network of contacts.
- (c) The Policy will be reviewed from time to time and revised in the light of any changed conditions.
- (d) PGS will endeavour to work together with other companies and organizations to share costs and experience in dealing with the issue of HIV/AIDS. The company will also seek the services and resources which may exist in the community to facilitate the implementation of the Policy.
- (e) Normal company disciplinary and grievance procedures relating to breaches of any right contained in the workplace policy shall apply without discrimination to all employees. Measures will be developed and put in place by the Company to ensure confidentiality during any and all of the said procedures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. J. ...', located at the bottom right of the page.