

# **BARAMA COMPANY LIMITED**

**Land of Canaan**

**E.B.D.**

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## **WORKPLACE POLICY ON HIV/AIDS**

### **GENERAL STATEMENT**

1. Barama Company Limited recognises the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its impact on the workplace. The Company supports national efforts to reduce the spread of the infection and minimize the impact of the disease.

### **OBJECTIVE**

2. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the prevention of HIV/AIDS among employees and their families, and to the management of the consequences of HIV/AIDS, including the care and support of employees living with HIV/AIDS. The policy has been developed and will be implemented in consultation with employees at all levels.

### **POLICY FRAMEWORK AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

3. BCL recognises the ten (10) key principles of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work as a basis for its action on HIV/AIDS.

4. It takes into account existing legislation prohibiting discrimination and protecting the safety and health of workers, existing laws on discrimination, working conditions and safety and health and with the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work.

5. While BCL recognises that there are circumstances unique to HIV infection, this policy rests on the principles that HIV infection and AIDS should be treated like any other serious condition or illness that may affect employees. It takes into account the fact that employees may live full lives for a number of years. The Company's commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all employees is based on the recognition that HIV is not transmitted by casual contact.

### **SCOPE**

6. This Policy applies to all Directors, Managers, Supervisors, Drivers, Production Workers and all other categories of workers contracted by or otherwise legally attached to the Company.

## **SPECIFIC PROVISIONS**

7. The protection of the rights of those affected by HIV/AIDS: -
- a. **Protection:** All employees will be protected against discrimination, victimization or harassment. The Company's Disciplinary Code and Grievance Procedure shall apply equally to all employees.
  - b. **Employment:** No employee will suffer adverse consequence, whether dismissal or denial of employment opportunities, merely on the basis of HIV infection.
  - c. **Testing:** BCL rejects HIV testing as a prerequisite for recruitment, access to training or promotion. However, the Company will promote and facilitate access to voluntary confidential counseling and testing (VCT) for all employees. All VCT will comply with accepted international standards on pre and post test counseling, informed consent, confidentiality and support.
  - d. **Epidemiological Testing:** Testing programmes for epidemiological purpose will be subject to appropriate consultation with recognized employee representatives and to independent and objective evaluation and scrutiny. All testing will be anonymous. The results of epidemiological studies will not be used as basis for discrimination against any class of employee in the workplace. In cases where employees wish to know their HIV status, as a result of their participation in anonymous epidemiological testing, voluntary testing and counseling will be assured.
  - e. **Confidentiality:** The Company recognises the sensitive issues that surround HIV/AIDS. Where an employee chooses to reveal his/her HIV status to management, the Company will keep the identity of such person **strictly confidential**.
8. Mechanisms will be created to encourage openness, acceptance and support for those employees who voluntarily disclose their HIV status within the workplace, including: -
- a. Encouraging persons openly living with HIV/AIDS to conduct or participate in education, prevention and awareness programmes.
  - b. Encouraging the development of support groups for employees living with HIV/AIDS.
  - c. Ensuring that persons who are open about their HIV status are not unfairly discriminated against or stigmatized.

## **AWARENESS RAISING AND EDUCATION**

9. a. Appropriate awareness and education programmes will be conducted to inform employees about HIV/AIDS, which will enable them to protect themselves and others against infection by HIV. All programmes will take into consideration the needs of both sexes. Some of these will include the families of employees and the local community when possible.
- b. The Company recognises the importance of involving employees and their representatives in the planning and implementation of awareness, education and counseling programmes, especially as peer educators and counsellors.
- c. Practical measures to support behaviour change and risk management will include referral to Sexually Transmitted Infection and Tuberculosis treatment services in the community, sterile needle and syringe exchange programmes and possibly distribution of male condoms.
- d. Training will be arranged for key staff including Managers, Supervisors Officers, trainers of trainers (both male and female), peer educators within the Company.
- e. Reasonable time off will be given, when possible/deemed necessary for participation in education and training about HIV/AIDS and related health matters.

## **CARE AND SUPPORT FOR WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

10. a. The promotion of employees' well-being: The Company will treat employees who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS with empathy and care. The Company will provide some reasonable assistance, which may include counseling, time off, sick leave, and information regarding the virus and its effect.
- b. Work performance and reasonable work site: It is the policy of the Company to respond to the changing health status of employees by providing suitable work sites for those infected with HIV. Employees may continue to work as long as they are able to perform duties safely and in accordance with performance standards accepted by the Company. If an employee with AIDS is unable to perform his or her tasks adequately, the Manager or Supervisor must resolve the problem according to the Company's normal procedures on poor performance/ill health.

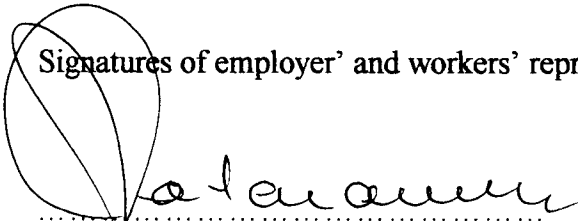
- c. **Benefits:** Employees living with HIV/AIDS will be treated no less favourably than staff with any other serious illness/condition in terms of statutory and company benefits, workplace compensation, where appropriate, and other available services.
- d. **Health Care:** The Company will help employees living with HIV/AIDS to find appropriate medical services in the community, as well as counseling services, professional support and self-help groups if required. Reasonable time off will be given for counselling and treatment.

### **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**


11. BCL has established an HIV/AIDS Committee to co-ordinate and implement its HIV/AIDS Policy and Programme.

- a. The committee will consist of twenty (20) employees representing all constituents of the Company, namely:
  - 1 Manager
  - 4 Supervisor
  - 2 Union Representatives
  - 10 Production Workers
  - 1 Medical Personnel
  - 2 Administrative Personnel
- b. The implementation of this Policy will conform to the Company's normal Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. Confidentiality will be assured during any and all procedures.
- c. In order to plan and evaluate its HIV/AIDS Policy and programme effectively, the company will undertake a survey to establish baseline data and regular risk and impact assessment studies. The studies will include knowledge, attitudes and behaviour/ practices (KAB/P). Studies will be carried out in consultation and with the consent of employees and their representatives, and in conditions of complete confidentiality.
- d. The policy, and related information on HIV/AIDS, will be communicated to employees using the full range of communication methods available to the Company.
- e. This Policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in the light of changing conditions and the findings of surveys/studies conducted.

Signatures of employer' and workers' representatives:

  
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**Mr. G. Lalaram**  
**General Manager**  
**Barama Co. Ltd.**

07/02/05  
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**Date:**

  
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**Mr. C. Duncan**  
**General Secretary**  
**Guyana Labour Union**

1-2-2004  
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**Date**

**Dated: 2005 January 10**