

Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA)



Research • Educate • Support

Position Statement on Environmental Responsibility

Preamble

The Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) is committed to conducting its business in a professional and ethical manner whilst paying particular attention to its corporate environmental responsibilities.

[Picture Credit: Green Hands]



Prevailing models of carcinogenesis hold that cancer cells arise from the accumulation of many small alterations in the DNA of normal cells. These alterations or mutations can be inherited or newly created. When certain alterations are combined, a cell and its progeny can begin to grow in an abnormal, uncontrolled fashion that is the hallmark of cancer. Other inherited and environmental influences can come into play and while these are not mutations, they are no less critical in determining whether or not a cell and its progeny progress to cancer. Some factors appear to prevent cancer, while others promote it. Thus, a central concept in our understanding of cancer is that it does not arise from a single event, but results from many changes and influences on a cell.

Examples of Associations Between Environmental Agents and Cancer

Cancer Site	Agent/Substance/Mixture
Bladder	Tobacco smoke; Benzidine and dyes metabolised to benzidine; Arsenic; Coal pitches
Leukaemia	Benzene; Butadiene; Ethylene oxide
Liver and intrahepatic bile duct	Alcoholic beverage consumption; Vinyl chloride; Thorium dioxide; Aflatoxins; Arsenic
Lung and bronchus	Tobacco smoke; Mustard gas; Asbestos; Radon; Wood dust; Coal tar pitches
Lymphoma (non_Hodgkins)	Dioxin (2,3,7,8-TCDD); 1,3-butadiene
Multiple myeloma	Benzene; Vinyl chloride; Dioxin (2,3,7,8-TCDD)

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Toxicology Program.

Researched and Authored by Prof Michael C Herbst
[D Litt et Phil (Health Studies); D N Ed; M Art et Scien: B A Cur; Dip Occupational Health; Dip Genetic Counselling; Dip Audiometry ad Noise Measurement; Medical Ethicist]

Approved by Ms Elize Joubert, Chief Executive Officer [BA Social Work (cum laude); MA Social Work]

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be defined in basic terms as the voluntary commitment of an organisation to contribute to social and environmental goals (European Commission, 2002). Under this definition, environmental responsibility is an implied part of social responsibility, even if the word 'environment' is not included in the CSR acronym. Indeed, numerous studies use the term CSR in discussions on corporate greening. One argument for this is that the natural environment is considered one of many stakeholders, and thus, if an organisation is acting socially responsible to its stakeholders, being accountable to the natural environment is a part of this larger responsibility

Position Statement

The Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) accepts its ethical responsibility to actively protect the environment, promote and participate in resource conservation and seeks to understand the political, economic and public health components of environmental sustainability. CANSA acknowledges that it has a duty to cover the environmental implications of its operations, products and facilities; to eliminate waste and emissions; to maximise the efficiency and productivity of its resources; and to minimise practices that might adversely affect the enjoyment of the country's resources by future generations.

In determining its Corporate Environmental Responsibility, CANSA identified and explored the following:

- Environmental commitment and awareness;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- Measuring, reporting and auditing;
- Transparency;
- Commitment to continuous improvement; and
- Going beyond compliance.

CANSA will discharge its responsibilities towards the environment by implementing the following:

- Operating in a manner that is committed to continuous environmental sustainability through conservation of resources, prevention of pollution and promotion of environmental responsibility amongst its employees
- Conserving resources such as
 - Electricity;
 - Natural gas;
 - Water;
 - Paper; and
 - Plastics
- Introduction of a 'fuel-fitness' programme for all CANSA motor vehicles through regular servicing and maintenance - with the following benefits:
 - Improving of fuel efficiency
 - Lowering insurance premiums
 - Saving on running costs
 - Reducing repairs, maintenance costs and downtime

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- Improving safety
 - Making a positive contribution to air quality
- Actively practicing:
 - Waste reduction
 - Recycling
 - Reusing
 - Initiating waste management programmes for potentially infectious waste (waste that is capable of producing infectious diseases, e.g. blood, body fluids and sharps) and non-infectious tissue and waste (materials with no inherent hazard or infectious potential, e.g. packaging materials and paper) management by:
 - Meticulous segregation of potentially infectious and non-infectious waste
 - Correct disposal of chemicals, tissue, hazardous materials and infectious waste
 - Initiating supply conservation and management practices by:
 - Opening only necessary supplies, equipment and medical devices
 - Supply management, to include purchase and selection of environmentally friendly products, equipment and devices
 - Proactive maintenance, repair and refurbishing of instruments and equipment
 - Reprocessing of single-use devices according to stringent guidelines
 - Informing its stakeholders, partners and service providers of its position on environmental responsibility and require them to adopt environmental management practices aligned with the expectations of CANSA
 - Keeping a complete record of its carbon footprint according to the Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No 39 of 2004).
 - Complying with Relevant Environmental Legislation and Regulations
 - Complying with legislation regarding emissions into the air
 - Storing waste safely and securely, making sure it is treated appropriately, ensuring it is collected by an authorised organisation (such as the local authority or a licensed private waste contractor)
 - Managing its business waste for recycling by separating paper, card, plastic, metals and glass prior to collection
 - Ensuring not to cause a statutory nuisance which could affect someone's health or annoy neighbours. This covers things like producing noise, smoke, fumes, gases, dust, odour, light pollution or accumulating rubbish.
 - Making sure to comply with restrictions on the storage and use of hazardous substances.

Medical Disclaimer

This Position Statement is intended to provide general information only. So far as permissible by law, the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) does not accept any liability to any person (or his/her

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Whilst the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) has taken every precaution in compiling this Position Statement, neither it, nor any contributor(s) to this Position Statement can be held responsible for any action (or the lack thereof) taken by any person or organisation wherever they shall be based, as a result, direct or otherwise, of information contained in, or accessed through, this Position Statement.



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