

7. FORMING THE PROVINCIAL MONITORING TEAM (PMT)

The PMT is a pivotal component of your RHP, as this is the group of people who actually go out and do the biomonitoring of the selected rivers. This team consists of the technicians and trained monitoring staff which may be part of the PIT if this is more expedient. However, if it is not, then it is imperative that the PMT liaise with the PIT on a regular basis to report on findings, site conditions etc.

7.1 SELECTION OF SUITABLE MONITORING PERSONNEL - APTITUDES, INTERESTS AND BACKGROUND

Literacy and a valid drivers licence are about the only “qualifications” needed for monitoring staff as well as enthusiasm and commitment. A broad knowledge and interest in the environment is a strong recommendation. Willingness to work in the field is another important consideration. For this reason, nature conservation or Parks Board staff are ideal candidates.

7.2 IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR FIELD PERSONNEL

- \$ Fieldwork is potentially hazardous. The occupational health and safety of field workers must be borne in mind at all times. Make sure that adequate measures to protect field workers have been taken and that your RHP field activities comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act No 85 of 1993). Apart from the possibility of jeopardising the safety of your PMT staff, failure to do so may result in costly legal action if an accident occurs while in the field.
- \$ First Aid - it is essential for monitoring staff to attend a course on basic first aid. First Aid kits must be supplied to each biomonitoring team.
- \$ Ability to swim - often assumed or overlooked, but a very real concern for RHP monitoring personnel.
- \$ Physical fitness - ideally monitoring staff should be reasonably fit and willing to spend long hours in the field. Sampling often requires long trips over rough terrain and can be strenuous.
- \$ Security of vehicles and equipment - an important consideration, especially out in remote areas.
- \$ Knowledge of the area being monitored is a definite advantage for monitoring personnel.
- \$ ***Warning!! Monitoring personnel must never go out into the field alone!!*** Ideally monitoring staff should work in pairs. This reduces the workload and time spent at each site, and if an emergency situation arises, two people will be in a better position to deal with it than one.

