



The Latest in Legislative Changes

In This Issue

In the News

Skills Development

Employment Equity

POPI

HR

B-BBEE

Posters

Health and Safety

Complimentary Webinars

Coaching Corner

Monthly Motivation

As February wraps up, we want to highlight key compliance updates and reminders to keep us on track. Staying compliant is a team effort, and your attention to these details matters.

BREAKING NEWS

Key Updates to the Code of Good Practice on Dismissal: A Comparison of the 2025 Draft and the Original Framework

<https://labourguide.co.za/general/key-updates-to-the-code-of-good-practice-on-dismissal-a-comparison-of-the-2025-draft-and-the-original-framework>

Skills Development:

WSP/ATR Submissions due 30 April – This report is beneficial for your business.

By now, most business owners have seen many reminders about the deadline for Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and Annual Training Report (ATR) submissions that are due 30 April 2025.

Skills Development legislation currently determines that any business with an annual payroll of over R500 000 may submit their WSPs and ATRs.

Completing your Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and Annual Training Report (ATR) might seem like just another compliance requirement. However, these submissions offer meaningful benefits that go far beyond regulatory obligations.

With the right approach, WSP/ATR submissions can help your business reclaim a portion of your Skills Development Levy (SDL), improve your B-BBEE score, and enhance your workforce's productivity through strategic training and development.

Mandatory & Discretionary Grants

- Your WSP/ATR Submission allows you to access mandatory grants, and you can apply for discretionary grants from your SETA, to help fund your training.

Learnership tax rebates

- When planning your training for the year, always keep in mind that any registered Learnership can award your company with Tax Rebates from SARS. You can claim a Tax Rebate of R80 000 for an able-bodied learner and R120 000 for a Disabled learner. These rebates are allocated per Learner and can give your company a good financial boost.

Better BEE Scores

- Skills Development is one of the key elements on the BEE scorecard, as well as the most beneficial when implemented correctly. Aligning your WSP/ATR to your BEE scorecard could be the key factor in improving your overall score or even moving up a level or two!

Better employees for more productivity

- This is simple – better-trained employees' equal better productivity and can promote your business with employees who feel empowered by their employer. If employee retention is a priority, training is an effective solution to benefit everyone.

Are you ready? Your company's WSP (Workplace Skills Plan) and ATR (Annual Training Report) must be submitted to the relevant SETA by no later than 30 April 2025.

Kindly note that NO late submissions will be allowed.

Given the extensive qualifying requirements and application process, we are committed to providing you with timely and efficient assistance. We are here to offer you a smooth and hassle free submission on your behalf, ensuring a seamless application experience in real time.



Employment Equity



VCA has recently sat in on the new 18 Sector's Sectoral consultations to get clarity on the changes which will be taking place this year.

In these consultations the DoEL explained how they came to the relevant targets and the requirements for designated employers going forward as well as how all companies, designated and non-designated, regarding their B-BBEE compliance.

VCA will be hosting a complimentary webinar on the **5th of March at 10:00**, to advise all companies on the way forward and what the DoEL will be initiating in 2025. To book your spot, contact Denise on (011) 425 3575 or denise@vcaconsulting.co.za



POPI

Over the past few years as companies have endeavoured to become POPI compliant, one important document has been overlooked, the employment contract.

It is essential for all employers to include a POPI clause within their contracts or do addendums to existing contracts to ensure they comply with the regulations of the POPI Act.

This clause is an essential component of any employment agreement in South Africa and safeguards individuals' personal information and privacy right.

This clause or addendum outlines how the employer will protect employee's personal information as well as clarifies the purpose for which said information will be used for.

It further protects highlights the employee's rights regarding their personal information.

HR: New Retirement Age in South Africa



While the Basic Conditions of Employment Act does not specify a retirement age, it is recommended that this is included in the employee's contract. It is also advisable that the organisation have a Retirement Policy stating the retirement age and what processes to follow should the employment contract surpass the retirement age.

In terms of "settled" law, employers who have allowed employees to work beyond the normal or agreed retirement age, could at any time thereafter serve them with a notice of dismissal based on them having reached their retirement age.

In terms of section 187(1)(f) of the Labour Relations Act (LRA), dismissal of an employee based on age is 'automatically unfair'. However, section 187(2)(b) provides for an exception: dismissal based on age is fair if the employee has reached the normal or agreed retirement age for persons employed in that capacity.

What should employers do?

It is recommended that employers adopt the following approach:

- Ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that all contracts of employment provide for an agreed retirement age, e.g. "... at the end of the month in which the employee reaches the age of x."
- Engage with employees well in advance to remind them of the approaching retirement date and associated consequences, such as handing over, administrative arrangements regarding retirement benefits, etc.
- Avoid permitting an employee to work beyond the normal OR agreed retirement age, unless you have entered into a written agreement that specifies a new retirement date.

B-BBEE and Bursary Spend:



Bursary programmes play a vital role in addressing skills shortages and promoting educational advancement among historically disadvantaged individuals. By providing financial support for education, companies can bridge the gap between potential and opportunity, fostering a skilled and inclusive workforce.

Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Bursaries are awarded with the objective of meeting the skills development goals of an organization as well as maintaining their B-BBEE status.

Large/ Generic organizations (Turnover exceeding R50 million per annum) in South Africa are required by law to spend at least 2,5% of their annual leviable revenue on bursaries for Black students at basic, higher and tertiary education institutions.

This is based on amendments to the **B-BBEE Codes of Good Practice**, put into effect on 1 December 2019. By doing so, organisations earn B-BBEE scorecard points under the **Skills Development** category.

In total, 6% of leviable revenue must be spent within the Skills Development Element with 2.5% going to bursaries and 3,5% going to learnerships, accredited short courses and informal training.

Strategic bursary management is a powerful mechanism for companies looking to invest in skills development while enhancing their B-BBEE impact.

By supporting educational advancement, organisations can cultivate a skilled and motivated workforce, improve their B-BBEE compliance, and drive productivity.

Ultimately, this approach contributes to long-term business success and a broader goal of social and economic transformation.

Posters

Does your company have all the compulsory Labour Law posters displayed at your workplace?

Here is a quick reminder that we are expecting the changes for two posters. These are Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Employment Equity Act.

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act is changing toward the end of March, due to amendment of the National Minimum Wage.

Regarding the Employment Equity Act, we will advise once we have these in stock.

To be on the safe side, please send me your orders now.



Please remember that employers who fail to display updated and compulsory legal posters on their premises may get a fine from DoL.

Occupational Health and Safety

VCA is proud to announce the launch of a new course:

Scaffold Erectors and Inspectors

Training is conducted at our facility in Germiston OR at your company premises
[minimum requirement of 6 delegates]



The flyer features a yellow header with the text "SCAFFOLD ERECTORS / INSPECTORS". Below this is the VCA logo in blue and white. To the right is a circular inset photo of a worker on a scaffold. To the left is a white silhouette of a worker on a scaffold against a black background. On the right side, under the heading "Course Contents :", is a list of topics.

SCAFFOLD ERECTORS / INSPECTORS

vca

Course Contents :

- Site preparation
- Scaffolding types
- Component identification
- Assembly techniques
- Fall protection
- Inspection procedures
- Defect identification
- Load capacity assessment
- Competency standards
- Reporting and communication

Get in touch to enquire about costs and availability.
011 425 3575 OR renetia@vcaconsulting.co.za

Complimentary Webinars

VCA prides itself on being a provider of several complimentary webinars in the year. These are able to be used for your wellness sessions which the EE Act calls for, as well as inhouse training for staff, and general upliftment.

Last year we ran the following,

- 06/03- Tax implications and benefits in Insurance Portfolios
- 18/07 - EE webinar
- 19/08 - Medical certificates and sick leave
- 04/09 - All about leave
- 11/09- Two pot system - what you need to know
- 26/09- YES programme
- 04/10- the difference between poor work performance and negligence
- 20/11- Your personal year end review

And this year we have the following lined up:

- 11/02 - Bullying in the Workplace - DONE
- 26/02 - The Reclamation hour - DONE
- 05/03 - EE Webinar
- 11/03 - BCEA & NMW
- 19/03 - ETI
- 08/04 - LRA

We look forward to have you join us on our quest for continual learning!



How Micro-Recoveries Can Prevent Burnout

By Lianne Byrne, Reclaim Your Life Now Coaching

How small, strategic breaks can transform your workday and protect your mental health.

We've all been there. It's 2:30 PM, you've been jumping between Zoom calls since morning, your inbox is overflowing, and that important report is still half-finished. Your head throbs, your mind is all over the place, and you can't remember the last time you took a proper breath. Sound familiar?

This daily reality is pushing so many of us toward burnout – that overwhelming state where exhaustion becomes the norm, cynicism creeps in, and even simple tasks feel monumental. But what if I told you that the solution doesn't require a career change or a month-long retreat in Bali? The answer might be simpler than you think: micro-recoveries.

What's Actually Happening When We Burn Out

Think of your brain like your phone battery. Every task, decision, and interaction drains a little power. Without recharging, you eventually shut down. When we push through fatigue signals, our stress hormones (hello, cortisol!) go into overdrive, our focus centers get fuzzy, and our bodies stay in that anxious, fight-or-flight mode we were never meant to maintain for hours on end.

Eventually, this becomes our new normal – and that's when burnout takes hold.

Micro-Recoveries: Your Secret Weapon

So what exactly are these magical micro-recoveries? They're intentional, brief moments of genuine renewal that you sprinkle throughout your day. I'm not talking about switching from your spreadsheet to Instagram (which is actually just another form of brain drain). I mean true moments of relief that activate your body's rest-and-digest mode.

These can be as short as 30 seconds or as long as 10 minutes – the key is that they give your system a genuine chance to reset and recover.

The Science Says It Works (Really!)

If you're thinking this sounds too good to be true, the research has your back:

Workers who took tiny 2-5 minute breaks each hour reported feeling a third less burned out than their "power through" colleagues, according to a 2023 study. And surprisingly, their productivity didn't drop – it stayed consistent

Even more fascinating? Looking at pictures of nature for just one minute can significantly lower stress hormones and help your brain recover its focus. And multiple studies now show that several small breaks actually work better than fewer longer ones when it comes to preventing burnout.

What These Micro-Moments Actually Look Like

For Your Body:

- Stand up and do a full-body stretch (yes, with the dramatic yawn and everything)
- Try the 4-4-4-4 breath: inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4

For Your Mind:

- Follow the 20-20-20 rule when working on screens: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds
- Close your eyes and do a 60-second mental vacation to your favorite place

For Your Spirit:

- Text a friend something completely unrelated to work
- Step outside (or to a window) and feel the air on your skin for one minute with no phone in hand

Making This Actually Happen In Real Life

In an office: Set a discrete alarm on your watch or phone, or use the Pomodoro technique with a dedicated timer. Better yet, be the trendsetter – when colleagues see you taking brief renewal breaks and remaining productive, you're changing the culture.

Working from home: Create physical transition moments – maybe it's stepping onto your balcony between tasks or simply moving to a different chair for your recovery moments. The change of environment signals to your brain that a shift is happening.

"But I Can't Because..."

"I seriously don't have time" – Here's the truth: you don't have time NOT to do this. Studies consistently show that pushing through fatigue actually makes tasks take longer and introduces errors. Micro-recoveries make you more efficient, not less.

"My boss will think I'm slacking" – Frame it as a performance optimization strategy (because it is!). Share this article or mention the research. Results speak volumes.

"I'll forget to take breaks" – Your phone can remember for you! Set gentle alarms, use a dedicated break timer, or partner with a colleague to send each other break reminders.

How You'll Know It's Working

Within a couple weeks of consistent practice, you'll likely notice:

- Getting to 5 PM without the usual brain fog
- Sleeping better at night
- Fewer moments of snapping at your kids/partner/pet
- Actually having energy for things you enjoy after work
- Rediscovering what enjoying your job feels like

The Bottom Line

Our work culture often treats humans like machines that should operate continuously at peak performance. But even machines need maintenance. These tiny moments of recovery aren't indulgences – they're essential maintenance for your most valuable resource: you.

By honouring your brain's natural need for periodic renewal, you're not just avoiding burnout – you're setting yourself up to thrive. And it all starts with giving yourself permission to take that first 30-second break.

What micro-recovery will you try today?

About Lianne: As a burnout recovery coach with years of experience helping women reclaim their energy and passion, I've guided my clients from chronic exhaustion to sustainable performance. My coaching philosophy centers on integrating small, powerful changes into daily routines—creating lasting resilience. Through one-on-one coaching and corporate workshops, I provide customised strategies for your individual needs. For personalised support on your burnout prevention journey, connect with me at liannebyrne.com or follow me on Instagram at [@reclaimyourlifefirst](https://www.instagram.com/reclaimyourlifefirst) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/liannebyrne).

“If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.” -Napoleon Hill