



Avoid Consuming Expired Products by Reading Labels



The Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency was established by the Compulsory Standards Act No. 3 of 2017 to administer, maintain and enforce compulsory standards for purposes of public health and safety, consumer and environmental protection. The establishment of the Agency was part of the implementation of the National Quality Policy of 2010. The Agency started its operations in January 2018.

Vision

“A credible compulsory standards regulator.”

Mission

“To ensure public health and safety and environmental protection.”

Core Values

Credibility

Professionalism

Integrity

Teamwork

Hard Work

Innovation

Confidentiality

Accountability

- 4** Executive Director's Message
- 5** Avoid consuming expired products by reading labels
- 7** ZCSA and NRCS seal an MoU
- 8** Road safety profile expected to improve
- 9** ZCSA refutes upward adjustment of penalty fees
- 10** Consumers to guard against unsafe products
- 11** Dangote cement earmarked for dam construction was good quality
- 12** High levels of product compliance commended
- 12** ZCSA pledges to heighten community sensitisation
- 13** Recover with Integrity-The Case of ZCSA
- 14** 10 Rules of Professional Etiquette for the Digital Workplace
- 16** Puzzle
- 17** Corona virus not a hoax
- 18** ZCSA Sports calendar won't be disrupted



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Welcome

Dear Reader,

It is a pleasure to write the foreword for this issue of the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA) Newsletter. This edition will highlight some of the activities undertaken by the Agency in the last half of 2020.

Last year, marked unprecedented times with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which shifted the way we interact, work, and conduct business. It has taught us not only to innovate but to re-imagine efficient ways in which we can deliver on our institutional missions and collaborations.

On this note, I wish to reiterate the ZCSA's commitment to ensuring that public health and safety is maintained, and that consumers and the environment are protected from harmful and substandard products.

As consumers continue to rely more on locally produced goods, we wish to encourage local manufacturers making products which are subject to compulsory standards to comply with the said requirements. This will not only protect consumers but will also create confidence in the ability to produce goods which satisfy the needs of the Zambian market.

In the recent past, our country has witnessed a surge regarding compliance to standards among various players in the manufacturing sector. We are confident

that increased compliance to compulsory standards will definitely increase product acceptance and market access, within and outside the country.

Worth noting is that the Agency signed an MoU with the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) of South Africa aimed at promoting economic cooperation and support through standardisation and quality assurance particularly with countries seeking markets for products in international and regional spaces. This agreement marked an important milestone and a beginning of a solid relationship between Zambia and South Africa in trade facilitation. We remain optimistic that the Zambian products that are subject to compulsory standards will expand their market access in the SADC region and beyond.

With turbulences globally in the social and economic spaces, the Agency will remain steadfast and continue to be innovative in order to fulfill its mandate of protecting the public and particularly consumers from buying unsafe and substandard products. As ZCSA, we shall remain consultative and continue to explore better options and alternative avenues within our jurisdiction in our quest to provide the highest service delivery standards.

I hope that this newsletter will update you on the work of the Agency and provide you with an opportunity to engage with us. Please enjoy reading this Bulletin.

All the best and stay safe!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Kaunda Chituta". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Executive Director

“As consumers continue to rely more on locally produced goods, we wish to encourage local manufacturers making products which are subject to compulsory standards to comply with the said requirements...”

Avoid consuming expired products by reading labels



ZCSA Inspectors during a market surveillance in Kafue district

Often times as consumers we tend to pick products from store shelves without paying much attention to labels when purchasing household supplies. We concentrate more on the brand name without much regard to the information on the label.

However, it is important for consumers to read the labels and ensure the product they are buying is properly packaged and labelled. Therefore, we will highlight the importance of labels and what information to look for on the package and explain what certain terminologies mean.

Standards for products that are subject to compulsory standards stipulate the marks, packaging and labelling requirements. These are not uniform across all products, as different products require particular packaging that is suitable for such

products, and more information on the labels than others. In this regard the requirements are referred to as product specific requirements for packaging and labelling.

The ZCSA has the mandate to ensure that products are properly packaged and that labels provide the minimum required information to enable consumers make an informed purchase. The Agency inspects all products using ZS 033 (Part 1 and 2) which provides general guidelines for labelling and packaging for all products.

Labelling is defined as any written, printed or graphic matter that is present on the label, accompanying the product, or is displayed near the product, including that for the purposes of promoting its sale or disposal.

The Agency is urging consumers to read labels and report when they are sold expired products.

The Agency conducts regular checks on product labels especially during market surveillances and spot checks to ensure that they contain information on expiry dates of prepackaged food products available on the local market. Under current regulations, it is an offence to sell any food after its expiry date.

The information on the label must include among others; the name of the food; the list of ingredients; net content and drained weight; name and address of manufacturer; country of origin; lot identification system; date; marking and storage instructions; and instructions for use.

Other requirements include; Quantitative labelling of ingredient composition, that is, the amount of each ingredient contained in the product; language shall be in English, other languages must be in addition to English; labels should be clear; an indication of durability of product i.e. best before date, date of expiry or use by date.

The expiry, best before date, use by and sell by dates are aimed at ensuring that the quality and safety of the product, be it food or any other product, is preserved. It is important to check these dates before buying.

The best-before dates are placed on the label to provide information to the consumer about the shelf life and freshness of the unopened food or product. It may be referred to as the manufacturers promise to the consumer that the packaging and the food within them will be of the highest quality standard and will contain the nutrients as outlined on the label. This applies to an unopened product, within the stated date. Once a product is kept beyond this date, the flavour, texture or nutritional value cannot be guaranteed.

The 'best before' date is often mistaken by consumers to be the same as the 'expiry date'. However, the best-before date refers to the situation where once this date has passed, the product may lose its nutrients, aroma, taste or freshness. This refers strictly to quality, not safety and does not necessarily mean that the food is no longer safe to eat.

Another date which consumers should look out for is the expiry date. The expiry date should be indicated for foods or perishable products whose nutritional value is important to the consumer and that maybe diminished once the product reaches this date.

The expiry date is the date up to which the food maintains its microbiological and physical stability, and the nutrient content declared on the label. That means it is best to consume the food before the expiry date to get the most nutritional value from it and to avoid any adverse effects that may come about as a consequence of consuming it after its expiry date.

Expiration dates are placed on the product to inform the consumer of the last day the product is safe to consume. Best before date on the other hand tells you that the food is no longer in its perfect state from that date. Expiry Date refers to the last date a food should be eaten or used. Safety of the product cannot be guaranteed beyond the expiry date and consumption of such food is at consumers' own risk.

The Agency conducts regular checks on product labels especially during market surveillances and spot checks to ensure that they contain information on expiry dates of prepackaged food products on the local market. Under current regulations, it is an offence to sell any food after its expiry date.

The retailer uses the expiry date to know how long it should be displayed on the shelf. It helps the traders to manage stock and ensure that they do not lose money by having to dispose of food that has expired.

The "sell by" date is another term found on labels and it is placed on the package to inform consumers of the last day when the item is at its optimum quality. The food item is still edible or useable after this date, and in some cases, consumers can even process it in such a way as to extend its shelf life further.

The sell by date is sometimes mixed up with the "use by" date. The use by date refers to the last day on which the product can be used. It applies to perishable products such as milk, fresh fish and meat. A product with a use by date should be disposed of once that date has passed.

The Agency is urging consumers to read the product labels and report when they are sold expired products. Such complaints must first be reported to the seller of the products so that corrective action can be taken immediately. Remember, it is important for consumers to be well informed about a product that they consume only that which is safe and they get the required nutrition and optimal benefits from the product.

ZCSA and NRCS seal an MoU



The Official Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding

The Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) of South Africa last year signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) intended to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between Zambia and South Africa.

ZCSA Executive Director, Peggy Kaunda Chituta who signed on behalf of the institution said that the strengthened collaboration would enhance and facilitate trade between the two countries.

Ms Chituta said, “Standards are at the heart of manufacturing, and through this MoU, manufacturers and traders of products that are subject to compulsory standards will benefit from the cooperation in inspections for products traded between the two countries.”

She said Increased compliance to standards would certainly increase product acceptance and market access. “As markets grow, so does the production of products, and at a time such as this when economies the world

over are recovering from the shock of the outbreak of COVID-19, increased production is most welcome,” Ms Chituta said.

ZCSA Executive Director said the MoU was key to promoting economic cooperation and support through standardisation particularly with countries seeking markets for products in international and regional spaces.

Ms Chituta noted that one of the benefits of the MoU was in making use of standards to remove barriers to trade. She said by their very nature, standards were tools for facilitating trade because they established common criteria for acceptance of products on the market and their safe use or consumption by consumers.

ZCSA Executive Director said another aspect of the MoU was the exchange visits for technical staff aimed at enhancing experience and adoption of best practice in the regulation of industries under our charge. She was hopeful that the implementation of the MoU would assist Zambian manufacturers produce goods that

meet the South African and largely regional market.

Ms Chituta further said the collaboration between the two Agencies would contribute positively to the successful development and integration of standards and technical requirements in our markets.

Meanwhile, NRCS Executive Director Edward Mamadise said the existence of such institutions allowed for collaboration and information sharing on the protection of consumers through enforcement of compulsory standards.

Speaking during the same virtual Signing Ceremony, Mr Mamadise noted that regulators were faced with challenges in their efforts to protect consumers and citizens against substandard and unsafe products. He said these challenges could not be addressed by only one Agency because unscrupulous traders knew which countries did not have regulators and they used those countries to transport products which may be unsafe to consumers.

Continued on page 8 >>

Road safety profile expected to improve



ZCSA Executive Director, Peggy Kaunda Chituta signs a RWI Contract on behalf of the Agency



The Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency through the Import Quality Monitoring (IQM) Department has predicted that the road safety profile in Zambia will improve for the country in the coming years following the signing of the Road Worthiness Inspection (RWI) Contracts with Inspection Companies.

On 30th November 2020, ZCSA signed contracts with three Vehicle Inspection Companies namely Auto Terminal Japan, EAA Limited and Quality Inspection Services Limited. So, the three companies are ZCSA appointed agents charged with the responsibility of inspecting, testing and analyzing used motor vehicles before they are offloaded on the Zambian market.

Pre-shipment RWI is conducted by ZCSA appointed agents to ensure compliance with the Zambian Standard ZS 560 – Code of practice

for inspection and testing of used motor vehicles for road worthiness, to promote public safety.

Pre-shipment RWI was initiated to minimize the risk of unsafe and substandard used motor vehicles entering the Zambian market, thus ensuring public safety and environmental protection. All imported used motor vehicles must meet the requirements of this important safety pre-export inspection.

Speaking during the Official Signing Ceremony, IQM Manager, Gerald Chizinga expressed confidence that the three Vehicle Inspection Companies which were renowned entities had all it took to safeguard millions of lives by reducing road traffic calamities through the provision of quality RWI services at designated locations outside Zambia.

Mr Chizinga stated that it was within the mandate of the Agency as stipulated in the Compulsory Standards Acts No. 3 of 2017 for ZCSA to enter into formal agreements with conformity assessment service providers to inspect, test or analyse products on its behalf.

The IQM Manager added that the three Vehicle Inspection Companies met the prescribed technical specifications after a thorough and competitive bidding process.

He was confident that the aforementioned companies would exceed the Agency’s expectations through the provision of quality inspections and testing of used motor vehicles.

The contracts which ZCSA signed with the three Vehicle Inspection Companies will run for a period of three years, from 2021 to 2023.

<< *Continued from page 8*

ZCSA and NRCS seal an Agreement

NRCS Executive Director said the collaboration with the ZCSA would enable the NRCS to counteract activities of unscrupulous traders. He said that was important especially with the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) which would require regulators to collaborate more and ensure seamless movement of goods to enable businesses to flourish.

“I want to be able to rely on a certificate

provided by the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency for a product entering South Africa because then I will have confidence that the product has been inspected by a reputable Agency,” he said.

The MoU focuses on areas of mutual interest to the two institutions in their mandate of protecting the public from harmful products. This agreement between the ZCSA and NRCS marked an important milestone and the

beginning of a solid relationship between Zambia and South Africa in trade facilitation.

It is therefore expected that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding would promote the manufacturing industry in Zambia by ensuring that the products produced in Zambia met the South Africa industry standards and beyond before they were consumed by the public.

ZCSA refutes upward adjustment of penalty fees

The Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA) would like to inform importers of used motor vehicles that the Agency has not adjusted upwards the penalty fee for non-compliance with the mandatory pre-shipment inspection for roadworthiness of all used motor vehicles destined for use within Zambia but has simply changed the method of calculation.

Auto-Terminal Japan, EAA Limited and Japan Export Vehicle Inspection Centre (JEVIC) Co. Limited are the ZCSA appointed agents carrying out

pre-shipment RWI of all used motor vehicles upto October 2020.

Any vehicle exported to Zambia without undergoing the inspection by ZCSA appointed agents incurs a penalty.

Under the old system the penalty was calculated at 15% of Cost, Insurance and Freight (C I F). The old system was however found to be subjective as it depended on the invoice presented. The new system is based on engine capacity thereby making it more

predictable and transparent.

The Agency would like to remind importers of used motor vehicles that RWI of used motor vehicles at source is a mandatory requirement aimed at ensuring public safety, and environmental protection.

Some of the parameters checked during inspection include structural damage, lighting, braking and suspension systems, carbon emission levels and radiation, among others.



Consumers should guard against unsafe products

As we come together as a country and work on modalities to address the corona virus pandemic, the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency is committed to ensuring the safety of products subject to compulsory standards.

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease has led to heightened demand for sanitisers, gloves, tissue, soaps, and masks. Health experts and authorities have been advising people to regularly wash their hands and use sanitisers to prevent infection.

The Agency is advising consumers to guard against buying substandard and unsafe products such as handwash, sanitisers and masks in a bid to prevent contraction of the coronavirus disease.

The Agency is aware that some unscrupulous traders may take advantage of the heightened demand

for the commodities by producing unsafe products and placing them on the market. Such traders prey on the ignorance of consumers by selling substandard and unsafe goods or falsifying product descriptions.

The Agency is further advising members of the public to buy these products from trusted or verified sources to avoid being cheated or preyed on by traders wishing to cash in.

“The sale of substandard and unsafe products is not only against the law, but is also unethical, bearing in mind that such products are urgently required at a time when the entire world is making every effort to ensure that any new infections are avoided and that the people’s wellbeing or their lives are safeguarded”.

Products that may be of poor quality, unsafe or ineffective can further threaten the health of those who consume them.

The Agency would like to assure members of the public that it is committed to ensuring the health and safety of Zambians by continuing to provide its services to the business community and the public at large.

The Agency is also providing its services by conducting critical inspections while at the same time protecting the health of its employees during this time.

And the ZCSA will continue to work with other government agencies to ensure the public is protected from purchasing substandard and unsafe products during this trying time.



Dangote cement earmarked for dam construction was good quality

The Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency has established that the cement offloaded on the market in Chingola and Kitwe by Dangote Zambia Limited which had a low early strength after a defined period was of good quality as it was meant for dam construction.

This was revealed after an investigation following complaints from members of the public that the commodity was of poor quality. The investigation was prompted by complaints from members of the public alleging low early strength levels in the Dangote 42.5R Cement brand.

Cement (ZS EN 197) is among the 60 products currently covered under compulsory standards and therefore subject to compliance requirements under the Compulsory Standards Act.

The Investigation was conducted in Chingola, Kitwe and Ndola and included site visits to a block manufacturing factory, a distribution agent and the Dangote cement plant. It was revealed that the cement used to make blocks had low early

strength after a defined period and the affected consumers complained to the distributor.

The distributor recorded eight complaints about low early strength of Dangote Cement 42.5R from its clients. Other consumers and distributors complained directly to Dangote Zambia Limited and the cement making firm also conducted its internal investigation to ascertain what was causing the problem.

It was established that the XRF machine which measures the mineral content of a product and gives a guide on the combination of these materials had malfunctioned. The XRF machine was giving readings for Type III cement rather than Type IV cement. This led to cement meant for Dam construction (which is normally dispatched in bulk) to be erroneously packaged in 50Kg bags and dispatched to the distributor who sold to members of the public

The cement which was offloaded on the market has a longer period to attain specified strength levels. This had an impact on users that require

early strength attainment levels such as block makers. The product was recalled, replaced and affected consumers were compensated and provided with the correct type of cement.

The Agency asked Dangote Zambia Limited to develop procedures to effectively manage change from one product to another. The cement producing firm was also advised to build storage bins where different finished products can be stored for ease of identification. The company's management has also been advised to issue a public statement to allay public anxieties.

From the foregoing, the public are reminded that the mandate of the Agency is to administer, maintain and ensure compliance to compulsory standards to ensure public health, safety, consumer and environmental protection.

ZCSA is therefore advising consumers of products to be vigilant and report any concerns about products that they may have.



Inspection of a Cement Manufacturing Plant

ZCSA pledges to heighten community sensitizations

Kasama District Commissioner, Kelly Kashiwa has called on the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency to heighten its sensitisation and community awareness interventions to enlighten the public on standards for purposes of consumer safety and environmental protection.

Speaking when ZCSA Management paid a courtesy call on him, Mr Kashiwa expressed gratitude that the Agency found time amidst their busy work schedules to pay a courtesy on his office and appraise him on the recent development within the Agency.

Mr Kashiwa was quick to mention that the health and safety of the consumers remained critical to the well-being of the vast majority of vulnerable citizens whom the Patriotic Front (PF) administration aspired to serve diligently at varying levels of the governance system.

The District Commission reiterated that through its routine dealings, ZCSA occupied a very critical and strategic position in the economic dispensation of our country as it helped in facilitating the growth of trade and manufacturing industry in Zambia.

Mr Kashiwa stated that the safety of regulated products on the Zambian



Kasama District Commissioner shares a light moment with ZCSA Executive Director (L)

market was important to the well being of the citizens who were key stakeholders in the value chain; adding that a health nation was certainly a wealthy nation.

He cautioned ZCSA employees that in the discharge of their duties, they should at all times desist from acts that may bring the good name of the institution into disrepute especially that the Government and indeed stakeholders recognized and appreciated the Agency's efficient service delivery at various work stations.

The District Commission reminded ZCSA Management to step up

sensitisation campaigns as they played a significant role in spreading vital information on different aspects of public safety, health, consumer protection and environmental protection.

In response, ZCSA Executive Director, Peggy Kaunda Chituta assured the Kasama District Commissioner that her Management working with the Communications Section would ensure that practical grass-root interventions were developed to help build and sustain the profile of the Agency.

High levels of product compliance commended

During the recent market surveillance conducted in Kafue, Chirundu and Siavonga districts, a team of ZCSA Inspectors and Head of Communications were impressed with the high levels of product compliance among traders and wholesalers.

The aforementioned was evident in a good number of wholesalers and renowned supermarkets that were inspected during the exercise. It was noted among others that the packaging of the products on the shelves in their stores were orderly and products displayed and product information was valid.

Worth noting from the surveillance

is that most of the traders and firms which were inspected were knowledgeable about the mandate and operations of ZCSA. Simply put, this category of stakeholders were very supportive during the inspections in their jurisdiction.

However, during the same market surveillance, there was an isolated case in Kafue district where some selected traders were selling assorted products which seemingly were unknown and possibly not regulated by the Agency. These products were confiscated by ZCSA in collaboration

with the Public Health Department of the Kafue Town Council.

In this perspective, ZCSA going forward will be compelled to raise awareness using cost effective medium of communication and disseminate vital information to community members on compulsory standards and product safety.



‘Recover with Integrity’ The Case of ZCSA

On 9th December, the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA) joined the rest of the world in commemorating the International Anti-Corruption Day. Commemorated under the theme “Recover with Integrity,” this International Anti-Corruption Day was an opportunity for us to recommit to collective action in preventing and addressing corruption, as we reflect on the devastating consequences of COVID-19 on governance institutions, the economy, and society.

From the outset, the theme of the 2020 International Anti-Corruption Day resonates well with operational aspects of the Agency. Integrity is one the seven core values of ZCSA. From the corporate governance stand point, integrity as a core value compels every employee to uphold morality and put our obligations to the nation above our personal interests in the execution of our duties. Having integrity means doing the right thing in a reliable way. It’s a personality trait that we admire, since it means a person has a moral compass that doesn’t waver.

Our three years of existence has made the Agency achieve a lot by implementing high level programmes and activities while upholding integrity. ZCSA has made progress in countless ways that has helped to move forward the development agenda for the country. The Agency has strictly adhered to the yardsticks prescribed in the strategic plan.

According to the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2019, corruption still remains pervasive in the country, yet the situation is considered relatively better when compared to other countries in the region. Looking deeply into the operatives of the Agency, ZCSA operates in a volatile business environment in Zambia which is delicate and extremely prone to corruption. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), corruption is standing in the way of sustainable development. Every year, businesses and individuals

Our three years of existence has made the Agency achieve a lot by implementing high level programmes and activities while upholding integrity.

pay an estimated US\$1.5 trillion in bribes, while at least US\$500 billion is lost to corruption in the health sector annually, more than the total cost of global Universal Health Coverage.

Despite the ugly face of alleged corruption manifesting in various sectors of the economy, ZCSA under the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry have remained steadfast and true to its mandate of ensuring safety of regulated products for consumers and environmental protection. In all our dealings, the Agency has strived to achieve the prescribed commitments in the service charter. It has endeavoured to establish strategic partnerships with like minded institutions to enhance operational efficiency and facilitate trade between Zambia and other countries.

COVID-19 pandemic has also created endless opportunities for corruption to thrive. UNDP asserts that when safeguards are relaxed under emergency protocols, and oversight mechanisms weakened or disrupted as a response to COVID-19, there is a likelihood of corruption to occur in its various forms. Worse still, such an environment facilitates the deterioration of public health and safety due to the consumption of substandard products on the market.

As ZCSA, we can stand on any podium with our heads high and state that we have never been culprits of corruption during the COVID-19 era. We commend the Integrity Committee (IC) at ZCSA which is headed by Manager Import Quality Monitoring,

Mr Gerald Chizinga for the leadership and professionalism exhibited over the years to stamp out corruption at all the levels. The Committee has strived to institutionalise the prevention of corruption for purposes of enhancing integrity and transparency. The IC members are individual members of staff who are tasked with taking steps to prevent corruption within their organisations. In other words, they are responsible for enhancing integrity through various reforms at ZCSA.

Borgen Magazine (2017) asserts that just like in most other African countries today, corruption and poor governance continue to tear the beautiful country of Zambia into pieces. The report further states that poverty in Zambia is real and continue to affect the larger part of the population.

Under this backdrop, we are hopeful that the 2020 International Anti-corruption Day commemoration should give us and all stakeholders renewed hope and energy towards the fight against corruption. The theme dubbed, “Recovery with Integrity” should help us promote collective action against corruption through multi-stakeholder engagement with governments, businesses and civil society and empowering communities.

More than ever before, ZCSA should continue to take the lead in strengthening processes and systems to seal any opportunity that may lead to corruption. ZCSA Management through the operations of the IC, should continue supporting the noble work of the Committee in fighting corruption. The IC should not relent in its work but sustain the gains scored over the years in ensuring integrity, transparency and accountability at ZCSA. In 2021 and beyond, ZCSA should continue to strengthen and promote a fair business environment that facilitates the growth of trade and manufacturing industry in Zambia.

For any suspected irregularities regarding products which fall within compulsory standards, do not hesitate to contact ZCSA Integrity Committee Line on +260 963 470 981.

10 Rules of Professional Etiquette for the Digital Workplace



Working remotely is becoming an increasingly popular option, but it's still a relatively new phenomenon. Navigating the unspoken rules and customs of working remotely requires some discipline. In fact, working in isolation may unintentionally erode your social skills, and your colleagues may begin to perceive you as a cad. Be aware of this tendency, and employ a set of 10 rules to minimize miscommunications and maintain good rapport with your colleagues.

1 "Early is on time, and on time is late."

First off, be punctual to show respect for your colleagues' time. Planning for digital meetings is more complex and time-consuming than simply showing up. Ten minutes prior

to your online meeting's scheduled start time, turn on your computer, check that your microphone and camera work, download and open the right programs, ensure good internet connectivity, and block distracting notifications.

2 Send personal rather than generic emails.

Emails that you send to every user in your company will end up in most employees' trashcans - unread. When you need to communicate to a large group within your company, use prerecorded video messages when possible. But even when you need to communicate with a colleague one-on-one, especially when discussing matters of a delicate nature, opt for video conferencing tools. Email and

text options tend to be breeding grounds for misunderstandings.

3 Be reliable and fulfill your obligations.

Follow through on every commitment you promise to your team. Being reliable boosts your reputation and makes you more relevant to your colleagues. As soon as you realize you'll be unable to meet a promised target or deadline, contact your team members to explain the delay. Consistency is the backbone of remote reputations.

4 Communicate clear expectations.

When you fail to voice your expectations precisely, follow-through becomes difficult. Delegate tasks to others, and agree to deadlines in writing to avoid the “bystander effect” whereby no one takes ownership of a task. “Everyone’s job is nobody’s job. No due date means never due.” The secret to fruitful long-distance working relationships is keeping the gap between your expectations and the reality of the situation as small as possible.

5 Respond to correspondence regularly.

A remote worker has a greater responsibility to answer email promptly than in-house employees. But responding to every communication in a timely manner isn’t always possible. If you are feeling overwhelmed by work or emails, communicate that to your team. Any response is better than no response, and a quick explanation for the delay, followed by a realistic response time, goes a long way to maintaining good long-distance relationships with co-workers. If you wish to receive fewer emails, send fewer emails.

6 Streamline your team’s processes by using the same tools as your colleagues.

Tools such as Dropbox lets you share access to files and documents with all team members. Workflow management programs such as Trello and Asana can increase team productivity and decrease remote project management miscommunications. Irrespective of which tools you use, remember the truism that less is more.

7 Always explain the rationale behind your actions.

People are 33% more likely to grant your requests when they understand the reasons behind them. Use the word “because” to increase compliance and to foster a team mentality by tapping into the persuasive value of explaining why. When leaders provide the rationale for their requests, they come across as less dictatorial, and their subordinates become more willing to acquiesce. Similarly, subordinates who reject requests ought to provide valid reasons for their responses.

8 If in doubt, leave emoji out.

Emoji may seem trivial, but they have the power to communicate emotional context in a textual environment stripped of tone and visual cues. To maintain an air of professionalism, don’t be the first

to use emoji in emails with clients or superiors, and reserve your use of the wink emoticon for communications with friends.

9 Use specific examples when you communicate.

To avoid miscommunication, state the purpose of your email in the opening paragraph. Your audience might read only the opening sentences and skim the remainder, so strategically place your request or call to action in the opening lines. Be detailed with your requests, and provide deadlines when possible. Try to limit yourself to one request per email.

10 Never forget to use your manners.

When you are rushing, it’s easy to forget to say please and thank-you in emails. Written communications lack the benefits of tone that verbal communication boasts, so omitting your manners in an email will come across as downright rude. “Otherwise polite and well-behaved humans can come off as complete jerks in the absence of face-to-face contact.”

Within 24 hours of receiving assistance, send individual thank-you notes to anyone who has helped you.

“Follow through on every commitment you promise to your team...”

Puzzle

S	I	M	P	A	R	T	I	A	L	I	T	Y	A	G	E	N	C	Y	E
O	P	A	P	P	R	O	A	C	H	S	A	F	E	T	Y	D	O	W	T
L	P	X	T	K	A	I	Z	E	N	H	E	A	L	T	H	O	B	H	I
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I	D	E	L	A	O	V	A	L	I	D	H	E	A	L	T	L	E	E	E
O	U	I	N	S	P	E	C	T	I	O	N	S	O	C	I	A	L	S	T
N	C	A	B	W	E	B	S	I	T	E	N	I	K	E		N	L	A	T
L	T	S	A	C	O	N	S	U	M	E	R	S	D	A	N	G	E	L	E
E	S	M	A	R	K	E	T	Q	R	E	G	U	L	A	T	E	D	E	A
G	T	Q	S	U	R	V	E	I	L	L	A	N	C	E	Z	I	C	R	T

1. Read the sentences below and Spot the Underlined Words from the Puzzle. Remember, as you read and work out the Puzzle, you will get important information about the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency that concerns YOU!
2. In a quest to enhance quality service provision, ZCSA has made strides forward to attain accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020 which shall provide requirements for the competence of bodies performing inspections and for the impartiality and consistency of their inspection activities.
3. In all its activities, ZCSA will incorporate the Kaizen approach effective 2021 as an ideal solution for the institution to set up new work etiquettes with minimal efforts, reduce stress, eliminate risk factors, improve estimates of costs and timeframes, value and motivate employees at its various work stations.
4. To all our key stakeholders and the general public, take advantage of the ZCSA Website at www.zcsa.org.zm and social media handles to learn more about the operations of the Agency and also to make general inquiries on standards.
5. The Agency developed and still implementing the Strategic Plan 2018 to 2021 which apparently has enhanced its operational efficiency much to the satisfaction of its esteemed stakeholder and the general public.
6. The ZCSA wishes to inform the stakeholders and the general public that it will not relent in ensuring safety of regulated products for consumer and environmental protection at varying levels of our society.
7. It is the duty of every wholesaler to request from a supplier a valid certificate/license issued by ZCSA before purchasing any product regulated by the Agency.
8. To avoid substandard and unsafe products being sold on the Zambian market, ZCSA will consistently conduct market surveillance to ensure public health and safety as well as environmental protection.



Coronavirus is not a hoax

From various credible media fronts, it has been reported that there is a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic which is claiming millions of human lives globally. The situation is not different even in Zambia. According to the Zambia National Public Health Institute, the country has recorded a surge in the number of COVID-19 cases. As at 31st December 2020, the country had 20,725 accumulative cases and 18,660 total recoveries of the pandemic. It recorded 131 deaths and 257 COVID-19 associated deaths with an apparent 1,677 active cases.

It is therefore true that we cannot afford not to guard against the deadliest and fast spreading COVID-19. Africa as a continent has not been spared. The Ministry of Health through its daily updates on COVID-19 has expressed worry over the reluctance by members of the public to adhere to the prescribed guidelines and health protocols to stop the spread of the virus. It has been confirmed that the new strain of coronavirus recorded in Zambia in recent times is the same recorded in Europe and South Africa.

Reality being what it is, the new wave of the virus is more deadlier and spreads faster than the older one. From mountains of evidence, most affected people who are vulnerable to contract the virus are those aged between 17 and 45. It has also been reported in the media that aforementioned age group is vulnerable because this category of people like patronizing public gatherings such

as weddings and public rallies. It is also true that pregnant women and people with critical health conditions are also vulnerable to the coronavirus pandemic.

They say, “charity begins at home,” so the fight against COVID-19 should start from our homes. It is the duty of every parent to teach their children/dependants basic health tips on how the virus can be prevented. The guard against the pandemic should be extended to our workplaces. The following basic health tips can be inculcated at all the levels such as washing hands frequently; avoiding touching ones’ eyes, nose or mouth; desisting from eating raw meat and unnecessary contact with wild animals; thoroughly cooking meat and eggs and avoid close contact with anyone with flu-like symptoms. In other instances, if one develops a fever, cough, or difficulty in breathing, they should seek medical care early. These interventions will greatly help to avoid the spread the virus.

Over and above this, masking up, observing social distancing and washing hands with soap are critical during this delicate time. Failure to observe COVID-19 health guidelines and protocols, Zambia as a country will most likely experience an inevitable surge in infections and deaths associated with the new strain of COVID-19 is deadly and more lethal with potential to wipe out human life. Let us stay safe always.



ZCSA Sports calendar won't be disrupted

...As physical exercise is emphasised



The Corona Virus which has ravaged many lives and brought down economies and claimed the lives of many globally continues to silently affect us. It is not a fallacy that COVID-19 has brought challenges to the world of sports. From many fronts, many sports disciplines have been negatively affected. There has been harsh decisions made to cancel or postpone sports events. Arguably, corporate institutions which support wellness programmes for its employees have seemingly shelved sports and exercise.

Medical professionals world over are working to find a cure for this deadly disease which has continued to affect many people. As the cure is being developed, people have been told on how to prevent contracting the disease. Some of these measures include, wearing a face mask, keeping a physical distance of about 1.5 meters, washing hands regularly and sanitizing them, among many others.

Mountains of empirical evidence suggest that sport and exercise play an important role in improving physical and mental health, and fostering

active citizenship and social inclusion. People have been advised to exercise regularly to boost their immunity and help prevent the contraction of COVID-19. It is to this effect that the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency encourages its members of staff to engage in some form of physical activity whilst religiously observing COVID-19 preventive protocols.

To this effect, members of staff have continued to engage in sports activities as part of fitness and wellness programme of the Agency. Although many things feel beyond our control right now, we do have the ability to be creative and to build physical activity and exercise into each of our days. We may even look back on this difficult time as the turning point when we learned new ways to build our emotional resilience and our physical health.

Each day is a new opportunity to engage in physical activity and exercise that can bring short and long-term benefits for mood, sleep, and physical health. Consistency and sustained motivation may be enhanced by peer support, family



support, or electronic platforms offering exercise programmes.

While we continue to be challenged by COVID-19 pandemic, wellness programmes will continue at ZCSA to reduce the risk of infection. The consensus is that in as much sport and exercise will not be disrupted at ZCSA, management and employees are alive to the fact that they should at all times comply with the prescribed health guidelines and other protocols to avoid the spread of the virus.

Stay safe always!

**We build
smiles
when you
buy ZCSA's
regulated
products...**



The Agency will endeavour to safeguard the lives of Zambians by monitoring the safety and quality of products on the market





Blow the Whistle...

against any suspicious, fraudulent and
ethically questionable products
you find on the market

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