

OSHMed Magazine

Occupational Safety & Health and Medical

by



E.M.A. FACES UNPRECEDENTED SURGE OF COSTS IN 2026 EMERGENCY CALLS SKYROCKET

THE DEADLY 'HUBBLY' DELUSION • HEALTH & SAFETY: NAMIBIA'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR URGED TO ADOPT NEW SAFETY STANDARD • FUN TIME - JOKE OF THE WEEK • E.M.A. WEEKLY EMERGENCY STATISTICS

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WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO RECOGNISE & **REACT TO STROKE ?**

FACE

Can their face fall on one side? (as they smile)

ARMS

Can they raise both arms & keep them up?

SPEECH

Is there a slurred speech?

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Time to call 9112 if you are one of the three

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everything to **STROKE**

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**STROKE
REACT
DON'T
REGRET.**



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E.M.A. Faces Unprecedented Surge: N\$500,000 in Public Assistance Provided as 2026 Emergency Calls Skyrocket

*Windhoek – The first quarter of 2026 has proven to be one of the most challenging periods in the history of the non-profit organisation **Emergency Medical Assistance (E.M.A.)**. As the year progresses, the organisation is reporting a severe spike in emergency call rates, pushing their resources and personnel to the limit to ensure the safety of the Namibian public.*

A Growing Financial Burden

Since the start of the year, E.M.A. has already provided over **N\$500,000** in direct assistance to the public. This staggering figure reflects the rising demand for life-saving interventions and medical transport across the country. While the organisation remains committed to its mission of "no one left behind," the rapid depletion of funds has raised concerns about the sustainability of these critical services.

"9112" Returns to the Screen

In the midst of these operational challenges, there is a beacon of public awareness on the horizon. The hit reality show **9112**, a collaborative production between **Bokeh** and **E.M.A.**, is officially returning for its second season.

Starting **May 1, 2026**, viewers will once

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again get a front-row seat to the high-stakes world of emergency response. The show aims to highlight the bravery of first responders while educating the public on emergency protocols.



A Network of Gratitude

E.M.A.'s ability to remain operational during this surge is largely due to the unwavering support of the private sector. The organisation extended a heartfelt "thank you" to its primary partners:

- **M+Z Group (Mahindra):** For the donation and support of a dedicated ambulance, a vital asset in their fleet.
- **OSH-Med International:** For providing essential logistical support that keeps the teams moving.
- **WestCare Namibia:** For handling administrative support, allowing the medical teams to focus entirely on saving lives.

A Call for Corporate Intervention

Despite this support, the sheer volume of emergencies in 2026 means that current resources are being stretched thin. E.M.A. is

now issuing an urgent appeal to the **private and corporate sectors** for further financial and material assistance.

"To keep our emergency work running at this scale, we need the community to stand with us. The costs of maintaining high-level care are rising, and every contribution directly translates to a life saved." — *E.M.A. 1st Chairman, Fabian Martens*

How You Can Help

If you or your organisation would like to support E.M.A.'s mission, please use the following contact details:

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The Deadly 'Hubbly' Delusion: Why Namibia's Favourite Social Pastime is a Silent Killer

WINDHOEK – *It has become a common sight from the cafes of Independence Avenue to the backyard "braais" in Katutura: the thick, sweet-smelling clouds of a water pipe, known locally as "hubbly bubbly" or shisha. For many Namibian youth, it is seen as a "cool," harmless alternative to cigarettes. However, recent medical data and warnings from health experts suggest that this social trend is masking a severe public health crisis.*



The "Filtered" Myth

The popularity of shisha in Namibia is largely driven by the misconception that it is safer than cigarette smoking. Many users believe that because the smoke passes through water, it is "filtered" of toxins.

Medical experts, however, debunk this. According to research highlighted, the water only cools the smoke, making it less irritating to the throat. This cooling effect is actually "treacherous" because it allows smokers to inhale more deeply into their lungs.

"The cooling doesn't remove the poison; it just makes the poison easier to swallow," says a health official. Shisha smoke contains the same dangerous substances as cigarettes: nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide, and heavy metals like arsenic and lead.

One Session = 100 Cigarettes?

The scale of consumption is what truly alarms the Cancer Association of Namibia (CAN). While a cigarette is usually finished in five minutes, a single shisha session can last over an hour.

During one shisha session, a person can inhale as much smoke as someone smoking **100 to 200 cigarettes**. Furthermore, every single "pull" on a water pipe can deliver as much smoke as an entire cigarette.

The Hidden Dangers: Carbon Monoxide and Infection

Beyond the long-term risks of lung, oral, and bladder cancer, shisha poses immediate threats:

- **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:** Shisha smoke contains significantly higher levels of carbon monoxide (CO) than cigarette smoke due to the burning charcoal used to heat the tobacco. In poorly ventilated lounges, this can lead to "shisha sickness"—dizziness, nausea, and even fainting.
- **Communicable Diseases:** In Namibia, sharing the same mouthpiece is a common social practice. Health officials warn that this significantly increases the risk of spreading tuberculosis (TB) and oral infections.

A Growing Addiction Among Youth

Recent reports from the National Council's standing committee on health indicate that children as young as ten are now experimenting with hubbly bubbly in



Namibia. The high nicotine content makes it "highly addictive," often serving as a "gateway drug" to cigarettes or other substances.

"The industry uses flavoured tobacco—like apple, mint, or berry—to target the youth," says a local activist. "It makes the product seem like candy, but the addiction it creates is very real."

Government Response

With 31% of Namibian teenagers already reported to be using tobacco products, the Ministry of Health and Social Services is currently reviewing the *Tobacco Products Control Act of 2010*. Proposed amendments include stricter regulations on shisha and vapes, potential bans on flavoured tobacco,

and increased excise duties to make these products less affordable for minors.

As the government moves to tighten the law, health experts urge parents and the public to look past the fragrant clouds. The message is clear: whether it's a cigarette or a hubbly, there is no such thing as a "safe" smoke.

Signs of Shisha Addiction:

- Feeling restless or irritable when not smoking.
- Cravings that can only be satisfied by a session.
- Physical symptoms like headaches or "brain fog" when trying to quit.
- Increased tolerance (needing longer sessions to feel the same effect).

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Health & Safety - "All In Together": Namibia's Construction Sector Urged to Adopt New Safety Standard

WINDHOEK – As the skyline of Windhoek continues to expand with new developments from the CBD to the outskirts of Klein Windhoek, the construction industry is facing a renewed call to action. Ahead of the global **Construction Safety Week 2026 (May 4–8)**, local industry leaders and safety experts are sounding the alarm on "STCKY" hazards—the "Stuff That Can Kill You."



Despite a general decrease in minor site injuries across the Southern African region, the rate of serious injuries and fatalities (SIFs) in the construction sector remains stubbornly high. In response, a new technical framework has been released to shift the industry from "ticking boxes" to a culture of genuine care.

The Three Pillars: Recognise, Respond, Respect

The 2026 campaign, themed "All In Together," introduces three critical pillars designed to unify everyone from site foremen in Walvis Bay to engineers in the capital.

- **RECOGNISE:** This pillar focuses on identifying "High Energy" hazards. Experts argue that we must use a common language to spot things like unstable scaffolding, high-voltage lines, and heavy machinery blind spots. Research shows that using structured models, like the "Energy Wheel," can improve hazard recognition by up to 30%.

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- **RESPOND:** Recognition is useless without action. The new guidelines urge Namibian contractors to move beyond just wearing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). Instead, the focus must be on "Direct Controls"—planning the work so that the hazard is eliminated or engineered out before a worker even steps onto the site.
- **RESPECT:** This calls for a shift in site culture. It means respecting the danger of the task and, more importantly, respecting the lives of the skilled artisans on the ground. It empowers any worker, regardless of rank, to stop work if they feel a "STCKY" risk is present.

something we think about once the bricks are being laid."

The new technical bulletins released this week provide practical tools for "Toolbox Talks"—the daily safety briefings held on sites across the country. These tools are designed to be used by project owners, designers, and field crews alike to ensure a "seamless thread" of safety from the drawing board to the finished building.

A Call to Local Contractors

With major infrastructure projects on the horizon, including green hydrogen plants and housing expansions, the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations is expected to keep a close eye on these global safety trends.

Moving Beyond the "Compliance Checklist"

"For too long, safety in Namibia has been seen as a mountain of paperwork or a yellow vest," says a local health and safety consultant. "The 2026 vision is different. It's a five-year plan to embed safety into the design and planning phases—not just

"Whether you are a small contractor building a residential wall or a major firm working on a multi-million dollar office block, the risks are the same," the report states. "We are all in this together, and the goal is simple: every worker must return home to their family at the end of the day."

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Local firms are encouraged to participate in the May events by hosting "safety stand-downs"—brief pauses in work to focus specifically on high-risk hazards and mental health—to demonstrate their commitment to a safer Namibian construction industry.



What is a "STCKY" Activity?

- **Stuff**
- **That**
- **Can**
- **Kill**
- **You**
- *Examples include: working at height without fall protection, working under suspended loads, and entering unshored trenches.*

If you need more information about implementing a good Health & Safety system at your company, contact OSH-Med international

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Fun Time - *Joke of the week*



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MVA Fund Emergency Services	9682
Fire Brigade	211 111
City Police	302 302
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Electricity Power Failures	290 3777
SPCA Emergency	081 124 4520
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E.M.A. Emergency Statistics updated 25.3.2026

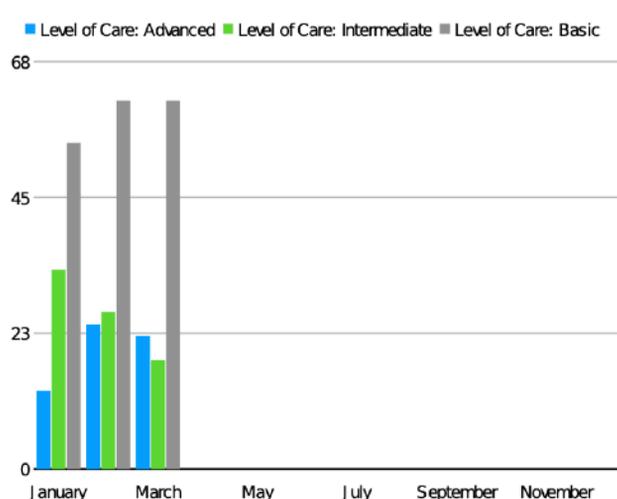
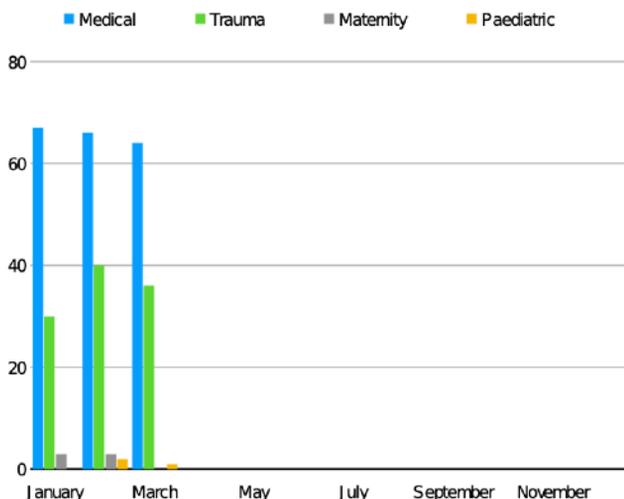
In 2026

E.M.A. assisted the public with
Emergencies in the value of

NAD 566,000.00

up till now

	Medical	Trauma	Maternity	Paediatric	Level of Care: Advanced	Level of Care: Intermediate	Level of Care: Basic
January	67	30	3	0	13	33	54
February	66	40	3	2	24	26	61
March	64	36	0	1	22	18	61
April	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total per annum	197	106	6	3	59	77	176
Total	312				312		



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- **What** happened?
- **What** kind of injuries?
- **How many** injured person
- **Waiting** for further question

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9112

Fire Brigade:

Windhoek

061-21 1111

Police:

NamPol

10 111

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061-302 302

MVA Fund

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(all numbers are from GRN or non-profit organisations)



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