

# **COVID-19**

## **PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

### **SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **GUIDE FOR COMPANIES**

#### **HOW TO PREPARE YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT AND RESPONDING IF AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

**Coronavirus Official Toll-Free Hot-Line Call Centre 0800 029 999**

**Clinicians Hotline: 082 883 9920**

**Official WhatsApp Help Service: 0600 123 456**

*24 APRIL 2020*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

### About the Department of Economic Development Tourism and Environment Affairs (EDTEA)

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs is mandated to oversee the socio-economic transformation in the Province. It leads the policy and strategic initiatives directed at promoting development and growth in various sectors of the economy. EDTEA co-operates with various stakeholders and social partners that include the private sector and civil society. The Constitution together with other national and provincial legislative, policy and strategic instruments determine the operations of the Department.

### About Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal

Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN) is a provincial public entity responsible for promoting domestic and international trade and facilitating inward investment for the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, falling under the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs. TIKZN's vision is to make the province of KwaZulu-Natal the premier investment destination and a leader in export trade. As a facilitator and initiator of projects, TIKZN services the needs of the province but also takes into account the need to create businesses that can become sustainable to continuously create jobs.

### Novel Coronavirus

According to the Regulations issued in terms of Section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002; R.318: 'COVID-19' means the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov) which is an infectious disease caused by a virus, which emerged during 2019 and was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) during the year 2020 that has previously not been scientifically identified in humans.

### Key important links:

<http://www.health.gov.za/>

<https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>

<https://www.nicd.ac.za/>

<http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/health.asp>

<http://www.kznedtea.gov.za/>

<http://www.tikzn.co.za/>

<https://www.labourguide.co.za/workshop/1773-covid-19-guideline-mar2020/file>

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### **Acknowledgement**

*The following steps for responding when an employee tests positive for the coronavirus are based on a combination of guidelines that are taken from the World Health Organisation (WHO), the South African Department of Health, The Department of Employment and Labour Workplace Preparedness: COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-19 virus); The National Council for Communicable Diseases and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.*

## **B. GUIDE TO BUSINESS**

### **1. How COVID-19 spreads**

- 1.1. When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects, such as desks, tables or telephones. People could catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects, and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. If they are standing within 1 meter of a person with COVID-19 they can catch it by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them.
- 1.2. Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age: people over 40 seem to be more vulnerable than those under 40. People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

### **2. Immediate do's for companies**

- 2.1. Employers are required to follow the measures below to help prevent the spread of infections in your workplace, such as colds, flu and stomach bugs, and protect your customers, contractors, and employees.
- 2.2. Employers should start doing these things now, even if COVID-19 has not arrived in the environment where you operate. These measures can reduce working days lost due to illness and stop or slow the spread of COVID-19 when it arrives at one of your workplaces.
- 2.3. Make sure your workplaces are clean and hygienic
  - 2.3.1. Surfaces (e.g. desks, tables and floors) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards and door and cupboard handles) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly.  
*Why?* Because contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads.
- 2.4. Promote regular and thorough hand-washing by employees, contractors, and customers
  - 2.4.1. Put sanitizing hand rub dispensers in prominent places around the workplace. Make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled
  - 2.4.2. Display posters promoting hand-washing
  - 2.4.3. Combine with other communication measures such as offering guidance from occupational health and safety officers, briefings at meetings, and information on intranet sites to promote hand-washing and other preventative measures referred to in the [www.sacoronavirus.co.za](http://www.sacoronavirus.co.za) website.
  - 2.4.4. Make sure that staff, contractors, and customers have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water
- 2.5. Promote good respiratory hygiene in the workplace
  - 2.5.1. Where possible, display posters promoting respiratory hygiene. Combine this with other communication measures such as guidance from occupational health and safety officers, briefings at meetings, and information on the intranet, etc.
  - 2.5.2. Ensure that face masks are provided to and correctly worn by employees and that paper tissues/towels are available at your workplaces, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of used masks and paper tissues.
  - 2.5.3. Advise employees and contractors to consult national travel advice and regulations before going on business trips.
  - 2.5.4. Brief your employees, contractors, and customers that if COVID-19 starts spreading in your business environment that anyone with even a mild cough or low-grade fever ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$  or more) needs to advise you, as the employer, immediately and immediately seek medical assistance.

- 2.5.5. Keep promoting the message that people need to stay at home even if they have only mild symptoms of COVID-19
- 2.5.6. Display posters with this message in your workplaces. Combine this with other communication channels commonly used in your organization or business

### **3. Immediate Response**

*(Guidelines for symptom monitoring and management of essential workers for COVID-19 related infection: Department of Health - Occupational Health and Safety Committee – Covid-19 Response)*

- 3.1. Employees should be screened for COVID-19 related symptoms and report such symptoms to a designated person and / or occupational health practitioner prior to entry into the workplace or work area in order for a decision to be made as to the staff member's continued attendance at work.
- 3.2. At the start of a shift and prior to ending the shift, designated persons and / or occupational health practitioner must check with employees whether they have experienced sudden onset of any of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or fever/chills (or  $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$  measured temperature if this is available at the worksite), in the past 24 hours as outlined in the symptom monitoring sheet. These are the current criteria for the identification of persons under investigation (PUI).
- 3.3. Should an employee report any of the abovementioned symptoms, s/he should immediately be provided with a surgical mask and referred to the designated staff at the workplace so that arrangements can be made for COVID-19 testing at the closest testing centre.
- 3.4. Should an employee report any additional symptoms as outlined in the symptom monitoring sheet, s/he should be provided with a suitable mask and referred to the occupational health clinic, family practitioner or primary care clinic for further clinical evaluation and requirement for COVID-19 testing if indicated.
- 3.5. On receiving their results the employee and/or health professional supporting the employee should notify their workplace so that the employee is managed accordingly. The workplace should proactively take steps to obtain this information to avoid any delays in reporting.
- 3.6. A positive COVID-19 test in an employee will require all potential contacts in the workplace to be assessed.
- 3.7. All employees on returning to work after isolation or quarantine period, should follow general work restrictions that include:
  - 3.7.1. undergo medical evaluation to confirm that they are fit to work
  - 3.7.2. wearing of surgical masks at all times while at work for a period of 21 days from the initial test
  - 3.7.3. implement social distancing measures as appropriate (in the case of health workers avoiding contact with severely immunocompromised patients)
- 3.8. adherence to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette
- 3.9. continued self-monitoring for symptoms, and seek medical re-evaluation if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen

### **4. Protect Other Employees**

- 4.1. If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should alert the authorities and also inform fellow employees of their possible exposure, but maintain confidentiality
- 4.2. Fellow employees should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms.
- 4.3. Identify where the infected employee worked, as well as those individuals—including colleagues, customers, visitors, and vendors—the infected employee came into contact with during the 14 days prior to testing positive or first displaying symptoms.
- 4.4. Guided by the Department of Health, Employers should notify affected customers, visitors, and vendors and instruct those employees who came into contact with the sick employee within the 14 day period to go home and self-isolate for 14 days, working remotely if possible.

## 5. Workplace Environment

Please refer to: <https://www.labourguide.co.za/workshop/1773-covid-19-guideline-mar2020/file>  
**The Department of Employment and Labour Workplace Preparedness: COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-19 virus)**

- 5.1. The onus is on the employer to provide all staff with personal protective gear (face masks, hand sanitisers and gloves (where necessary)).
- 5.2. The employer should ensure that the work environment is cleaned and disinfected every four hours. All staff are to observe social distancing (at least 1.5m between working spaces).
- 5.3. If an employee or client has tested positive for coronavirus, and has been in contact with the employment premises, based on the potential breadth of exposure to coronavirus, the employer must close immediately, and coordinate with employees to work remotely if possible.
- 5.4. The employer is to immediately alert the Department of Health through its **coronavirus hotline Official Toll-Free Call Centre 0800 029 999, Clinicians Hotline: 082 883 9920; Official WhatsApp Help Service: 0600 123 456**
- 5.5. The employer should immediately perform enhanced or deep sanitising cleaning and disinfection, after persons suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in your facility.
- 5.6. Employers should develop business continuity plans, policies for worker protection and provide training to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks. Training should include when to use personal protective equipment, what PPE is necessary, how to properly wear, use, and take off PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
- 5.7. Employers must ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with appropriate OSHA standards.
- 5.8. Collaborate with the provincial health department to ensure appropriate protocols and guidelines, such as updated/additional guidance for cleaning and disinfection, are followed, including for identification of new potential cases of COVID-19.
- 5.9. Re-opening of the employment facility should be coordinated with advise from the requisite authorities and in line with the DMA and applicable regulations.

More detailed information on these can be found on <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>

<https://sahivsoc.org/Files/Guidance%20for%20symptom%20monitoring%20and%20management.pdf>

**Remember:**

**Simple precautions and planning can make a big difference**

**Action now will help protect your employees, your clients, our community and importantly your business**

**PLAY YOUR PART**