



ADDENDUM TO DEPARTMENTAL SHERQ POLICY

POLICY TITLE : **Coronavirus Disease 2019 “COVID-19” POLICY**
POLICY REF. No : **COVID-19 OHS, POLICY 01**

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all employees and to stop the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 “COVID-19” virus. Section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993 “OHSA” requires every employer to provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of its employees. Similarly, the OHSA also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their fellow employees.
- 1.2 Information pertaining to COVID-19 is being provided by various authorities on a regular basis and it is important to ensure that updates are obtained and disseminated throughout the department. Updates by World Health Organisation “WHO” and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases “NICD” and the Department of employment and Labour will be relied upon.. Spreading unverified information may contribute to unnecessary panic, stigma and discrimination, all of which do not add value in this era.
- 1.3 It is the employee's responsibility to contact management should he/she have any queries related to this Policy.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Department of Public Works and Roads as well as Clients (Contractors inclusive) of the Department The policy includes measures being taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in order to sustain a healthy and safe workplace. It is important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR COVID-19 COMBAT WITHIN THE NW: DPW&R

- 3.1 Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996
3.2 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993
3.3 Compensation for Occupational Diseases and Injuries Act, 130 of 1993
3.4 Disaster Management Act, 57 of 2002
3.5 Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995
3.6 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997
3.7 Public Service Act, 1994 as amended and regulations

3.8 The Medical Schemes Act, 131 of 1998

4. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REGULATIONS AND STRATEGIES

4.1 South African COVID-19 HOTLINE: 08000 29999

4.2 COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in the Workplaces, Covid-19 OHS, 2020

4.3 Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations of 29 April 2020

4.4 Circular No.1 of 2020: Phased Return to Work as part of COVID-19 LEVEL 4 (Public Works & Infrastructure)

4.5 Protocol and Workplace Plan to Manage Phased Return to Work After the Easing of the Level 5 Lockdown, May 2020 (Public Works & Infrastructure)

4.6 Government Notice: COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces COVID-19 (C19 OHS), 2020 (Department of Employment and Labour)

4.7 Circular No. 18 of 2020: State of Disaster COVID-19: Public Service Return to Work Guidelines after the Easing of the National Lockdown (the DPSA)

4.8 DPSA Circular No. 7 of 2020: State of Disaster: Guidelines for the Containment/Management of the CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) in the Public Service (the DPSA)

4.9 DPSA Circular 11/2020: Directions in respect of leave for employees affected by COVID -19

4.10 Notice on Compensation for Occupationally-acquired covid-19 disease under Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993 as amended

5. CONTENT

5.1 How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread when there is close contact (1.5 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases as the period of exposure to an infected person lengthens. Contaminated droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes are the main means of transmission. There are two main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- Infection can be spread to people who are nearby as droplets are inhaled into the lungs.
- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person who has been contaminated and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

5.2 Primary Symptoms of COVID-19

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath/ difficulty in breathing

- Redness of eyes
- Body aches
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Tiredness

Infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people and those with long-term chronic conditions like diabetes, cancer and lung disease.

5.3 What to do if you develop Symptoms

- People who contract COVID-19 may take approximately from one to twenty-one days to develop symptoms. Even if you do not have a history of travel to a COVID-19 affected region or contact with an individual who has contracted the illness, you must still inform your healthcare provider or employer if you present with symptoms of COVID-19.

Hotline for the COVID-19 as per the Department of Health website:

**South African
COVID 19 HOTLINE
08000 29999**

If you present with symptoms of Corona Virus, please call the official COVID 19 HOTLINE before going to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. By calling the hotline, someone will be sent to test you where you are, which will limit the spread of the virus.



- All employees and visitors entering and exiting the department are expected to be screened. The departmental COVID-19 screening checklist/tool and temperature scanner will be used.
- Employees should notify their line manager / supervisor and stay at home if they are sick and have been booked off. All employees should follow the department's sick leave policy which is premised on the DPSA Ministerial directions issued under Circular 11 /2020 in such circumstances. If the employer has reason to suspect that an employee has been infected with COVID-19 or an employee becomes ill at work,

the employer will request the employee to leave the workplace and seek medical treatment and/or testing immediately.

5.4 Quarantine and Working from Home

If an employee has been in close contact with an individual who has since been diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee must immediately inform their employer and contact the COVID-19 Hotline. Close contact means that the employee was in face-to-face contact (i.e. within 1.5 metres) or in a closed space for more than 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19.

If, after informing the employer and Department of Health, the employee is required to self-quarantine, the provisions of DPSA Circular 11/2020 on Ministerial Directions must be followed through the Supervisor.

Should the employee undergo prescribed medical screening process and is tested positive for Covid-19, an employee may be granted sick leave or incapacity leave in accordance with the Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and ill health retirement (PILLIR) if the employee has exhausted his/her normal sick leave for the duration of the isolation period if the employee's sick leave entitlement under the section is exhausted

5.5 Travel

All domestic flight travel is suspended until further notice unless absolutely necessary as determined by the parties concerned. Local travel to clients will still be required but must be done in line with current protocols of low contact and high hygiene. In this instance, the department will also be guided by their clients in terms of the clients' needs and expectations.

5.6 Meetings

- Gatherings other than official meetings are prohibited
- Consider whether a face-to-face meeting is needed - could it be replaced by a teleconference or any other electronic platform, e.g. skype, WhatsApp, Zoom etc.
- In the case of critical face-to-face meetings, employees must be seated at least 3m apart and they may not be more than five (5) in a room unless it can sufficiently accommodate more participants.
- Ensure that all participants in the meeting have washed their hands for 20 seconds or utilises a hand sanitizer prior to the meeting commencing and during the meeting.
- Ensure that all delegates are seated at least one and a half metre apart.

- The names and contact details of all participants in the meeting should be retained for at least one month. This may be done through the completion of a register and will assist healthcare authorities in tracing those who have been exposed to COVID-19 if a participant does become ill with the virus shortly after the meeting.
- If a participant should contract the virus shortly after the meeting, the employer must inform all participants who attended the meeting and advise them to go for screening and/or testing.

5.6 Hygiene and safety in the Workplace

- The number of employees at the workplace at any given time will be minimised without compromising key service delivery, through rotation, staggered working hours, shift systems, remote working arrangements or similar measures in order to achieve social distancing.
- All employees and visitors entering the workplace will be temperature screened for any observable symptoms associated with Covid-19 and appropriate action taken to either temporary isolate while contacting department of Health for necessary intervention.
- If an employee show symptoms of Covid-19 and subsequently advised to consult and isolate the employer through the OHS representatives must facilitate the assessment of the risk of transmission, disinfect the area and the worker's workstation, refer those workers who may be at risk for screening and take any other appropriate measure to prevent possible transmission.
- Should there be any evidence that the worker contracted COVID-19 as a result of occupational exposure, the department must report and lodge a claim for compensation in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act No. 130 of 1993) in accordance with Notice 193 published on 3 March 2020.
- All visitors and employees entering the building and offices are required to utilise a hand sanitizer on entering the premises which will also be placed at the entrances and strategic points.
- Coughs and sneezes must be covered with a tissue; or onto a flexed elbow, the tissue must be disposed of in the relevant waste bin.
- Frequently touched objects, including workstations and surfaces, must be cleaned and disinfected using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are temporarily not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol must be used.
- Employees must be released to go home through Supervisors in the absence of water supply. Water shortage must be reported to the OHS Units to facilitate appropriate intervention.
- Handshakes with any staff or clients must be AVOIDED; one's face should not be touched either.

- No more than three (3) persons are allowed in a lift at a given time

5.8 Wearing Face Masks

The use of face masks covering the mouth and nose is compulsory, when in public, entering any building, premises, work and when utilising government vehicle or public transport. Persons without a face mask will not be permitted to enter the workplace, as required by Chapter 5(1) and 5(2) of the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations (29 April 2020).

5.9 Seminars, Training and Conferences

No employee may attend external seminars, training or conferences, unless approved by the Administrator. The presentation of seminars and training initiated by the department to employees will be converted to online/blended facilitation, e.g. skype, or limited to a small group without compromising social distancing and hygiene and ventilation protocol. etc.

5.10 COVID-19 Steering Committee

A COVID-19 Steering Committee will be established to ensure the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace, as required by Government Notice NO. 479 29 APRIL 2020 - 479 Disaster Management Act (57/2002): Covid-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces Covid-19 (C19 OHS), 2020 and the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations of 29 April 2020.

The COVID-19 Response Task Team is also appointed to assist, where necessary, with the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace.

5.11 COVID-19 Compliance Officer

A COVID-19 Compliance Officer will be appointed, which may be the same appointee as the COVID-19 Manager. The Compliance Officer is required to develop a plan for the phased in return of employees to the workplace, prior to reopening the workplace for business. The plan must include the following:

- Which employees are permitted to work;
- What the plans for the phased-in return of their employees to the workplace are;
- What health protocols are in place to protect employees from COVID-19; and
- The details of the COVID-19 Compliance Officer;


5.12 Occupational health and safety representatives

Occupational health and safety representatives and employees within the wellness units will coordinate, facilitate and participate in the daily temperature screening of employees, awareness sessions and investigation of cases in addition to their roles as per the OHS Act.

5.13. Consequence of Breach

If an employee breaches this policy the necessary disciplinary action will be taken. It is important to note that the employer's sick leave policy will not be adjusted or become flexible during the outbreak of COVID-19. The normal sick leave policy which is in line with Labour Law will still apply.

This policy is subject to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines and accordingly will be updated if, and when, required.



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ADMINISTRATOR
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29 MAY 2020
DATE