

**MEDIA RELEASE****DATE: 24 March 2020****TO: ALL NEWS EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS**

**RE: NRCS URGES ALL SOUTH AFRICANS TO BE VIGILANT WHEN PURCHASING MASKS AND CHEMICAL DISINFECTANTS AS SOME CAN BE DEADLY.**

It has come to the attention of the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) that consumers are purchasing chemical disinfectants and particle filtering half masks in large quantities as part of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 epidemic.

These products are subject to safety regulations administered by the NRCS to ensure that they do not present unnecessary risk to consumers. The regulations set out a hierarchy that must be taken into account when the safety of products is being assessed.

In light of this, the NRCS would like to urge consumers to only purchase chemical disinfectants and particle filtering half masks that have been approved by the NRCS and to use them in accordance with their instructions for use that either appear on the product itself or in a leaflet inserted inside the packages.

A chemical disinfectant is a type of disinfectant that can kill microorganisms like bacteria, viruses, spores and fungi on inanimate surfaces (any solid surface like a table or a door handle). The product label of each chemical disinfectant product will state against which microorganisms it can be used and how it must be used in order for it to be effective.

Each chemical disinfectant product that is placed on the South African market must comply with the minimum safety requirements and must also be registered by the NRCS. Such a product shall also display the NRCS registration number on its label and can be one of the following:

- Act29GNR529/XXXXXX/XXX/XXXX
- Act5GNR529/XXXXXX/XXX/XXXX
- NRCS/8054/XXXXXX/XXX

The NRCS is also responsible for the regulation of particle filtering half masks that are also known as dust masks or disposable dust masks. Such filtering half masks shall comply with the minimum safety requirements as set out in the Compulsory Specification (VC8072:2011) for respiratory protective devices and as such, must be approved by the NRCS in accordance with these requirements.

The NRCS has a list of more than 400 chemical disinfectant manufacturers, importers and distributors who are registered to provide the market with approved products. Similarly, there are more than 40 suppliers of approved particle filtering half masks also registered with the NRCS.

Where there is a shortage of supply of these essential products during this critical time, the NRCS will consider sales permit applications from businesses in its effort to combat the spread of the Coronavirus as long as the products do not pose harm to consumers and may not result in unfair trade.

The organisation remains vigilant to guard against any unscrupulous business practises as part of its mandate to protect the health and safety of consumers and ensure fair trade.

**For technical queries, please speak to Thomas Madzivhe on 012 482 8770 / 072 475 1267**

**For media related queries, please contact Mirriam Moswaane on 012 482 8826 / 083 364 2007**

**ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL REGULATOR FOR COMPULSORY SPECIFICATIONS (NRCS).**