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COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.

GUIDANCE ON VULNERABLE EMPLOYEES & WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION IN RELATION TO COVID-19

With many businesses resuming operations at the end of the month, the Department of Health has put together an interim guide to provide guidance to evaluate and manage vulnerable employees in the context of the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (No. 85 of 1993), the employer has an obligation to provide “a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of his employees.” In addition, an employer has an obligation to ensure that in instances where hazards cannot be eliminated, they be appropriately controlled to prevent a risk of an adverse health outcome.

The major categories for vulnerable employees include:

1. 60 years and older
2. One or more of the underlying commonly encountered chronic medical conditions (of any age) particularly if not well controlled:
 - chronic lung disease: moderate to severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchiectasis, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, active TB and post-tuberculous lung disease (PTLD)
 - diabetes (poorly controlled) or with late complications
 - moderate/severe hypertension (poorly controlled) or with target organ damage
 - serious heart conditions: heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies, pulmonary hypertension; congenital heart disease
 - chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
 - chronic liver disease including cirrhosis
3. Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
4. Immunocompromised as a result of cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
5. >28 weeks pregnant (and especially with any of co-morbidities listed above)

If you have employees who fit into the broad categories above, download the guidance document [here](#).

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resource for all COVID-19 related updates, regulations, notices and news.

All SAMED COVID-19 updates and related information can be found here.

CLICK HERE



UPDATE: AMENDMENTS TO THE DIRECTIONS ISSUED UNDER SECTION 27(2) OF THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT IN TERMS OF MEASURES TO PREVENT AND COMBAT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

A number of amendments have been made to the directions which address the measures to prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19.

- There are a number of amendments to the handling of mortal remains.
- Persons returning from outside of the Republic will be subjected to screening and mandatory quarantine for a minimum of 14 days in designated quarantine facilities and may be subjected to daily testing.
- This is expanded into the considerations for the quarantine facilities and transport to and from these facilities.
- Foreign nationals evacuated from South Africa will be subjected to exit screening and may be subjected to quarantine at their own cost for a minimum period of 14 days should they present with COVID-19 symptoms.
- With the easing of lockdown restrictions, provision has been made for additional control measure for public areas.

Download the amendments to the directions [here](#).

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WEBINAR: A SUSTAINABLE EXIT STRATEGY - OPTIONS FOR LIFTING COVID-19 CONTAINMENT MEASURES

African governments have applied different strategies and preventive measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. These measures have significantly impacted health systems and the economy, putting at risk the most vulnerable populations. As countries are starting to look ahead, with a view to entering the recovery phase, WHO urges 'controlled lifting of anti-COVID measures'. Without appropriate countermeasures, lifting lockdowns and lack of sufficient social distancing measures could accelerate the spread of the virus.

On the other hand, the longer such measures are in place, the greater the chance of a significant, permanent reduction in living standards. A constant dialogue between the public sector and the private sector is key to support a progressive lift of the containment measures. This webinar invites key stakeholders from African Ministries of Health and Africa CDC to discuss what a sustainable strategy should look like and how the private sector can be involved.

[Log in on Friday 29th May at 4pm EAT.](#)

SUSTAINABLE EXIT STRATEGIES FOR LIFTING COVID-19 CONTAINMENT MEASURES

May 29th 04:00PM East African Time

			
Mr. Farid Fezoua President & CEO, GE Healthcare, Africa	Hon. Kwaku Agyemang-Manu Minister for Health, Ghana	Dr. Benjamin Djoudalbaye Head, Division of Policy, Health Diplomacy and Communication, Africa CDC	Dr. Mercy Mwangangi Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health, Kenya





 Curated by: 

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REPORT UNLICENCED COMPANIES TO SAHPRA

Several members have contact SAMED about companies trading medical technologies without a SAHPRA Medical Device Establishment License. These companies are trading illegally and it is essential that they be reported to SAHPRA for investigation.

SAHPRA has published a list of licenced companies under documents on their [medical devices page](#) which you can use to check if the company has a Medical Device Establishment License before sending a report. You can download this list as at 26 May 2020, [here](#). Please ensure that you visit the SAHPRA website to obtain updates as this is an evolving list.

Report unlicensed companies by emailing: mokgadi.fafudi@sahpra.org.za

IMPORTANT SAHPRA MEDICAL DEVICE NOTICES

- [Specification criteria for COVID-19 serological test kits](#)
- [Joint Communication-Regulatory Status of Equipment Used to Help Prevent COVID-19](#)
- [NRCS media Release – Standards for Masks and Disinfectants](#)
- [Regulatory Requirements for the manufacture, distribution or wholesale of Serological COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits](#)
- [SAHPRA clarifies the issue of COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits](#)
- [Medical devices including IVDS requirement for supply in light of COVID-19 pandemic](#)

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SAHPRA has launched a COVID-19 Medical Device Hotline to deal with COVID-19 related queries.

- 084 220 8037
- 072 993 2273
- 078 281 6334

For queries on COVID-19 please email mdcovid.@sahpra.org.za and all other regular medical device queries can be sent to MDnotifications@sahpra.org.za

For general licensing queries: June Searela june.searela@sahpra.org.za / 072 828 2416

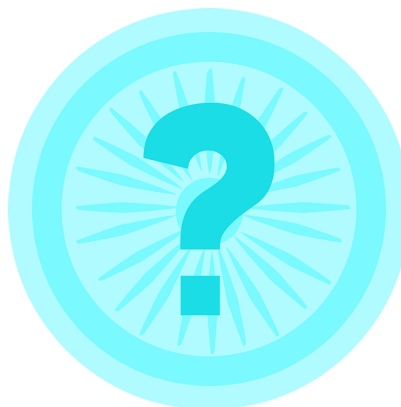
For COVID-19 related applications: Matlapeng Shabalala Matlapeng.Shabalala@sahpra.org.za / 071 302 0409 or

Khanyisile Nkuku Khanyisile.Nkuku@sahpra.org.za / 081 854 7109

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DO YOU HAVE A
COVID-19
QUESTION OR
QUERY?

Please visit the [FAQ Section](#) of our library as it provides answers to many of the frequently asked questions we receive.



What must I do to prepare my workplace and have staff return to work?

There are now Occupational Health & Safety Measures that all businesses, apart from health facilities and practices, must adhere to. This applies to those who have been supplying essential goods this far, as well as those that may partially re-open from level 4 and down.

Download the directive [here](#)

You can also find useful tools on the [Return2Work website](#).

PARTICIPATE ON B4SA COVID-19 PROCUREMENT PORTAL

The information collected on the B4SA covid19manager.co.za platform will be used to ensure supplier verification, regulatory compliance, product availability, reasonable pricing and providing the accurate and most up-to-date logistical information to the procurement department division at BSA to place orders from you and/or assist with ramping up local production. It is an automated process to help facilitate the overwhelming demand currently being experienced in South Africa during the weeks to come.

NOTE: THIS IS A LIVE SYSTEM SO PLEASE UPDATE YOUR STOCK QUANTITIES AND LEAD TIME AS AND WHEN THEY CHANGE.

Please see the following [link to the video](#) for an explanation of how to use the portal and click on <https://covid19manager.co.za/> to add your company and product information.

You will most likely be contacted by a member of the BSA procurement team should your information provided need to be verified or an order need to be placed.

If you have any questions about the status of your registration, on the types of PPE and medical equipment that B4SA are procuring, if you are struggling to complete your application, or if you have any other queries, please get in touch with the B4SA support team via covid19portal@businessresponsecovid19.co.za. If you are not receiving feedback from the administrators, please check your spam/junk folders.

THE SOLIDARITY FUND

The Solidarity Fund provided more details on its purpose and mandate of mobilising and coordinating efforts and resources from all South Africans and the international community to assist most vulnerable South Africans to deal with the impact of Covid19 and the consequences of measures intended to slow its rate of infection. One of its key focus areas is a Health Response with direct support for the healthcare system, augmenting both the private and government healthcare sectors to ensure they have what they need, as well as enabling emergency supplies.

Details on how to donate are available on the Fund's website www.solidarityfund.co.za

For more information email info@solidarityfund.co.za

For offers of supply of Medicines and Medical Devices send

to covid19supplies@businessresponsecovid19.co.za

If you are seeking PPE for your hospital, clinic, or NGO please email your request

to covid19requests@businessresponsecovid19.co.za

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COVID-19 EVENTS

CONFIDENTIALITY & COVID-19: EKA SNAP SESSION

EKA is again hosting one of its **Snap Sessions** in response to pertinent COVID-related issues on **28 May 2020, 18:00 - 20:00** via Zoom.

The Disaster Management Regulations and the Notifiable Medical Conditions Regulations authorise the **collection, use and disclosure of personal information**, including health information and information on age and addresses.

Employers are expected to keep a list of employees 60 years and older, as well as all employees with co-morbidities. Screening criteria are applied by health facilities and businesses to visitors, (prospective) patients, company representatives, etc. Tests are expected and results are to be disclosed in some cases. Vast amounts of personal information are collected, stored, used, and in, some cases, passed on to others. This raises important compliance questions.

As limitations to the right to privacy are constitutionally determined, **pertinent questions** will be addressed:

- *Are these disclosures mandatory? Can someone refuse to provide this information?*
- *What can, or must, an employer or a business do with this information? To whom can it be disclosed, if at all?*
- *How can or should this information be used?*
- *Can the Department of Labour, the NDoH / NICD or third parties insist on accessing this information?*
- *How should businesses, practices and employers protect this information?*
- *Should it be destroyed and if so, at what stage?*
- *If an employee or visitor is being quarantined, should that fact be disclosed to protect others, or not?*

For more information, contact: pat@elsabeklinckassociates.co.za

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OMMIA HEALTH COVID-19 VIRTUAL EXPO

Omnia Health Live are bringing together the global healthcare industry, for the largest virtual gathering ever seen before, a whole new concept planned from the ground up to be more diverse and accessible, **taking place 22-26 June 2020.**

[Join the experience here](#)

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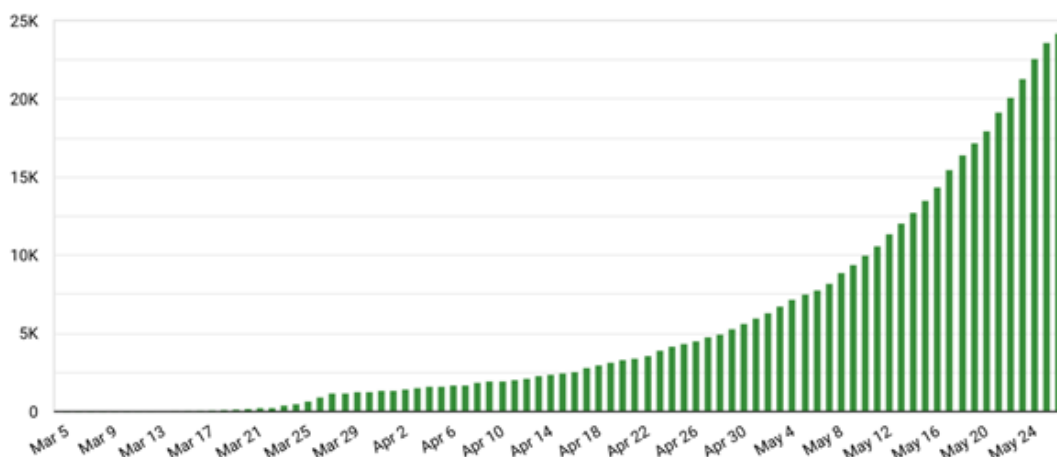
COVID-19 EVENTS

TRACKING THE PANDEMIC

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24,204	1,049	Fatalities	2.10%	12,741
Active Cases	Relative to Population	524	Relative to Population	Total Tests
10,999	0.0413%		0.000892%	605,991

Cumulative Confirmed Cases



ECONOMICS, POLITICS, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL

According to [Commissioner of the SA Revenue Service, Edward Kieswetter](#), the COVID-19 pandemic has given South Africa an opportunity to reshape the economy in a way that addresses past injustices and ensures equal opportunities for all. As the country gears up to lift restrictions on economic activity as in the move to Level 3 of the lockdown from 1 June, Kieswetter said it was important not to revert to restoring the "status quo". That would assume everything was right before COVID-19 when on the contrary, the pandemic has exposed the inequalities of society. SA should consider how to address housing infrastructure, public health, public transport and spatial planning gaps, he argued. "In the way that we reopen the economy, there is an opportunity to address those injustices." SA should be mindful not to just reopen legacy businesses once the economy reopens, saying SARS itself is using the "COVID-moment" to leap into the future. "This is an ideal opportunity for new business models ... for virtualising the workplace," he said.

[Tiger Brands Ltd. could make significant job cuts](#) and asset sales this year as Africa's biggest publicly traded packaged-food company looks to reduce costs and survive weak consumer demand worsened by the coronavirus pandemic.

Daily Maverick's Mark Heywood wrote about the responsibility to speak out on [malnutrition, health services](#) and democracy. Children between the ages of six months and five years are the most vulnerable to malnutrition, which will have a long-term impact on their intellectual and physical development. Since the start of the lockdown, survey after survey has reported increases in hunger.

For example, according to a University of Johannesburg/Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) survey, 34% of the people surveyed between 18 to 27 April reported that they had gone to bed hungry (up by 6% from an earlier survey). A larger survey of nearly 20,000 people (released by Minister Blade Nzimande on 26 April), also by the HSRC, had already set the alarm bells ringing. On "access to food" it found that "Just under a quarter (24%) of residents had no money to buy food. More than half (55%) of informal settlement residents had no money for food. About two-thirds of residents from townships also had no money for food."

CLINICAL, SCIENTIFIC

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize expressed his concern about [the global shortage of test kits for Covid-19](#) as he announced the country's latest coronavirus figures. In the previous 24 hours, 9 214 tests were conducted. The previous day there were about 12 900 tests. Mkhize, briefing the National Council of Provinces on Tuesday, explained the drop in tests was due to the worldwide shortage of test kits. A backlog could mean doctors will have to make clinical diagnoses. In the same briefing, the Minister announced that COVID-19 [hotspots could remain at Level 4](#) as the country moves to Level 3 on 1 June, with the possibility they could be moved to a hard lockdown if measures to curtail the spread of the virus fail.

South Africa's lockdown seems to have delayed the [winter influenza outbreak](#). School closures and travel bans are likely to have prevented seasonal flu from taking hold. A mild flu season will help in the

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every year due to the deaths and absenteeism from sick days. If fewer people catch flu, the country will have a better chance of fighting COVID19, experts wrote in April.

Field hospitals:

WATCH: CTICC is transformed into the biggest dedicated COVID-19 hospital in Africa. In a fortnight, the centre will be ready to accommodate up to 850 COVID-19 patients. It will be the largest temporary field hospital in the country, in a province where cases have soared quicker than in the rest of the country. Volkswagen South Africa acquired the necessary approval from their head office in Germany to convert its [Port Elizabeth plant into a temporary medical facility](#). Once the facility is up and running, it could accommodate up to 4000 beds for patients diagnosed with COVID-19.

The World Health Organization has ["temporarily" suspended clinical trials of hydroxychloriquine](#) as a potential treatment for COVID-19 being carried out across a range of countries as a precautionary measure. The decision came after the publication last week of a study in the Lancet indicating that using the drug on COVID-19 patients could increase their likelihood of dying.

Meanwhile, the first [coronavirus vaccine to reach phase 1 clinical trial has been found to be safe, well-tolerated and able to generate an immune response against SARS-Cov-2 in humans](#), according to a news release. This new Ad5-NCov vaccine, an adenovirus type-5 vaccine which expresses the spike glycoprotein of the SARS-Cov-2 virus, was developed by the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology and CanSino Biologics in Tianjin, China. The developers cloned a spike gene based on the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This trial was conducted among 108 healthy adults between the ages of 18 and 60 in an open-label way – this means that both the trial candidate and the research knew exactly what the candidate would be receiving. These adults showed promising results after 28 days, but the results need to be evaluated for a period of six months. The researchers tested the blood of the candidates at regular intervals to see how the immune system was affected. The vaccine stimulated a rapid T-cell response in the majority of volunteers, which was greater in those given the higher and middle doses of vaccine, with levels peaking at 14 days after vaccination.

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SAMED is the voice of the South African medical technology industry. The not-for-gain was formed in 1985 and aims to provide members with a collective, objective and credible platform to engage with stakeholders. SAMED's members include individual medical technology companies, associate members and associations.

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