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COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT - ALERT LEVEL 2 REGULATIONS

From midnight 17 August 2020, South Africa will move to alert level 2 in our response to the coronavirus pandemic. This will come as a relief to all South Africans who have had to live under stringent restrictions for the last five months.

President Ramaphosa says it is a sign of the progress South Africa is making in reducing new infections and demand on South African health facilities. It is also a very important development in efforts to restart the economy.

Ramaphosa, however, says that it is too early to celebrate and that there is still a chance of resurgence of the disease

As the country moves to alert level 2, many restrictions on social and economic activity have been lifted. With this comes an increased risk of transmission. Ramaphosa warned that the greatest threat to the health of nation right now is complacency.

Level 2 Regulations allow meetings between family and friends, visits to entertainment venues, leisure travel and the consumption of alcohol in licensed establishments (excluding nightclubs).

"But as the old adage goes, just because you can, doesn't mean you should," Ramaphosa added, "Many people who have the coronavirus do not have symptoms and may not even know they are infected. This is a sobering reality because it means that any of us could be infected right now and could unwittingly infect others."

Read the full address [here](#).

Download the Disaster Management Act: Regulations: Alert level 2 during Coronavirus COVID-19 lockdown [here](#).

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REFERRALS TO NASREC FIELD HOSPITAL

NASREC Field Hospital has two important sections:

- Quarantine & Isolation (Q&I) Section: For anyone with COVID-19 who cannot self-isolate at home to prevent transmission of coronavirus to family or communities.
- Intermediary Care Section (Oxygen): For anyone with COVID-19 who has been admitted to a public sector hospital on oxygen who is now stable but still requires oxygen and clinical care towards full recovery

Q&I section

This section of the NASREC Field Hospital is for anyone well or with mild symptoms or who has recovered in a public sector hospital but who cannot self-isolate or complete their isolation period at home safely. This is to prevent transmission of coronavirus to your family or community members.

Residents will be provided with a bed, meals, clinical monitoring and can utilize the outside space to get fresh air and sunshine until they are ready to de-isolate and return home.

Q&I Admission Criteria

- Quarantine: No COVID test result as yet but high risk exposure or mildly symptomatic Non-pregnant females

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psychiatric disturbance; No intravenous lines or need for intravenous medications or fluids; No requirement for additional blood tests; No requirement for advanced nursing care (e.g. wound care, assistance with personal hygiene, intake/output monitoring)

Who can admit to Q&I?

It is possible for a person or their family to request admission directly or for a primary care clinic or a hospital to request admission if they meet the Q&I criteria. Please remember the Q&I Section is for well or mildly symptomatic people. It is not for anyone who is sick and needs focused on clinical care. If a person arrives sick, the person bringing them will be redirected to a public sector hospital. **Phone 066 442 6289 to request a Q&I admission.**

Intermediate Care (Oxygen)

This section of Nasrec Field Hospital is for patients who have been very unwell at a public sector hospital on oxygen. The person's condition has improved and they are on the road to recovery.

They still need oxygen, clinical care and rehabilitation until they can be taken off oxygen safely and manage at home.

Intermediate Care Admission Criteria

- Confirmed COVID +ve
- Able to maintain SpO₂ of >90% on 5L oxygen by nasal prong or facemask
- Non-pregnant adult- Clinically stable or improving
- Able to get out of bed and walk to the bathroom with minimal assistance (we can accept patients who can get to the bathroom with a walker and oxygen cylinder)
- Normal level of consciousness
- No psychiatric disturbance
- No intravenous lines or need for intravenous medications or fluids
- No requirement for additional blood tests
- No requirement for advanced nursing care (e.g. wound care, input/output monitoring)

Note: Patients with high sugars can be accepted as long as they are not acidotic or dehydrated. All patients must be transferred with all acute and chronic medications.

Who can admit to Intermediate Care?

Only consultant doctors at public sector hospitals may admit patients they are currently managing in their hospital after discussion and acceptance by the Nasrec Intermediate Care Clinical Lead. The Intermediate Care Clinical Lead's telephone number has been shared with consultants at public sector hospitals. Intermediate Care will have doctor rounds 3 times a day and nursing care throughout the day.

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ENSAFRICA NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF RECENT MEASURES AIMED AT CURBING COVID-19 SPREAD

- **Africa:** The Namibian Competition Commission indicated that it has found clear evidence of price exploitation on essential products after conducting a price movement analysis. It has formed a dedicated task team to investigate such complaints. Nigeria's Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission has commenced investigations into price gouging, most recently investigating the flour industry for price manipulation. The Malawian Competition and Fair Trading Commission has also expressed concern over excessive pricing, reporting that in the transport industry, bus fares have seen a substantial increase with bus and minibus operators allegedly establishing margins of between 40% and 200%, despite two consecutive downward adjustments on fuel prices. The Botswana Competition Authority has cautioned the general public against "unscrupulous traders" and businesses taking advantage of consumers amid the pandemic and further reported receiving numerous complaints regarding price increases on basic food products and healthcare and hygiene products. The South African Competition Commission (SACC) continues to prioritise COVID-19 matters and plans to refer several more cases to the Competition Tribunal for prosecution. The SACC has emphasised that competition policy should be prioritised as a key tool towards economic recovery, post-pandemic. *Source: [ENSAfrica](#)*
- **Africa:** In recent years, the African continent has shifted to the forefront of Germany's foreign policy and development agenda, with programs rolled out under the country's USD1.1-billion Development Investment Fund for Africa, which is primarily dedicated to easing the entrance of German businesses into African markets. *Source: [African Energy Chamber](#)*

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- **Southern Africa:** As part of the on-going regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have signed a new agreement worth EUR3.6-million to facilitate cross-border transit of essential goods during the COVID-19 crisis. The Tripartite Transit and Transport Facilitation Programme (TTTFP) is geared to facilitate the transit of essential goods that include food, fuel and medicines across the borders. *Source: SADC*
- **Malawi:** Malawi has received a grant of JPY300-million (approximately MWK2-billion) from the Government of Japan to assist in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The grant will assist the Malawi government to procure medical equipment. "Medical equipment to be procured will include intensive care unit (ICU) beds, ultrasound scanners, bedside monitors and other high-tech medical devices," he said. *Source: Malawi News Agency*
- **Namibia:** Air Namibia has temporarily suspended all its domestic flight for a period of 18 days effective 12 August until 29 August. Domestic flight operations will resume on 30 August. *Source: Namibia Economist*
- **Nigeria:** The World Bank Board of Directors approved a USD114.28-million financing to help Nigeria prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by COVID-19 with a specific focus on state-level responses. Through the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Project (CoPREP), the Government of Nigeria will provide grants to 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as immediate support to break the chain of COVID-19 local transmission and limit the spread of COVID-19 through containment and mitigation strategies. *Source: World Bank*

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COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

TRACKING THE PANDEMIC

The latest COVID-19 figures, summarised in the table below, are consistent with the trend over the last three weeks. The rate of total recoveries relative to total confirmed cases has been steadily climbing and has now reached 80%.



Regulations under the State of Disaster

On Saturday evening, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that a move to lockdown level 2 would come into effect at midnight tonight (Monday) and this would entail the easing of some restrictions.

There will be few economic activities that remain restricted – although conditions will attach to the conduct of almost all forms of business – but some key social restrictions will remain in place. The emphasis is no longer on WHAT we are permitted to do (with a few exceptions) but HOW we should conduct ourselves.

Almost every concession was accompanied by a warning that distancing and/or conditions would apply.

Opening up

- The sale of tobacco products is now permitted.
- The sale of alcohol is once more legal, with sales for off-site consumption restricted to the hours of 9h00 to 17h00 on Monday to Thursday and on-site consumption in bars and taverns permissible only until 22h00.
- Inter-provincial leisure travel will be possible and hotels and guest houses may receive leisure guests.
- Gyms will be able to operate – but Virgin Active told EWN that communication from the government indicated every gym would have to submit an infection control plan before resuming business.
- Social visits between family members and friends will be permitted, on the understanding that this will involve small numbers of people.

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- Funerals are limited to 50 people.
- All religious observances are similarly limited to 50 people.
- No fans will be allowed in to view competitive sports at stadiums.

Stephen Grootes wrote an interesting **commentary** in the Daily Maverick on the latest developments in coronavirus containment. It starts as follows:

“The move to a Level 2 lockdown allows SA’s battered economy to start humming again and furnishes the possibility of slowing the flood of job losses. Hopefully, it marks the end of the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, even as the virus will probably remain with us for many years. Still, there is much to be done, and no indications yet that any economic reforms will happen.

The decision to switch to lockdown Level 2 and drop the bans on the sale of alcohol and tobacco products was widely expected. All the signs were there and the unions had gone public in their demands for the change, fearing even greater job losses. Gauteng Premier David Makhura had said earlier in the week that his province was ready to move to the next level.

But the most important statements came from doctors and scientists. It would be impossible, they said, to defend the destruction of the economy while the number of new cases being reported every night was dropping so quickly. And while there will be some who claim there was a “grand conspiracy” to lower the number of tests being conducted, doctors were quick to point out that fewer tests were being done because [fewer people were presenting with coronavirus symptoms](#).

Either way, to keep the country on lockdown Level 3 with fewer than 3,000 new daily cases being announced was always going to be unsustainable.

Pressure was also building up from other corners.

The case brought by British American Tobacco SA (BATSA) on behalf of much of the tobacco industry, along with an appeal to an earlier case brought by the Fair-Trade Independent Tobacco Association had the potential to severely embarrass the government. A loss in either of those cases would have justified the public outrage, and there was an additional potential for BATSA and others to sue the government for loss of income.

But a lot more than just injured pride was on the line with these decisions.

Since the country was locked down, there has been a process of [“informalisation”](#) of the economy, which has rolled back two decades worth of attempts to bring everyone into the formal economy. This is a painful dynamic that has the potential to make many workers poorer and less safe, while also reducing the power of the state (and, crucially, its income). If the lockdown on Level 3 had continued much longer, it is possible that this process would have become irreversible.

And, of course, there was also the significant rise in the illicit economy, as illegal booze and cigarettes found their way into millions of desperate hands in every one of thousands of South African communities.” (Direct extract ends)

The Sunday Times reports that there is now a Health Department requirement that a **COVID-19 test** be performed on the body of every person who **died at home of natural causes**. This is to achieve more complete statistics on COVID-related deaths in the country. The death certificate may not be signed off before test samples have been taken and this has undertakers up in arms. Although there is no requirement to wait for the results of the tests, delays are foreseen in terms of availability of test kits and staff qualified to take samples.

Health and clinical developments

The first of **43 experts from around the globe** who have been assembled by the World Health Organization to assist South Africa fine-tune its Covid-19 response arrived on Friday and were welcomed by Health Minister [Dr Zweli Mkhize](#). “The work of battling a pandemic does not begin and end and therefore we will be encouraging fluidity and agility and welcome the fact that they will be looking at our situation with fresh eyes and may be able to identify or offer a perspective we might not have considered,” Mkhize said.

Governance and anti-corruption measures

The Sunday Times reports that the **SIU has frozen bank accounts** of three companies that are suspected of benefitting from irregular PPE contracts awarded by the Gauteng Health Department. The companies are Ledia Structural Development, Royal Bhaca Projects, and Mediwaste. The accounts are said to contain more than R100 million. SIU spokesperson Kaiser Kganhago confirmed that the SIU had applied to the Special Tribunal to freeze and preserve accounts of companies under investigation for

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securing PPE for its staff members. EWN reported that SIU head of strategy, Ziphozenkosi Mguli, had written to Justice Minister Ronald Lamola making the claim the SIU CFO had instructed officials to select a particular company to supply PPE.

EWN reports that US Ambassador Lana Marks has indicated that **donations of PPE from the US government** will be delivered directly to beneficiaries – frontline workers in rural areas – to prevent corruption.

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