



SUBJECT	COVID-19 Policy
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## 1. **OBJECTIVE**

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure a 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, 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 through the organisation. Please refrain from forwarding information related to the virus without having checked it with credible sources such as the World Health Organisation “WHO” and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases “NICD”. Spreading unverified information may contribute to unnecessary panic, stigma and discrimination, all of which do not add value at this stage.
- 1.3 This policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines and accordingly will be updated if, and when, required.

## 2. **APPLICATION**

This policy includes measures being taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. You are kindly requested to follow all these requirements to sustain a healthy and safe workplace. It is important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

## 3. **CONTENT**

### 3.1 **How does COVID-19 spread?**

COVID-19 is most likely to spread when there is close contact (2 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 an infected person who has been contaminated and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

### 3.2 **Primary symptoms of COVID-19**



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

- sore throat
- difficulty in breathing
- dry cough
- tiredness
- fever (**Most Typical**)
- Fatigue
- Muscle or joint ache or pain
- Body Chills

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

### 3.3 What to do if you develop symptoms

People who contract COVID-19 may take anywhere 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 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.



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 company's sick leave policy in such situations. If the company has reason to suspect that an employee has been infected with COVID-19 or an employee becomes ill at work, they must follow the requirements set out in the COVID-19 Incident reporting procedure.

### 3.4 Quarantine and working from home



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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 direct line manager and contact the COVID-19 Hotline. Close contact means that the employee was in face-to-face contact (i.e. within 1 metre) or in a closed space for more than 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19.

If, after informing the Department of Health, the employee is required to self-quarantine then the following policies will apply:

- If the employee is able to work during this period, then there is no requirement to submit a sick leave or annual leave request. The employee is, however, required to report daily to their line manager.
- Should the employee become sick during this period, then normal sick leave policy will apply.

### 3.5 Travel

All domestic flight travel is suspended until further notice unless absolutely necessary as determined by the parties concerned. All non-essential travel, particularly on public transport, is discouraged.

### 3.6 Meetings

- Consider whether a face-to-face meeting or event is needed - could it be replaced by a teleconference or any other electronic platform?
- Could the meeting be scaled down so that fewer people attend?
- Ensure that all participants in the meeting have washed their hands for 20 seconds or utilised a hand sanitiser prior to the meeting commencing.
- Ensure that all delegates are seated at least two metres apart.
- The names and contact details of all participants in the meeting should be retained for at least one month post meeting. 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 up to 21 days after the meeting.
- If a participant should contract the virus within this period after the meeting, the company must inform all participants.

### 3.7 Hygiene in the workplace

- All visitors and employees entering the offices must be requested by the receptionist to wash their hands or utilise a hand sanitiser on entering the premises.
- Where coughs and sneezes are covered with a tissue; the tissue must be disposed of in the relevant waste bin.



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- Coughs and sneezes are also recommended to be directed into a bent elbow.
- Frequently touched objects, including workstations and surfaces, must be cleaned and disinfected using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe as a minimum.
- 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 not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 70% alcohol content must be used.
- Handshakes with any colleagues or visitors must be AVOIDED; one's face should not be touched either.

### 3.8 Wearing face masks

The use of face masks as an additional preventative measure against COVID-19 has been recommended for use by the National Department of Health. It must be noted that wearing a mask is not a primary preventative measure and should not provide a false sense of protection. Additional COVID-19 preventative measures include the adoption of good hand hygiene and physical distancing.

### 3.9 Seminars, Training and Conferences

No employee may attend external seminars, training or conferences, unless approved by the Rector. Any training that is required will be presented online / through blended facilitation.

### 3.10 COVID-19 Manager

A COVID-19 Manager will be appointed 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. It is recommended that a COVID-19 Response 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.

### 3.11 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



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- The details of the COVID-19 Compliance Officer;

### 3.12 Consequence of breach

If an employee breaches this policy the necessary disciplinary action will be taken. It is important to note that the company'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. It is the employee's responsibility to contact management should he/she have any queries related to this Policy.