



## INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

<b>To:</b>	<b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>Ref:</b>	<b>COVID 19 CIRCULAR NO ____ 2021</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>THE ACTING DIRECTOR- GENERAL MR I FAZEL</b>	<b>Office:</b>	<b>CGO 7<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR</b>
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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COVID-19 CIRCULAR NO <u>170</u> OF 2021: REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RETURN TO WORK PLAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
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### COVID 19 CIRCULAR NO 170 OF 2021

This circular serves to inform all staff of the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure about the review of the implementation of the return to work plan in line with Adjusted Alert Level 3.

1. On 26 July 2021 the President announced the movement to Adjusted Level 3. The DPSA issued DPSA Circular 6 of 2021 on 29 July 2021 indicating occupancy rate of less than 50% occupancy at any given time.
2. Regional Sub committees and compliance employees should decide their own rotation percentage by assessing their regional level of risk, taking all factors into account. Each region must conduct a risk assessment taking all factors into account and report at the next meeting where it will be decided if the committee should be prescriptive or not.
3. **Staggered approach to return to work:**
  - 3.1 The Department will use a staggered approach to ensure less than 50% occupancy rate at any given time but a 100% of services must be operational.
  - 3.2 It is envisaged that this Circular will direct the organisation with respect to the implementation of Lockdown Level 3.
  - 3.3 Vulnerable employees with uncontrolled comorbidities and those over 60 may be allowed to work from home as far as reasonably possible. **The**

***Department may when the need arise call on such employees to report for duty.***

- 3.4 All reception areas and open plan offices must be retrofitted with acrylic screens, where employees may not be able to effect adequate social distancing (open plan/shared offices).
- 3.5 Employees accommodated in shared offices where social distancing cannot be observed will continue on rotational basis until retrofitting has been implemented or advised differently.
- 3.6 Departments are required to ensure that 100% of its service offering is operational during Alert level 3.

#### **4. Critical Units to Ensure Safe Return Of Employees**

- 4.1 Facilities Management and Corporate Services branches are regarded as crucial during the implementation of this exercise.
- 4.2 Corporate Services is expected to ensure that physical security and access to the building is in accordance with all safety protocols.
- 4.3 HR will provide guidance and monitor the departmental rotational plans, applications for officials with comorbidities.
- 4.4 Communications will be responsible for all the key messaging and notifications affecting the implementation of this Circular.
- 4.5 The Compliance Officer, Compliance Employees and Health and Safety Committee Members to oversee the implementation of safety and emergency protocols in the Department.
- 4.6 Facilities Management is expected to ensure that the workplace is ready and properly cleaned and that all employees have the required PPE.
  - Cleaning of common areas and offices should be done twice a day.
  - Officials are also encouraged to sanitise their working tools such as laptops, cell phones, etc.
  - All employees should ensure that they sanitise the common equipment such as printers, copy machines, laminating machines, etc. before use.
  - Kitchen appliances such as microwaves, fridges, kettles, etc. should also be sanitised before and after use.
  - Pool vehicles should be sanitised before and after use.

#### **5. Measures to Put In Place Before Employees Return To Work**



- 5.1 The department must ensure that the environment is safe for all employees.
- 5.2 Adhere to the Health and Safety Protocols (Provision of PPE's, etc.)
- 5.3 Establish physical distancing measures within the workplace.
- 5.4 Rearranging workstations (open plan) to increase separation at least 1.5 meters apart; install acrylic screens
- 5.5 Restrict business travel (only essential travel and must be approved by the respective Manager/Supervisor in line with the SCM prescripts.
- 5.6 Managers to authorize the access of visitors to ensure decongestion of the workplace.
- 5.7 Employees are still encouraged to clean their own workstations to minimise cross-contamination – officials to be provided with disinfecting disposable cleaning wipes or surface sanitizers.
6. Vulnerable Employees:
  - 6.1. Employees who are 60 years and older should be permitted to work remotely.
  - 6.2 All employees with identified uncontrolled risks and vulnerabilities maybe be permitted to work remotely, but they must apply to do so. Employees are required to apply and the application must be considered by the Supervisor and approved by the Branch Head, Regional Manager or Director-General.
  - 6.3 All applications for Adjusted Alert Level 3 should reach the respective Wellness Units at Head Office and the Regions by 20 August 2021. All applications to work remotely must be fully completed and all documentation must be attached. Applications must be submitted to the Wellness Officer who will register the application and submit to the Supervisor who will consider the application and recommend to the Branch Head (Head Office Employees), Regional Manager (Regional Employees) or the Director-General (SMS members).
  - 6.5 Employees who already obtained approval for working from home do not have to apply again but must ensure that they have a signed letter of approval to work remotely.
7. **Critical for all employees to comply with:**

- 7.1 Social distancing is the ultimate defence in containing the spread of COVID-19. Staggered return to work to manage the number of employees at the same time at the office. Limit number of employees in common areas (tea rooms, conference rooms, etc). Limit the number of employees entering and leaving the building.
- (a) Staggered arrival and departure should be put in place as follows:
    - (7h30 – 16h00)
    - (8h00 – 16h30)
    - (8h30 – 17h00)
    - (9h00 – 17h30)
  - (b) Implement staggering breaks or lunch schedules (12h00- 12h45 / 13h00-13h45).
  - (c) All shortlisting and interviews can be done in a boardroom that allow for social distancing and which is well ventilated.
  - (d) No catering is allowed during any meeting, shortlisting or interviews. Bottled water can be supplied.
  - (e) ICT to continue providing IT technical support for those employees working from home. This means that the department will continue with video conferencing and virtual meetings, even for those employees who will be back at the office.
  - (f) Face-to-Face meetings, attendance of training and seminars are not encouraged at this stage until guidelines are provided for such meetings. Managers should play an important role in ensuring that all safety protocols are observed.
  - (g) All employees must submit the online screening forms to their respective managers on a weekly basis, unless the official is showing COVID-19 symptoms during the course of the week, then they will be required to submit the form indicating so. Failure to submit the screening form will result in disciplinary measures.
  - (h) The electronic/manual screening form must be submitted by visitors who are entering the building.
  - (i) Should employees display any COVID-19 symptoms while at work, they should immediately inform their managers and be referred to the isolation room.
  - (j) COVID-19 Q&A is accessible on the departmental COVID-19 Portal.
  - (k) Only employees who are not showing COVID-19 symptoms should be allowed to come to work.



- (l) **The Public Service Disciplinary Code and Procedure shall be applied to employees of the Department who contravene COVID-19 Regulations.**
- (m) Parents whose children cannot be accommodated in after care centres during this time may request time off in a regulated manner. (*Supervisors to manage the process*)

## **7.2 Education and communication:**

- (a) The department will continue communicating the Health and Safety Protocols such as giving information to employees on how to stay hygienic and safe around others and any changes.

## **7.3 Critical to remember by all employees and managers:**

- (a) Branch/Unit Heads and Regional Managers are required to submit Branch, Unit or Regional Office monthly productivity reports respectively to the **Office of the Director General by the 10th day of the following month.**
- (b) The monthly report will culminate into the quarterly report. These reports must be incorporated in the monthly productivity element to assist in the management of remote work from the office. The report must be submitted to the office of the DG and Carbon Copy the DDG CS. Corporate Services (HRM). CD HRM will be responsible for the analysis and interpretation of the reports and will provide a consolidated report to the ADG 5 days thereafter and will also be responsible for the coordination of rotational plans and applications for remote work due to comorbidities.
- (c) During level 3, it is vital for managers and staff to remember that their safety and that of others is the responsibility of everyone. This is the time to promote a caring culture within the department.
- (d) Employees are not allowed to visit each other during office hours without any valid and work related reason. Employees must not spend more than 15 minutes in each other's office, even during lunch time.

## 8. Enquiries

All applications, in accordance with this Circular, to work from home must be submitted to the Regional HR Manager or HRA at Head Office by 20 August 2021. Enquiries related to this circular can be directed to Ms T Hlatshwayo, Chief Director HRM at [Thembi.hlatshwayo@dpw.gov](mailto:Thembi.hlatshwayo@dpw.gov) and Ms Gugulethu Komane, Compliance Officer at [Gugulethu.komane@dpw.gov.za](mailto:Gugulethu.komane@dpw.gov.za).



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**MR I FAZEL**  
**ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DPWI**  
**DATE: 16 August 2021**