



# the dpsa

Department:  
Public Service and Administration  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X916, PRETORIA, 0001 Tel: (012) 336 1000, Fax: (012) 326 7802  
Private Bag X9148, CAPE TOWN, 8000 Tel: (021) 467 5120, Fax:(021) 467 5484

## TO ALL HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS

### CIRCULAR NO 04 OF 2021

#### STATE OF DISASTER COVID-19: PUBLIC SERVICE ADJUSTMENTS TO RISK ADJUSTED LEVEL 3 REGULATIONS.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 South Africa is currently experiencing the surge of the third wave of COVID-19 infections. In order to contain the spread of COVID-19, the President has announced that the country will be placed on adjusted level 3 with effect from the 15th June 2021.
- 1.2 A key aspect of the response is that all workplaces should continue to have safety protocols in place and adhered to in line with revised regulations.
- 1.3 This circular is a guide to Heads of Departments in the public service to continue with the decongestion of workplaces by limiting the numbers of employees physically on-site as part of measures to mitigate the effects of the third wave of COVID-19.
- 1.4 The circular takes into consideration the service delivery obligations of Departments, the needs of service recipients and safety of public servants.

#### 2. KEY PRINCIPLES

The Accounting Officer has an obligation to ensure that the following necessary administrative measures and tools are availed and put in place in each Department, using relevant existing legal instruments to hold government officials accountable for service delivery and lawful administrative practices whilst ensuring that they adhere to health protocols.

## **2.1 REMOTE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 2.1.1 The Accounting Officer should ensure reduction of the occupancy rate of less than 50% at any given time for public servants using shift work and/or remote working arrangements amongst others.
- 2.1.2 Due to the nature of their role in providing leadership and direction, Members of Senior Management Service (SMS) are to be in the office at least two days a week in order to decongest the workplace. The enforcement of this clause should be applied on a case-by-case basis informed by the Department of Health's Guidelines on the management of risks and comorbidities.
- 2.1.3 Employees should be encouraged to work remotely and a Remote Working Contractual Agreement should be in place in order to manage accountability, performance and liabilities. There must be clear deliverables to which the manager and employee agree to and can be tracked and accounted for.
- 2.1.4 Each Accounting Officer is responsible for determining the eligibility of employees to work remotely based on the nature of service delivery modes and the means/tools to work remotely including for office-based employees.
- 2.1.5 When determining the eligibility criteria, Accounting Officers should consider the nature of the work scheduling for office-based employees (e.g. security, administrators, cleaners, SCM etc.) as well as the availability of enabled systems. This must be done on a case-by-case basis after assessment of eligibility and the needs of mission critical functions, which support essential services.
- 2.1.6 Accounting Officers may also consider shift work for business continuity to ensure that the Department meets its service delivery commitments, guided by relevant prescripts.
- 2.1.7 Where employees are unable to function due to the impact or effects of COVID-19 (e.g. quarantine or isolation), the Accounting Officer may consider job rotation and/or staggered approach to ensure business continuity and availability of services.
- 2.1.8 Accounting Officers should have a clear outline on consequence management should the employee fail to adhere to the content of the agreement or any other organisational rules while working remotely.

## **2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS**

- 2.2.1 Each Department should ensure that:
  - 2.2.1.1 Both employees and employers benefit optimally from these practical arrangements, based on environmental contextual circumstances.
  - 2.2.1.2 A formal work scheduling arrangement between the employer and employee is provided in order to ensure business continuity, non-interruption of products and services and allow an employee to self-manage and perform without focusing narrowly on processes.
  - 2.2.1.3 Legal administrative control instruments are provided to manage accountability of employment obligations during remote working arrangements.
  - 2.2.1.4 Protocols are provided where employees are placed in safe bubble workspaces due to vulnerabilities, or who are either infected or affected (either quarantine or isolation) based on assessed risks to others, using occupational health protocols, but are still able to work remotely.

- 2.2.1.5 Human contact is minimised with the use of digital virtual communication platforms to conduct operational decision making and response planning via conference calls and meetings.
- 2.2.1.6 Digital housekeeping rules and data management protocols are provided and should be made known to all staff in advance.
- 2.2.1.7 Necessary physical distancing ergonomics and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) protocols are provided according to categories of employee needs, not classified as essential services.
- 2.2.1.8 Occupational Health and Safety compliance and risks to employees are managed.

### **2.3 LEAVE MANAGEMENT:**

- 2.3.1 The application of the leave policy as previously covered in Circular 7 of 2020 and Circular 11 of 2020, read with the provision in the Determination and Directive of leave remain applicable for all categories of employee.

### **2.4 RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR REMOTE WORKING**

- 2.4.1 Each Accounting Officer has a responsibility to determine and ensure the availability of identified and appropriate tools of trade for all employees approved to work from home, including measures to keep the team connected and employees informed of new developments.

### **2.5 SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 2.5.1 For the integrity of the state and government information, security considerations should be kept at the forefront when approving remote working arrangements.
- 2.5.2 Protocols should be put in place for all employees to understand the requirements of the Minimum Information and Security Standards and other relevant legal prescripts especially when utilising personal Wi-Fi networks.

### **2.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

- 2.6.1 Performance management for all employees should be managed in line with Circulars 1 and 2 of 2021.

- 3. All Heads of Departments, in dealing with risk assessment and the categorising of employee comorbidities and vulnerabilities with respect to work, should use their discretion in dealing with matters which may not be specifically covered in this circular but which may be workplace, occupational or sector specific and in line with the delegated authority.

- Accounting Officers retain the legal responsibility to determine workplace requirements and for ensuring the delivery of the full public service array. Taking into account the dynamic and fluid contextual circumstances arising from the declared National Disaster, Departments who are unable to implement the above provisions must provide reasons for such failure to the Minister for Public Service and Administration within two weeks of such matter arising.



**MS YOLISWA MAKHASI**

**DIRECTOR GENERAL**

**DATE:**

2021/6/24