



## INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

<b>To:</b>	<b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>Ref:</b>	<b>COVID 19 CIRCULAR NO <u>    </u> 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>
<b>Tel:</b>	<b>(012) 406 1990</b>	<b>Fax:</b>	

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COVID-19 CIRCULAR NO <u>196</u> OF 2022: REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RETURN TO WORK PLAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN LINE WITH DPSA CIRCULAR 5 OF 2022 CHANGES TO ADJUSTED RISK ALERT LEVEL 1 COVID-19 REGULATIONS</b>
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### COVID 19 CIRCULAR NO 196 OF 2022

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 Risk Alert Level 1.

1. A special Cabinet meeting held on 31 January 2022, approved changes to the Adjusted Risk Alert Level 1. The DPSA issued DPSA Circular 5 of 2022 on 4 February 2022 indicating that Departments should work towards a rate of 100% capacity inclusive of employees with comorbidities.
2. Departments are required to align to the measures contained in the amended Circular.
3. Regional Subcommittees and compliance employees should determine rotation percentages by assessing their regional level of risk, taking all factors into account to adhere to the DPSA. Each region must conduct a comprehensive risk assessment taking all factors into account and amend their rotational plans accordingly.
4. **Staggered approach to return to work:**
  - 4.1 The Department will use a staggered approach to ensure a 100% occupancy rate at any given time by 14 March 2022 where facilities can accommodate 100% occupancy.

- 4.2 The Department will move from 50% to 75% occupancy where possible based on risk assessment by 4 March 2022 and from 75% to 100% occupancy by 14 March 2022 (where facilities can accommodate 100%).
- 4.3 It is envisaged that this Circular will direct the organisation concerning the implementation of Adjusted Alert Level 1.
- 4.4 Vulnerable employees with uncontrolled comorbidities and those over 60 may be allowed to work from home based on their request with motivation. ***The Department may when the need arises call on such employees to report for duty.***
- 4.5 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).
- 4.6 Employees accommodated in shared offices where social distancing cannot be observed may continue on a rotational basis until retrofitting has been implemented or advised differently. The target remains to reach 100% occupancy in the workplace.
- 4.7 Departments are required to ensure that 100% of their service offering is operational during Adjusted Risk Alert level 1.

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

- 5.1 Facilities Management and Corporate Services branches are regarded as crucial during the implementation of this exercise.
- 5.2 Corporate Services is expected to ensure that physical security and access to the building are in accordance with all safety protocols.
- 5.3 HR will provide guidance and monitor the departmental rotational plans, applications for officials with comorbidities.
- 5.4 Communications will be responsible for all the key messaging and notifications affecting the implementation of this Circular.
- 5.5 The Compliance Officer, Compliance Employees, and Health and Safety Committee Members oversee the implementation of safety and emergency protocols in the Department.
- 5.6 Facilities Management must 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 sanitize 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.

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

- 6.1 The department must ensure that the environment is safe for all employees.
- 6.2 Adhere to all Health and Safety Protocols (Provision of PPEs, sanitizing, etc.)
- 6.3 Establish physical distancing measures within the workplace.
- 6.4 Rearranging workstations (open plan) to increase the separation of at least 1.5 meters apart; install acrylic screens
- 6.5 Managers to authorize the access of visitors to ensure decongestion of the workplace.
- 6.6 Employees are still encouraged to clean their workstations to minimize cross-contamination – officials to be provided with disinfecting disposable cleaning wipes or surface sanitizers.

## **7. Vulnerable Employees:**

- 7.1 Employees who are 60 years and older may be permitted to work remotely based on **request** and comprehensive motivation.
- 7.2 All employees with identified uncontrolled risks and vulnerabilities maybe be permitted to work remotely, but they must **re-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. Employees applying/re-applying may work from home until approval is granted/not granted.
- 7.3 All applications to work remotely for Adjusted Risk Alert Level 1 should reach the respective Wellness Units at Head Office and the Regions by

14 March 2022. All applications to work remotely must be fully completed and all medical reports 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 make a recommendation to the Branch Head (Head Office Employees), Regional Manager (Regional Employees), or the Director-General (SMS members).

- 7.4 Employees who already obtained approval for working from home for previous levels should apply again meeting the requirements set out by the DPSA for Adjusted Lockdown Level 1 applications.

## **8. Critical for all employees to comply with:**

- 8.1 Social distancing, wearing of masks, and sanitising of hands remain the ultimate defence in containing the spread of COVID-19. Staggering return to work to manage the number of employees at the same time at the office. Limit the 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 allows for social distancing and which is well ventilated.
  - (d) ICT will continue to provide IT technical support and video conferencing and virtual meetings, where necessary prior to reaching 100% occupancy. The Department will gradually reduce these services once 100% occupancy is maintained.
  - (e) Physical engagements such as face-to-face meetings, attendance of training and seminars, workshops, etc within the Department and Regional Offices as well as external venues will be allowed as long as all health and safety protocols are observed. Managers should play an important role in ensuring that all safety protocols are observed.
  - (f) All employees must submit the online screening forms to their respective managers weekly unless the official is showing COVID-19 symptoms during the week, then they will be required to submit



the form indicating so. Failure to submit the screening form will result in disciplinary measures.

- (g) The electronic/manual screening form must be submitted by visitors who are entering the premises.
- (h) Should employees display any COVID-19 symptoms while at work, they should immediately inform their managers and be referred to the isolation room.
- (i) COVID-19 Q&A is accessible on the departmental COVID-19 Portal.
- (j) Only employees who are not showing COVID-19 symptoms should be allowed to come to work.
- (k) **The Public Service Disciplinary Code and Procedure shall be applied to employees of the Department who contravene COVID-19 Regulations.**
- (l) 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***)

## **8.2 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.
- (b) During level 1, managers and staff need 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.
- (c) Employees must avoid visiting 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 lunchtime.
- (d) All new rotational Plans (where applicable) taking into consideration DPSA Circular 5 of 2022 must reach Human Resource Management by 14 March 2022 (Managers should be responsible for the rotational plans for their sections)

## 9. Enquiries

All new applications, in accordance with this Circular, to work from home must be submitted to the Regional HR Manager or Wellness Unit at Head Office not later than the 14 March 2022.

Amended rotational plans (if necessary) should reach HRM by 4 March 2022. Enquiries related to this circular can be directed to Ms. R Mostert, Director HRA at [ronel.mostert@dpw.gov.za](mailto:ronel.mostert@dpw.gov.za), and Ms. Gugulethu Komane, Compliance Officer at [gugulethu.komane@dpw.gov.za](mailto:gugulethu.komane@dpw.gov.za).



**MR I FAZEL**  
**ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DPWI**  
**DATE: 28 February 2022**