



# DPSA CIRCULAR 18 OF 2020

War Room Meeting

May 13, 2020

## OBJECTIVE OF THE CIRCULAR



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The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has issued Circular No 18 of 2020, to the entire Public Service that details necessary measures which national and provincial departments ought to implement to ensure the containment and management of the COVID-19 in the Public Service.

# OBJECTIVE



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DPSA Circular 18 of 2020 dated 1 May 2020 which is aligned to above Regulations prescribes norms and standards applicable to the Public Service in respect of return to work namely:

- Governance arrangements
- Preparation of work place in response of easing of lockdown.
- Symptoms screening, masks and personal protective equipment
- Staggered return to work
- Remote working arrangements
- Education and communication
- Employees return to work
- Contact tracing

Above is also subject to Regulations from Minister of Employment and Labour

# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE: WAR ROOM



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## Members of the war room are as follows:

Adv TJ Phahlo

Ms N Ntombela

Ms KE Moahloli

Ms H Josiah

Ms BV Kgasane

Mr TP Matshaba

Ms M Motsemme

Mr SS Thulo

Ms P Mphatsoe

Ms P Mphosi

Me. W Khoabane

Ms N Mayekiso

Adv KD Tsotetsi

Freddy Finger

Ms L Mnguni

We are committed as a team in insuring preparations are in relations to norms and standards of COVID-19

## Preparation of work place in response of easing of lockdown



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Conduct a risk assessment to identify risks of COVID-19 outbreak in the department.

Identify areas in the department where provisions against COVID-19 are still inadequate and processes to immediately/urgently correct these.

Submit a record of its risk assessment together with a written policy concerning the protection of the health and safety of its employees from COVID-19 to its health and safety committee and the Provincial Chief Inspector at the Department of Labour.

Assign in writing an employee as the compliance officer as contemplated in the regulations issued in terms of the Disaster Management Act .

# Duties of the Compliance Officer



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- Determine the area of floor space in square meters;
- Determine the number of service recipients and employees that may be inside the premises at any time with adequate space available;
- Take steps to ensure that persons queuing inside or outside the premises are able to maintain a distance of one and a half meter from one another;
- Provide hand sanitizers for use by the public and employees at the entrance to the premises;
- Ensure that all directions in respect of hygienic conditions and limitation of exposure to persons with COVID 19 are adhered to;
- Develop a plan prior to employees returning to the workplace for the phased increase of employees returning to the workplace, which plan must be in line with Annexure E to the Regulations issued in terms of the Disaster Management Act

## Symptoms screening, masks and personal protective equipment



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- Screening all employees and any other persons entering the workplace to ascertain whether they have any of the observable symptoms associated with COVID-19, namely fever cough sore throat, redness of eyes or shortness of breath (or difficulty in breathing). Temperature screening must be done as a minimum and departments must adhere to guidelines issued by the NDoH in consultation with the Department of Labour and Employment regarding screening, medical surveillance and testing;
- Departments to provide every employee required to be at the workplace with at least two cloth masks;
- Employees working in the reception areas should be provided with the requisite PPE
- All employees whose operational requirements require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should at all times be provided with such

# Staggered return to work



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- Departments must develop a schedule for a staggered return of the workforce which will assist in managing the number of employees at the workplace;
- This schedule must be disseminated to all employees and to the relevant sectors in support of the restart of the economy;
- HoDs must ensure that employees who are required to be at the workplace be issued with the requisite permit authorising travel for work purposes;
- HoDs should consider amending working times to minimise the risk associated with the simultaneous arrival and departure of employees;
- Staggering of employees' meal intervals should be considered.



# Remote working arrangements



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- Departments are encouraged to continue with the approach of remote working, taking into consideration the requirements as outlined in Circular 15 of 2020 with regard to critical and essential services;
- Departments urged to strengthen such capabilities by ensuring that employees have necessary resources for remote working and are productively utilised;
- Employees may be working remotely, may also be required from time to time to attend the workplace, to among others, receive instructions, documentation, access office infrastructure and to submit completed tasks.
- Older employees and those that present with co-morbidities. Those employees will be expected to submit evidential documentation to their Human Resources;
- The decision on remote working must be made with due consideration to the service delivery needs of the Departments.

# Education and communication



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Departments to ensure that sufficient communication takes place between the department & employees during this period of lockdown;

Departments to establish mechanisms to interact and provide staff with accurate information.

# Employees return to work



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- Thorough cleaning of the workplace to ensure that it is clean and hygienic, which includes disinfecting of all work surfaces and equipment before work begins and cleaning of all toilets, common areas, door handles and shared electronic equipment;
- Disabling of all biometric systems or making them COVID-19 proof;
- Ensuring that hand sanitizers, soap and paper towels are available for employees ( there must be sufficient quantities of hand sanitizers based on the number of employees or other persons who access the workplace);
- Arranging the workspace to adhere to one and a half meter distancing, if it is impracticable arrange that physical barriers are placed on the work stations to form a solid barrier between the employees while they are working or be provided with face shields or visors;
- Determining the number of service recipients and employees that may be inside the department/office/premises at any given time within the adequate space available;
- Configuring entrance and reception areas to contain the transmission of COVID-19 and employees working in these areas should be provided with the requisite PPE;
- Installing physical distance markers at reception, entrances and any other area where queuing is envisaged. Measures must be put in place to manage the queue for people to keep adequate distance from one another;
- Placement of sanitizers should be strategically placed at entrances, common areas, doorways, lifts/elevators, escalators, handrails, where office equipment is shared, etc.;

# Employees return to work



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- Displaying protocols as they pertain to the use of shared office equipment and common areas in prominent places;
- Screening all employees and any other persons entering the workplace to ascertain whether they have any of the observable symptoms associated with COVID-19, namely fever cough sore throat, redness of eyes or shortness of breath (or difficulty in breathing).  
Temperature screening must be done as a minimum and departments must adhere to guidelines issued by the NDoH in consultation with the Department of Labour and Employment regarding screening, medical surveillance and testing ;
- Requiring employees to report whether they suffer from any of the following additional symptoms, body aches, loss of smell or loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness and require employees to inform the employer if they experience an of the symptoms in par (j) and/or (k);
- Not permitting the employee to enter the workplace or report for work if he or she presents with the symptoms mentioned in par (j) and/or (k);
- Isolating the employee if he or she is already at work when he or she presented with the symptoms

# Employees return to work



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With increase of employees returning to work, consider amending working times to minimize the risk associated with the simultaneous arrival and departure of employees, as well as staggering meal intervals of employees

Not all Public Service employees in all departments are able to return to work immediately. HoDs should ensure that ensure that employees with co-morbidities or underlying illnesses, as far as is possible, remain at home or/and work remotely until the pandemic has passed as they remain vulnerable to contracting the virus.



## Adhere to the following obligations regarding contact tracing:

- Keep a register, containing the details of employees, visitors and service providers that enter the workplace on a particular day;
- The register must include the date, time of entry and departure, name surname, identity number, residential address and cellular number

# SUMMARY FORWARD



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We have put in place a draft operational plan to monitor the implementation of regulations as follows:

- COVID 19 Steering and War Room Committee
- Assignment of Compliance Officer
- Procurement of PPE, sanitizer, distance markers and shields
- Identification of vulnerable groups
- Online platform against physical service points
- Proper ventilation
- Remote work arrangement
- Education and Communication
- Contact tracing by each unit through proper register
- Disinfection of buildings and GG vehicles

Security register are in the process to be aligned with COVID 19 regulations

ICT working on deploying various **e-Government solutions** and has prioritized **e-submissions** to address the following **business problems**

# CLOSURE



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In dealing with the response to COVID-19, employees are requested for cooperation and calm during this period. Our collective and joint actions to support the national efforts made to contain COVID-19 is of high significance.

- Let's remember to keep our workplace safe by practicing good hygiene
- Let's regularly wash our hands with water and soap for at least 20 seconds
- Let's stop handshaking – and use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Let's create habits and reminders to avoid touching faces
- Let's cover coughs and sneezes
- Let's disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks and handrails regularly
- Let's increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning



Thank you