



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Media Statement

7 September 2020

RESUMPTION OF INMATE VISITS IN CORRECTIONAL CENTRES AND REMAND DETENTION FACILITIES

Following the pronouncement by President Cyril Ramaphosa that the country will move to Alert Level 2 effective from 18 August 2020, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has reviewed its Covid-19 Risk-Adjusted Strategy accordingly. To this end, inmate visits to correctional centres and remand detention centres shall be permitted under strict conditions, observing COVID-19 health protocols as well as Departmental Standard Operating Procedures.

It is critical for members of the public to observe that visits are limited to one non-contact visit per inmate per calendar month, and only one visitor per inmate at a time. Bookings must be pre-arranged at least 48-hours prior to the intended visit to ensure proper planning. As a result, no visits will be allowed without prior appointment. Only visitors with face masks as per the approved name-list will be allowed access. Visitors must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the scheduled visit time. Inmates will be allowed to receive items as per their privilege group and as prescribed in the policy.

Visits will be permitted to take place between 09H00 and 15H00 on visit days. In centres housing both sentenced and remands categories, and depending on the number of inmates, remand detainees may receive visits on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, excluding Public Holidays. Whereas, sentenced offenders will be allowed visits on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Weekends and Public Holidays.

We rely on members of the public to be honest during screening in order to prevent any potential infections and cross contamination. Those who have been in contact with COVID-19 positive cases must indicate as that will allow our health care practitioners to conduct extensive screening, which includes taking of vital signs. It is important to note that provision of false information is a criminal offense.

Consultation visits between legal practitioners and inmates will be non-contact and shall observe COVID-19 health protocols and operating procedures as determined by DCS. As prescribed, legal practitioners will be expected to make prior arrangements with the Head of Centre and be armed with a proof of identity. On urgent matters, legal representatives and inmates may communicate telephonically after approval from the Head of Centre has been obtained, and where circumstances and resources permit.

As restrictions have been eased across the country, DCS is constantly monitoring the public health situation in each correctional centre, including community transmissions, and take decisions accordingly based on the risk levels. If, at any given time, there are new or suspected cases of Covid-19 in a facility or unforeseen circumstances at the premises, this could affect visitations. Those planning a visit should always confirm their visit with the relevant correctional centre before travelling.

Our top priority remains the health and safety of our officials, inmates and the public. We will therefore continue to monitor the situation and adjust safety measures and operating procedures where necessary.

Ends.

Enquiries: Singabakho Nxumalo on 079 523 5794

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