



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**CORONAVIRUS: PHASED EASING OF LOCKDOWN
KEY MESSAGES
23 APRIL 2020 @ 23H00**

BRIEF:

The national lockdown is being relaxed in a phased approach that will still require a drastic change in our daily lifestyle. The lockdown has delayed the steep increase in COVID-19 infections seen elsewhere in the world. The WHO has repeatedly praised South Africa for our handling of the pandemic, and has commended us for acting swiftly, and for following scientific advice to delay the spread of the virus. However, we are not out of the woods yet, and therefore need to follow a phased easing of lockdown restrictions.

From 01 May the country will move to a new phase in the fight against COVID-19. This will take the form of a risk adjusted strategy which will see the gradual easing of current lockdown restrictions.

As part of this approach there will be five coronavirus levels. As from 01 May we will move from the current level 5 to level 4. This means that some activity will be allowed to resume, subject to extreme precautions required to limit community transmission and outbreaks.

We will all have to dig even deeper and show our combined resolve over the coming weeks and months. Life as we knew it before the lockdown will not return, and we must be prepared for major disruptions until a tried, tested and working vaccine is available. We are likely to have continued disruptions to our way of life for the next two years.

During the lockdown our nation pulled together like never before and this must continue during the phased easing of the lockdown. We dare not ease up on our collective fight.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<p><i>South Africans must prepare for a new way of life.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disruptions to our daily way of life will continue until a tried, tested and working vaccine is available. ● COVID-19 infections are expected to peak in September and we are likely to have continued disruptions to our way of life for the next two years. ● The restrictions, hygiene practices and social distancing we adhered to during the lockdown are now the new normal. ● While certain restrictions will be lifted to allow the economy to return to normal, we cannot go back to business as usual. ● We will continually adjust risk categories based on either an improvement or deterioration of conditions.
<p><i>This is a fight for our nation and our way of life.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have made good inroads into the fight against the spread of the virus, but we dare not become complacent now. ● The spread of the virus can continue after the lockdown as was the case in Singapore and Japan, which saw a wave of new infections. ● The national lockdown did not eradicate the virus; it simply helped to suppress the spread of infections, and provided us more time to develop coordinated and well consulted responses. ● There will be no parties, large gatherings or celebrations.
<p><i>We will relax the lockdown in phases.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have adopted a phased approach because an abrupt return to normal daily activity may increase the spread of the virus. ● A phased approach allows economic activity to resume while protecting vulnerable communities. ● The easing of the lockdown will first take place in sectors that are vital to the economy or where social distancing is a natural part of operations. ● Specific conditions will apply to these sectors to ensure the safety of all employees and citizens. ● There may however be a continued lockdown for specific districts or hotspots to curb the spread of the virus.
<p><i>A smart system is in place to get us moving again.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will implement a five level smart system for the country, provinces and districts. ● This will ensure that we are responsive to changes and conditions on the ground at any time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The five level system encompasses maximum and minimum restrictions. • Levels for each province and district will be determined by the National Coronavirus Command Council. • The transition between levels does not have to be linear. • Levels may be skipped, and it may be necessary to return to a higher level based on epidemiological trends.
<i>Those most at risk will be asked to stay home for longer.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A voluntary lockdown for the elderly or those with multiple medical conditions (co-morbidities) will be in place until the end of September. • We call on industry to create special shopping times for our most vulnerable groups. • This will ensure that they can safely buy essentials, while avoiding any unnecessary contact with others.
<i>We must all make lifestyle changes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our daily lifestyles will need to dramatically change to protect our families and keep the rate of COVID-19 infections low. • We cannot go back to business as usual; living with restrictions and a heightened sense of social distancing is the new normal. • Citizens must continue to practise social distancing, do not go to social spaces and avoid large groups of people. • Practise everyday preventive actions such as the regular washing of hands with water and soap for at least 20 seconds. • Ensure you wear a mask when going out and maintain a 1.5 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing and sneezing.
<i>Keep it up South Africa!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government thanks all South Africans for acting in a responsible and disciplined manner through this very difficult period. • Our survival as a nation depends on our actions over the next few weeks and months. • Everyone has a role to play in this fight and those who break the rules risk harming us all.
<i>We must adjust our approach to everyday life.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and transport restrictions will remain in place after the lockdown. • Unless otherwise specified no inter-provincial movement of people, except for transportation of goods and exceptional circumstances (e.g. funerals) will be allowed. • Unless otherwise specified all borders, including all land, air and seaports will remain closed to passengers. • Unless otherwise specified there will be no international passenger travel except for South African nationals returning or foreign nationals being repatriated.

<p><i>We must prepare ourselves for a new reality.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unless otherwise specified bars and shebeens or taverns will remain closed. ● Unless otherwise specified conference and convention centres will remain closed. ● Entertainment venues such as cinemas, theatres, concerts and all other related sectors will remain closed unless otherwise specified. ● Any large gatherings such as sporting events, religious, cultural and social gatherings will not be allowed, unless otherwise specified. ● This includes social, sporting and cultural gatherings such as weddings, parties, initiations, conferences, concerts, church services and others.
<p><i>We will slowly begin to reopen the economy and society.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Industries are encouraged to adopt a work-from-home strategy where possible, and all staff who can work remotely must be allowed to do so. ● Every business will have to adhere to detailed health and safety protocols to protect their employees. ● Workplace plans must be put in place to enable disease surveillance and prevent the spread of infection. ● All businesses that are permitted to resume operations will be required to do so in a phased manner, first preparing the workplace for a return to operations, followed by the return of the workforce in batches of no more than one-third. ● Work environments must have sanitisers available or hand washing facilities with soap. ● Stringent social distancing measures should be implemented in the workplace.