



ESWATINI
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE
EXTRAORDINARY

VOL. LVII

MBABANE, Friday, MARCH 27th 2020

[No. 53]

CONTENTS

No.

Page

PART C - LEGAL NOTICE

72. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Regulations, 2020S1

LEGAL NOTICE NO: 72 OF 2020

THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT

(Act No. 1 of 2006)

THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) REGULATIONS, 2020

(Under section 43)

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 43 of the Disaster Management, 2006, the Deputy Prime Minister makes the following Regulations-

ARRANGEMENT OF REGULATIONS

PART I

PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

1. Citation and Commencement.
2. Interpretation.

PART II

COUNTERING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

3. Prevention of spread of Covid -19.
4. Compulsory notification on suspected cases.
5. Screening of persons.
6. Test samples for Covid-19.
7. Notification on development of symptoms.
8. Isolation for asymptomatic person.
9. Isolation for symptomatic person.
10. Steps upon examination.
11. Measures for defined geographic area.
12. Refusal of medical examination, treatment, isolation and quarantine.
13. Refusal to cooperate with enforcement officer.
14. Places of quarantine and isolation.

PART III

INTERNAL AND CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL

15. Internal Travel.
16. Cross –Border Travel.

PART IV

CONSUMER PROTECTION

17. Interpretation.
18. Price control.
19. Unfair practices.
20. Supply of Goods.
21. Restriction and prohibition on sale of liquor.
22. Restriction on restaurants.
23. Essential industries.
24. Offence

PART V
GENERAL PROVISIONS

25. Restriction and prohibition of gatherings.
 26. Duties of port of health officers.
 27. Closure of schools and Tertiary Institutions.
 28. Suspension of visits.
 29. Spreading rumours or unauthenticated information on COVID -19.
 30. Immunity against liability.
 31. Emergency Procurement Procedures.
 32. Authority to issue guidelines.
 33. Offences and penalties.
- Schedules

PART I
PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

Citation and Commencement

1. (1) These Regulations may be cited as the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Regulations, 2020.

(2) These Regulations shall come into force on the date of publication and shall cease to have effect at the end of the national emergency in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise indicates-

“adequate space” means not more than one person per square meter of floor space;

“contact person” means a healthy person that has been in such association with an infected person or a contaminated environment as to have been exposed and is therefore at a higher risk of developing the disease and includes-

- (a) a person living in the same household as a COVID-19 case;
- (b) a person having had direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case or his infectious secretions without recommended personal protective equipment or with a possible breach of personal protective equipment; or
- (c) a person who was in a closed environment or had face to face contact with a COVID-19 case at a distance of within 1 metre including air travel;

“COVID-19” means the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov) which is an infectious disease caused by a virus, which emerged during 2019 and was declared a global pandemic by the WHO during the year 2020 that has previously not been scientifically identified in humans;

“Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act” means the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act No. 38 of 1967;

“enforcement officer” includes a public health officer, an immigration officer, members of the police service, defence force and correctional services;

“donor” means an individual, corporation or organisation that is a contributor of cash, kind or other assets;

“gathering” means any assembly, concourse or procession of more than twenty (20) persons, wholly or partially in open air or in a building or premises;

“high risk country” means a country classified by the World Health Organization as a high risk country;

“isolation” in relation to a person means the separation of that person from any other person in such a manner as to prevent infection or contamination with Covid-19—

- (a) at a facility designated, by notice, on the purposes of these Regulations by the Minister of Health;
- (b) in that person’s home;
- (c) in a hospital; or
- (d) at another suitable place;

“liquor” includes African beer and has the same meaning ascribed to it in the Liquor Licences Act, 1964;

“loitering” means to stand, wait or walk in a public place without any purpose”;

‘National emergency’ means the national emergency declared by Government on the 17th March 2020 under Legal Notice No. 66 of 2020;

“quarantine” means separating asymptomatic individuals potentially exposed to a disease from non-exposed individuals in such a manner as to prevent the possible spread of infection or contamination;

“school” has the meaning ascribed to it in the Education Act, No.9 of 1981; and

“The Act” means the Disaster Management Act No.1 of 2006;

“WHO” means the World Health Organisation; and

“essential travel” means travel on official government business, company or organisation business, or for medical reasons.

PART II COUNTERING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Prevention of spread of COVID-19

3. Every person in the Kingdom of Eswatini shall take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the manner stipulated in the First Schedule and as may be determined by the Ministry of Health from time to time.

Compulsory notification on suspected cases

4. Every person, medical practitioner or health officer, whether in Government or private, shall notify the Ministry of Health of any person, who within their knowledge, has a travel history to COVID-19 affected countries and has complaints of fever, cough, respiratory difficulty or even without any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or is a contact person.

Screening of persons

5. (1) A Government or private hospital or clinic shall have designated screening points for suspected cases of COVID – 19.

(2) A hospital or clinic shall, during screening of such cases, record to ascertain if the

person has travelled to any country or an area where COVID-19 has been reported or is a contact person.

(3) The history of a contact person shall be recorded, collated and transmitted to the Epidemiologist through the health management information system.

Test samples for Covid-19

6. All test samples shall be collected as per the directive of the Ministry of Health and these samples shall be sent to a designated laboratory.

Notification on development of symptoms

7. Where a person, with a history of travel in the last fourteen (14) days to a country or area from where COVID-19 has been reported or is contact person, develops symptoms, that person shall contact the nearest clinic or call 977 so that necessary measures if required may be initiated by the Ministry of Health.

Isolation for asymptomatic person

8. A person with a history of travel to a country or area from where COVID-19 has been reported or is a contact person in the last fourteen (14) days, who does not have symptoms of cough, fever, difficulty in breathing, shall be under isolation or quarantine at home and take precautions as stipulated in the Second Schedule and shall avoid contact with any person including family members for fourteen (14) days from the date of arrival from such area.

Isolation for symptomatic person

9. (1) A medical practitioner or health officer shall admit a person and isolate that person, if required, where that person has a history of visit to an area where COVID-19 is endemic and the concerned person is symptomatic or is a contact person.

(2) Where there is sufficient reason, cause or information to suspect or believe that a person could be infected with COVID-19 and that person's continued presence in the premises is hazardous to public safety, a medical practitioner or health officer shall –

- (a) enter any such premises, after giving reasonable opportunity to the owner or occupier, for the purpose of surveillance of instances of fever or cough or respiratory difficulty; and
- (b) enquire into or undertake physical examination,

and that person shall be bound to cooperate and render all possible assistance to facilitate such surveillance, inspection, enquiry and examination.

Steps upon examination

10. Where consequent upon an inquiry, inspection, examination or otherwise, a medical practitioner or health officer has reason to believe or suspect that a person could be infected with COVID-19, the medical practitioner or health officer shall direct or arrange to put that person in home quarantine or direct or escort that person to a designated quarantine facility or an isolation facility, as the case may be.

Measures for defined geographic area

11. Where cases of COVID-19 are reported from a defined geographic area, the Senior Medical Officer-Public Health in conjunction with the approval of National Emergency Management Task Force on Coronavirus (COVID- 19) shall take containment measures to prevent spread of the disease, which include-

- (a) sealing off that geographical area;
- (b) banning entry and exit of population from the containment area;
- (c) closure of schools, offices and banning public gatherings;
- (d) banning of vehicular movement in the area;
- (e) initiating active and passive surveillance COVID-19 cases;
- (f) isolation of all suspected cases;
- (g) designating any building as containment unit for isolation of the cases;
- (h) ensuring that enforcement officers are available at the concerned area for discharging the containment measures; and
- (i) any other measure as directed by the Ministry of Health.

Submission to medical examination, treatment, isolation and quarantine

12. (1) A person who has been clinically, or by a laboratory, confirmed as having COVID-19, or who is suspected of having contracted COVID-19, or who has been in contact with a person who is a carrier of COVID-19 or a contact person, shall be submitted to medical examination, treatment, isolation or quarantine as the case may be.

(2) A person referred to under sub-regulation (1) shall not refuse consent to an enforcement officer for-

- (a) submission of that person to a medical examination, including but not limited to the taking of any bodily sample by a person authorised in law to do so;
- (b) admission of that person to a health establishment or a quarantine or isolation site; or
- (c) submission of that person to mandatory treatment, isolation or quarantine or isolation in order to prevent transmission.

(3) A person who contravenes sub- regulation (2) or fails to comply with an instruction or order of an enforcement officer, shall be placed in isolation or quarantine for a period of 48 hours, as the case may be, pending a warrant being issued by a magistrate, on application by an enforcement officer for the medical examination contemplated in sub regulation (1).

(4) A warrant contemplated in sub-regulation (1) may be issued by a magistrate, if it appears from information on oath or affirmation by an enforcement officer -

- (a) that a person is confirmed as having been infected with COVID-19.
- (b) who is on reasonable grounds suspected of having contracted COVID-19, or who has been in contact with, or on reasonable grounds suspected to have been in contact with a person who is a carrier or infected with COVID-19.

(5) The warrant may impose restrictions on the powers of the enforcement officer as the magistrate may deem necessary.

(6) A warrant issued in terms of this regulation remains in force until –

- (a) it is executed;

- (b) it is cancelled by the person who issued it or, if such person is not available, by any person with like authority;
- (c) the expiry of sixty days from the date of its issue; or
- (d) the purpose for the issuing of the warrant has lapsed, whichever occurs first.

(7) A person shall not be entitled to compensation for any loss or damage arising out of any action or omission made in good faith by an enforcement officer under this regulation.

Refusal to cooperate with enforcement officer

13. A health officer, medical practitioner or enforcement officer shall, where a person who refuses to co-operate with or to render assistance to or comply with the directions of that enforcement officer -

- (a) take any coercive action as deemed necessary or expedient for enforcing such cooperation and assistance;
- (b) in case of a minor, such direction shall be directed to the guardian or any other adult member of the family of the minor.

Places of quarantine and isolation

14.(1) The Minister of Health shall identify and make available sites to be used as isolation and quarantine facilities, including facilities at the ports of entry.

(2) The Members of the Epidemic Task Force in the Ministry of Health shall identify and make available sites to be used as isolation and quarantine facilities within each Region, as the need arises.

(3) All isolation, separation and quarantine facilities shall be fumigated by the Ministry of Health from time to time.

PART III INTERNAL AND CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL

Internal travel

15. (1) Non-essential travel between cities, towns and cities is prohibited.

(2) Loitering at any time in any thoroughfare or public place or near any dwelling house, shop, store or any enclosed place or veld or bush is prohibited.

(3) Public transport shall only operate for essential travel, provided there is one (1) meter distance between passengers.

Cross-border travel

16. (1) Traveling in and out of the Kingdom of Eswatini is prohibited save for essential travel.

(2) A person traveling from a country that has been classified as high risk by the World Health Organisation (WHO), is prohibited from entering the Kingdom of Eswatini.

(3) A returning national or resident of Eswatini shall be subjected to screening and self - isolation for a period of fourteen 14 days upon entry.

(4) A person who intends to enter the country for non-essential travel shall be subjected

to screening and isolation for a period of fourteen (14) days and shall bear the costs of such isolation.

(5) There shall be no restrictions on transportation of food, goods and cargo into and outside the country.

(6) A visa and entry permit that has already been issued to a traveller from a high risk country is, at the commencement of these Regulations, revoked.

(7) Immigration officials shall maintain a record of all cross-border travellers for purposes of identification and tracking.

(8) A person who enters the Kingdom of Eswatini with the purpose of seeking asylum shall be screened and isolated for a period of fourteen (14) days.

PART IV PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS

Interpretation

17. In this Part 'price increase' means a direct increase or an increase as a result of unfair conduct such as, among others, false or misleading pricing practices, covert manipulation of prices, manipulations through raising or reducing grade levels goods and services.

Price control

18. (1) A firm shall not effect a price increase to the detriment of consumers.

(2) An excessive or unfair price increase shall be determined using the following guide if-

- (a) it does not correspond to or is equivalent to the increase in the cost of providing that good or service;
- (b) it increases the net margin or mark-up on that good or services above the average margin or mark-up for that good or service during the state of emergency period
- (c) the offer to supply, or enter into agreement to supply any goods and services at a price that is unfair, unreasonable or unjust.

Unfair practices

19. A supplier shall not –

- (a) engage in unacceptable conduct, which includes the use of unfair tactics in connection with the marketing of any goods or service and the supply of goods or services to a consumer; and
- (b) offer to supply, or enter into agreement to supply any goods and services at a price that is unfair, unreasonable or unjust.

Supply of Goods

20. (1) A supplier shall develop and implement reasonable measures to –

- (a) ensure reasonable and equitable access of goods to customers, which may include limiting the number of items which a consumer may purchase; and
- (b) maintain adequate supply of stock;

(2) Where there are restrictions on the purchase of supplies, a supplier shall prominently

display a notice in their outlet pertaining to such restrictions.

(3) A supplier shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that purchases by consumers are not intended to circumvent the object and implementation of these Regulations.

Restriction and prohibition on Sale of liquor

21. (1) Liquor consumption outlets including bars and clubs, shall cease to operate at the commencement of these Regulations.

(2) A premise which sells liquor and also operates as an accommodation establishment shall provide adequate space and comply with all directives and guidelines issued by the Government and the World Health Organisations in respect reducing the infecting others with Covid -19.

(3) A Bottle Store may be opened and operate between 11:00 am to 6:00 pm from Monday to Saturday.

Restriction on Restaurants and food outlets

22. (1) A restaurant or food outlet operator shall ensure that there is no more than twenty (20) customers (excluding employees) in that establishment during trading hours.

(2) A restaurant operator shall ensure that liquor is not sold to customers during the period of national emergency.

Essential Industries

23. (1) The Minister responsible for commerce shall prescribe essential industries which may continue to operate during the National emergency.

(2) The essential industries shall adhere to the directives and guidelines issued in respect of hygiene conditions and limitations of exposure to persons with Covid 19.

Offence

24. A person who contravenes the provisions of this Part commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding Five Hundred Thousand Emalangeni (E500, 000.00).

**PART V
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Restriction and prohibition of gatherings

25. (1) In order to contain the spread of COVID-19, a gathering of more than twenty (20) people is prohibited.

(2) The Prime Minister may from time to time vary and give direction on the maximum number of people who may be part of a gathering.

(3) An enforcement officer shall, where a gathering takes place -

(a) order the persons at the gathering to disperse immediately; and

(b) if they refuse to disperse, take appropriate action, which may, subject to the Criminal Procedure Act, include arrest and detention.

(4) A funeral and memorial service shall not last for more than 2 hours and food shall not

be provided except for family members.

(5) All other gatherings shall not last for more than two (2) hours.

Duties of Port Entry Health Officers

26. Port of entry health officers shall be the first to deal with arriving persons at ports of entry.

Closure of schools and Tertiary Institutions

27. Schools and Tertiary institutions shall be closed until the decommissioning of the declaration, which period may be extended for the duration of the national emergency by the Prime Minister.

Suspension of visits

28. All visits by members of the public to –

- (a) Correctional Centres;
- (b) Remand Detention Facilities;
- (c) Holding Cells;
- (d) Military Detention Facilities; and
- (e) Department of Social Development facilities, including Child and Youth Care Centres, shelters, One Stop Centres, and Treatment Centres,

are suspended for a period of thirty (30) days from the date of commencement of these Regulations, which period may be extended for any period, but not beyond the duration of the national emergency by the Cabinet member responsible.

Spreading rumours or unauthenticated information on COVID -19

29. (1) A person or an institution or organization shall not-

- (a) spread of any rumour or unauthenticated information regarding COVID-19;
- (b) use any print or electronic media for information regarding COVID-19 without prior permission of the Ministry of Health;
- (c) publish any statement, through any medium, including social media, with the intention to deceive any other person about – COVID-19;
- (d) use print or electronic media on the COVID-19 infection status of any person; or
- (e) spread of any rumour or unauthentic information regarding any measure taken by the Government to address COVID-19.

(2) A person or an institution or organization that indulges in an activity that contravenes this Regulation commits an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty thousand Emalangeneni (E20, 000.00) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five (5) years.

Immunity against liability

30. No liability or suit shall lie against an enforcement officer or medical practitioner or member

of the National Emergency Management Task Force for anything done in good faith under these Regulations.

Emergency Procurement Procedures

31. (1) Where Government ministries and departments procure any goods, services or works to combat the spread of COVID -19 during the national emergency period, the relevant controlling officer shall-

- (a) evaluate the need for the emergency procurement and decide the preferred procurement method in order to guarantee economy and efficiency;
- (b) identify, specify and prioritize the immediate procurement activities which may be used in the period of the emergency;
- (c) where possible, identify other government bodies that can provide immediate assistance; and
- (d) specify the time frame within which the emergency procurement will be undertaken.

(2) Upon satisfying the requirements under sub-regulation 1, the controlling officer shall proceed to procure the goods, works or services in accordance with the method of procurement selected.

(3) The controlling officer shall, within thirty (30) days after completion of the procurement process, prepare and submit a report on the emergency procurement to the Eswatini Public Procurement Agency.

(4) The report under sub-regulation (3) shall be in the format prescribed in the guidelines issued by the Eswatini Public Procurement Agency.

(5) The relevant approvals authority shall not grant retrospective approval for emergency procurement.

Authority to issue guidelines

32. (1) The Prime Minister may issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in any area of the Kingdom of Eswatini, which directions may include the -

- (a) recruitment and training of human resources from the Ministry of Health, and other entities responsible for the handling of COVID-19 mortal remains;
- (b) deployment of human resources from the Department of Health to identified sites to render services;
- (c) sourcing of human resources from retired health professionals and Non-Governmental Organisations to render services in identified sites;
- (d) provision of health equipment, sanitation materials and medical supplies;
- (e) identification and establishment of mortuaries that will accommodate all COVID-19 mortal remains; and
- (f) disposal of COVID-19 mortal remains.

(2) The Prime Minister or a Minister may vary the guidelines issued in terms of this regulation when the need arise.

(3) The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Commissioner General of Correctional Services may issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in all justice departments including Correctional Centres.

(4) The Chief Justice may, where appropriate, issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in all courts and court precincts in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

(5) The Minister of Education and training may issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in all schools and tertiary institutions.

(6) The National Commissioner of Police may issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in all police stations, police posts, and holding cells.

(7) The Deputy Prime Minister may issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in all Department of Social Welfare facilities and ensure that all forms of communication issued regarding COVID-19 outbreak prevention, risk mitigation and response measures address the needs of persons living with disabilities.

(8) The Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry may-

(a) issue guidelines to –

(i) protect consumers from excessive, unfair, unreasonable or unjust pricing of goods and services during the national emergency; and

(ii) maintain security and availability of the supply of goods and services during the national emergency; and

(b) direct businesses to position systems for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

(9) The Minister of Public Works and Transport may issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in matters falling within the Minister's mandate.

(10) Any Minister may issue and vary guidelines, as required, within that Minister's mandate, to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19, from time to time, as may be required, including -

(a) disseminating information required for dealing with the national emergency;

(b) implementing emergency procurement procedures; or

(c) taking any other steps that may be necessary to prevent an escalation of the national emergency, or to alleviate, contain and minimise the effects of the national emergency or taking steps to facilitate international assistance.

(11) Traditional leaders may issue guidelines to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 and shall exercise authority within their jurisdiction to ensure that the provisions of these Regulations are enforced at chiefdom and community level.

Offences and penalties

33. (1) A person who contravenes a provision of these Regulations commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty five thousand Emalangeni (E25, 000.00) or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding two (2) years.

(2) A person who intentionally gives false information about oneself or another person being infected with COVID-19 commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine of not exceeding ten thousand Emalangeni (E10, 000.00) or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one (1) year.

(3) Any person who intentionally exposes another person to COVID-19 may be prosecuted for an offence, including assault, attempted murder or murder.

**FIRST SCHEDULE
(Under Regulation 3)**

STEPS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Every person shall use the following steps to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID -19) -

- (a) wash hands frequently with soap and water for 40 seconds;
- (b) an alcohol based hand sanitizer with 70% alcohol must be used for 20 seconds;
- (c) if hands are dirty or soiled, do not use an alcohol based hand sanitizer, rather wash hands with soap and water;
- (d) when coughing or sneezing cover nose and mouth with handkerchief or paper tissue. Dispose of tissue immediately after use and wash hands;
- (e) if handkerchief or tissue paper is not available cough into a flexed elbow;
- (f) refrain from touching face, mouth, nose and eyes;
- (g) stay at least a metre away from those coughing or sneezing;
- (h) monitor your body temperature; and
- (i) avoid handshakes.

**SECOND SCHEDULE
(Under Regulation 8 and 14)**

HOME QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION MEASURES

1. (1) A home quarantined or isolated person shall-

- (a) stay in a well-ventilated single-room preferably with an attached or separate toilet. If another family member needs to stay in the same room, it is advisable to maintain a distance of at least one (1) meter between the two.
- (b) stay away from contact with elderly people, pregnant women, children and persons with co-morbidities within the household.
- (c) restrict movement within the house.
- (d) under no circumstances attend any social or religious gathering which include but not limited weddings and night vigils

(2) A home quarantined or isolated person shall, follow the under mentioned public health measures at all times, -

- (a) wash their hands as often thoroughly with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- (b) avoid sharing household items such kitchen utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people at home;
- (c) wear a surgical mask at all the time and ensure that the mask is changed every 6-8

hours and disposed of;

- (d) disinfect masks used by patients, care givers, or close contacts during home care using ordinary bleach solution containing (5%) or sodium hypochlorite solution containing (1%) which shall be disposed off either by burning or deep burial;
- (e) consider used masks as considered as potentially infected; and
- (f) immediately inform the nearest health centre or call 977, if symptoms appear such as cough, fever or difficulty in breathing,

2. (1) Family members of a home quarantined or isolated person shall -

- (a) ensure that only an assigned family member shall be tasked with taking care of such person;
- (b) avoid touching the soiled linen or direct contact with skin;
- (c) use disposable gloves when cleaning the surfaces or handling soiled linen;
- (d) wash their hands after removing gloves;
- (e) not allow visitors into their house.

(2) In case the person is being quarantined becomes symptomatic, all their close contacts shall be home quarantined for fourteen (14) days and followed up for an additional fourteen (14) days or until the report of that person turns out negative on lab testing.

(3) The following environmental sanitation requirements shall be observed in a home quarantine or isolation place or facility-

- (a) clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the quarantined person's room such as bed, frames and tables daily with one (1%) Sodium Hypochlorite Solution;
- (b) clean and disinfect toilet surfaces daily with regular household bleach solution or phenolic disinfectants; and
- (c) clean the clothes and other linen used by the person separately using common household detergent and dry.

3. A home quarantine or isolation period shall be for fourteen of (14) days from contact with a confirmed case or earlier if a suspect case of whom the index person is a contact turns out negative on laboratory testing.

USE OF MEDICAL MASKS BY GENERAL PUBLIC

Types of medical masks

1. There are different types of medical masks characterized by different sizes and shapes available in the markets, the common ones being -

- (a) flat pleated masks of woven fabric which cover the nose and mouth and are worn behind the head with straps or elastic fasteners; and
- (b) conical or duck bill shaped masks with valves or without valves that fit in the contour of the face over the nose and mouth.

Use of masks by general public

2. (1) Medical masks should not be used by healthy persons who do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 as this creates a false sense of security that can lead to neglecting other essential measures such as washing of hands.

(2) There is no scientific evidence to show health benefits of using masks for healthy persons in the community.

(3) Erroneous use of masks or continuous use of a disposable masks periods longer than six (6) hours or repeated use of same mask may actually increase the risk of getting an infection and may cause persons to incur unnecessary costs.

When to use medical masks

3. (1) Members of the public may use medical three layer masks when ill to prevent infection from spreading to others and wash your their hand frequently to avoid spreading infection to others.

(2) A medical three (3) layer mask shall be used -

- (a) when a person develops cough or fever;
- (b) while visiting a healthcare facility;
- (c) when one is caring for an ill person; and
- (d) by close family contacts of a suspected or confirmed case undergoing home care.

Duration for which a medical mask will remain effective

4. A medical mask, if properly worn, will be effective for 8 hours, if the mask gets damp it should be changed immediately.

Correct procedure of wearing triple layer mask

5. When wearing a medical mask, the steps given below need to be carefully followed and if the steps are not followed this might lead to infection from the mask –

- (a) unfold the pleats make sure that they are facing down;
- (b) place over nose, mouth and chin;
- (c) fit flexible nose piece (a metallic strip that can easily be located) over nose-bridge;
- (d) secure with tie strings (upper string to be tied on top of head above the ears – lower string at the back of the neck.);
- (e) ensure there are no gaps on either side of the mask, adjust to fit;
- (f) while in use, avoid touching the mask;
- (g) do not let the mask hang from the neck;
- (h) change the mask every after six hours or as soon as it becomes damp;

- (i) while removing the mask great care must be taken not to touch the potentially contaminated outer surface of the mask;
- (j) to remove mask first untie the string below and then the string above and handle the mask using the upper strings; and
- (k) disposable masks are never to be reused and should be disposed of right away.

Disposal of used masks

6. (1) Used masks shall be considered as potentially infected.

(2) Masks used by patients, care givers, close contacts during home care shall be disinfected using ordinary bleach solution (5%) or sodium hypochlorite solution (1%) and then disposed of either by burning or deep burial.

THEMBA NHLANGANISO MASUKU
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER