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Government Notice

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

No. 107

2020

HEALTH DIRECTIVES RELATING TO COVID-19: STATE OF EMERGENCY - COVID-19 REGULATIONS

Under regulation 14(1) and (3) of the State of Emergency - Covid-19 Regulations published under Proclamation No. 9 of 28 March 2020, with the authorisation of the President and the approval of the Attorney-General, I issue the directives set out in the Schedule.

K. SHANGULA
MINISTER OF HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Windhoek, 21 April 2020

SCHEDULE

Definitions

1. In this directives a word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Regulations has that meaning, and unless the context otherwise indicates -

“aircraft” means aircraft as defined in section 1 of the Civil Aviation Act, 2016 (Act No. 6 of 2016);

“COVID-19” means the coronavirus disease of 2019 which is a respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2);

“isolation”, in relation to COVID-19, means the separation of individuals who have tested positive from COVID-19 from individuals who have not contracted COVID-19;

“self-quarantine” means staying home and away from other people as much as possible after exposure or potential exposure to COVID-19;

“social distancing” means any number of measures taken to increase the physical space between people to slow the spread of COVID-19; and

“the Regulations” means the State of Emergency - Covid-19 Regulations published under Government Notice No. 9 of 28 March 2020.

COVID-19 related deaths and funerals

2. (1) Deaths and funerals related to COVID-19 will be handled by the government with psychosocial support to the family of the deceased person.

(2) For non-COVID-19 related deaths and funerals, the family of the deceased person is strongly advised -

- (a) to promote hand washing, respiratory hygiene and social distancing at the event; and
- (b) advice mourners to wear masks and gloves when coming to all activities related to the funeral.

COVID-19 awareness messages and campaigns

3. The Ministry should intensify public awareness messages and campaigns using all media avenues and platforms to reach every community member in all the regions.

Duties of providers of critical services

4. Providers of critical services must -

- (a) regularly disinfect the premises used for the performance of those services and the premises to which the workers or public has access; and
- (b) ensure that the workers or persons who access their services in person are provided with disinfection before, during and after leaving such place of service.

Duties at airports, ports of entry, roadblocks and checkpoints

5. (1) The person in charge airports, ports of entry, roadblocks or checkpoints must -

- (a) regularly cause strict disinfection to be conducted at the premises and areas used for the performance of the functions at the airport, port of entry, roadblock or checkpoint to which the workers or public has access;
- (b) ensure that persons entering or leaving the airport, port of entry, roadblock or checkpoint are provided with disinfection before, during and after leaving such place of service;

- (c) ensure that every person working at the airport, port of entry, roadblock or checkpoint receives sufficient training on infection prevention and control and provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.
- (2) Owners or operators of -
 - (a) an aircraft used for the purposes of conveying passengers and goods must ensure that such aircraft is disinfected regularly, before and after each flight;
 - (b) vehicles used for the purposes of providing transportation service in respect of goods or persons must ensure that the means of transport, such as motor vehicles are disinfected regularly, before, during and after each conveyance.
- (3) The person in charge of airports, ports of entry, roadblocks or checkpoints must -
 - (a) conduct or cause to be conducted mandatory screening of persons for COVID-19 at all airports, ports of entry, roadblocks or checkpoints; and
 - (b) place thermo guns at airports, points of entry, roadblocks or checkpoints for screening all incoming and inland travellers.

Reporting requirements

6. (1) State and private medical practitioners must immediately report all suspected cases of COVID-19, whether positive or negative, to the persons designated by the Minister of Health and Social Services using the set case definitions as well as taking specimens and packaging according to the set standard operating procedures.

(2) All health facilities in the country must introduce a triage system and mandatory screening.

(3) The Ministry of Health and Social Services must coordinate the provision of personal protective clothing and equipment to all staff members employed at all ports of entry, roadblocks and checkpoints.

(4) Subject to regulation 15(1) of the Regulations, all health care workers must refer to and apply relevant sections of the Public and Environmental Health Act, 2015 (Act No. 1 of 2015) regarding the notification, prevention and control of notifiable diseases.

Public transport services

7. Owners or operators of vehicles with which a transportation service is provided must provide alcohol-based hand sanitisers and adhere to the laws on overloading.

Auctions

8. Subject to regulation 5 of the Regulations, an auctioneer must put in place precautionary measures during livestock auctions to prevent transmission of the COVID-19.

Accommodation establishments

- 9. The owner or manager of an accommodation establishment must -
 - (a) provide alcohol-based hand sanitisers and masks for all staff members;

- (b) educate guests to have own protective measures;
- (c) obtain the full travel history of all guests and next destination;
- (d) immediately contact health authorities when he or she notices that a guest is ill, or displays symptoms related to COVID-19; and
- (e) adopt and implement World Health Organisation Guidelines on Workplace Prevention of COVID-19, including training of staff members on appropriate infection prevention and control measures.

Shops, shopping mall and supermarkets

10. Shops, shopping mall and supermarkets must put measures in place to ensure and enhance hygiene at all times to protect their employees and customers, such as the provision of alcohol-based hand sanitisers and face masks for employees.

Shelters

11. (1) All regions must identify suitable shelter and services for persons without or in need of shelters.

(2) Regional and district social workers of the Ministry must facilitate and spearhead the services to persons without shelters.

(3) Counsellors and other leaders in the community must be involved in the facilitation of shelter.

(4) Regional and district social workers of the Ministry must record and register persons without shelter.

(5) The Ministry must establish a multi-sectoral committee to respond to the needs of persons without shelter.

(6) Regional Directors of the Ministry must mobilise resources to provide basic necessities, such as clothing, mattresses and bedding, cleaning materials and food.

(7) Regions must provide written reports to the head office every second day on information on the status of the resources that are available at the shelter, resources that are needed, and the number of persons accommodated in shelters.

(8) The Ministry or operators of shelters must provide the persons placed in shelters with -

- (a) adequate sleeping facilities which must be so arranged that residents must sleep two meters apart from each other;
- (b) toiletries and hand sanitisers;
- (c) proper ablution facilities;
- (d) meals which are to be provided by stakeholders;
- (e) health and social welfare education;

- (f) drinking water on a daily basis;
 - (g) health screening on admission; and
 - (h) psychosocial support services.
- (9) Health and social services staff members are to be accompanied by law enforcement officers who must be in civilian clothes when performing functions in terms of this Directive.
- (10) Persons who are placed in a shelter should ensure cleanliness at all times.
 - (11) The Ministry and stakeholder must provide cleaning materials.
 - (12) There must be 24/7 supervision and security available at all shelters.
 - (13) The Ministry must provide persons who are yet to be placed in a shelter with -
 - (a) adequate provision of toiletries, clean running water and sanitiser;
 - (b) meals;
 - (c) drinking water;
 - (d) health and social welfare education;
 - (e) health screening on a weekly basis and when a reasonable demand is made; and
 - (f) psychosocial support.

Soup kitchens

- 12.** (1) Persons in dire need of food will be identified by the Ministry and food must be delivered to them as take-away and not sit-in.
- (2) Soap, running water and hand sanitisers will be provided at the soup kitchens.
 - (3) Hygiene and social distancing must be practiced at all times.
 - (4) Only persons registered by the Ministry are to be served at a soup kitchen.

Residential care facilities for older persons

- 13.** (1) Only critical service visitors may be allowed at residential care facilities for older persons.
- (2) Daily telephonic contact with persons in residential care facilities by family members and other care givers is allowed and encouraged.
 - (3) All persons at residential care facilities must practice good hygiene and social distancing at all times.
 - (4) Gatherings are not allowed at residential care facilities for older persons.
 - (5) All tenants are allowed to seek medical services and basic necessities.

Alcohol and drug residential rehabilitation centres

14. (1) Hygiene and social distancing must be practiced at all times in groups as well as individually.

(2) Groups should be limited to 8 members only.

(3) New intakes at private and state alcohol and drug rehabilitation centres are not allowed.

(4) Visitors are not allowed at alcohol and drug residential rehabilitation centres.

(5) At alcohol and drug residential rehabilitation centres -

(a) counselling and education services are to be provided telephonically;

(b) referral for medical and social welfare services must be on demand;

(c) continuous education on COVID-19 must be provided to current clients and staff members.

Services at mental health facilities

15. (1) All person at mental health facilities must practice good hygiene and social distancing at all times, including the dining rooms.

(2) Visitors are not allowed at a mental health facility.

(3) The operator of a mental health facility may not conduct group work activities.

(4) Counselling and education services to patients at mental health facilities are to be provided telephonically.

(5) The operator of a mental health facility must provide continuous education on COVID-19 to current patients and staff members.

(6) The operator of a mental health facility must only admit emergency cases such as suicide ideation or danger to self and others.

(7) The operator of a mental health facility must prepare isolation rooms for new admissions.

(8) New patients are allowed to be accompanied by one caregiver, if applicable.

(9) The operator of a mental health facility must conduct health screening on admission of a new patient.

Quarantine

16. (1) Truck drivers coming from outside Namibia who are off-loading commodities and driving to the next destination must be informed to self-quarantine overnight at a facility -

(a) designated by the government; or

(a) identified by the employer of the truck driver or the truck driver,

at the cost of the employer of the truck driver and the truck driver must observe good hygiene, social distancing and use mask at all times.

(2) Truck drivers who are staying in Namibia for more than one day must self-quarantine at a facility -

- (a) designated by the government; or
- (b) identified by the employer of the truck driver or the truck driver,

at the cost of the employer of the truck driver until the date of departure irrespective of the duration of stay in Namibia.

(3) If the employer elects to quarantine a truck driver at a facility of their choice, the employer or the truck driver must inform the Ministry accordingly.

(4) The employer of the truck driver or the truck driver must inform officials of the Ministry of Health and Social Services the number of days the driver will stay in Namibia.

(5) The truck drivers must observe good hygiene, social distancing and use mask at all times.

(6) Ministry of Health and Social Services officials must assess the quarantine facilities elected by the employer of the truck driver or truck driver to determine whether the facilities meet the required standards.

(7) Truck drivers are prohibited from picking up hitch-hikers.

(8) Truck drivers must observe proper hygiene practices and social distancing while in transit.

(9) In the event of a breakdown, the employer of the truck driver or the truck driver must dispatch the support services to the scene without delay and the driver must, to the extent possible, remain in the truck or practice social distancing to avoid contact with any other person.

(10) A truck driver involved in a motor vehicle accident and in need of medical attention must be admitted in an isolated room as determined by the degree of his, her or their injury, and if the driver has minor injuries, the employer must ensure self-quarantine.

(11) Non-Namibian airline staff cabin crews arriving into Namibia on flights for purposes of evacuation, medical services, delivery of cargo and other critical services flights must not disembark from the aircraft.

(12) All persons who have been in contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

(13) All persons who are suspected or considered probable cases must self-quarantine at home or at a selected facility until results are confirmed.

(14) Law enforcement officers guarding quarantine or isolation facilities must observe social distancing when interacting with persons under quarantine.

(15) Persons under quarantine must observe the following quarantine principles -

- (a) social distancing;

- (b) no partying, no alcohol or other drugs use;
- (c) no visitors at quarantine or isolation facilities; and
- (d) maintain cleanliness of their rooms.

(16) A written quarantine order must be issued to persons identified for quarantine and a tear-off slip release form must be issued on discharge of the person for the records of employers.

- (17) The Ministry must make special arrangements and considerations for -
- (a) unaccompanied minors; and
 - (b) persons with pre-existing medical conditions who require special care.

Responsibilities of drivers of trucks or vehicles carrying goods

17. (1) Trucks or vehicles carrying goods must only have 2-3 crew members per vehicle to facilitate smooth border crossing at internal and regional borders.

(2) If the crew are screened or tested and found to be at high risk of or positive for COVID-19, the trucks or vehicles will be decontaminated before it is allowed to continue to its final destination and the crew must be quarantined for 14 days according to the set national guidelines.

(3) If the crew are quarantined while in transit, truck owners or operators must make necessary arrangements for a backup crew to ensure that the goods are delivered to the intended destination.

(4) Truck drivers must declare their final destination and are urged to stop only at designated points along the transport routes or corridors so as to limit the chances of spreading of COVID-19 during transit.

(5) Truck drivers and their employers must observe the SADC Guidelines on Harmonisation and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the Region during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Access to quarantine facility

- 18.** Access to quarantine facility is only permitted to -
- (a) health care workers directly involved in the care of persons in the quarantine facility;
 - (b) social workers and psychologists providing psychosocial counselling;
 - (c) law enforcement officers;
 - (d) high ranking government officials to whom special access has been granted for the purpose of COVID-19 response;
 - (e) maintenance workers with prior approval; and
 - (f) facility management and support staff such as cleaners and cooks.

Isolation facilities

19. (1) Every region must have an isolation facility that meets the minimum standard of care.

(2) Regions must identify facilities that can be converted into isolation facilities.

(3) Persons with confirmed cases of COVID-19, whether mild, moderate and severe cases must be admitted in an isolation facility.

Offences and penalties

20. (1) Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with directive 4, 5(1), 5(2), 5(3), 6(1), 6(4), 16(1) to 16(5), 16(9), 16(11) to 16(13), 17(1), 17(2) or 17(3) commits an offence and is on conviction liable to a fine not exceeding N\$2 000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to both such a fine and such imprisonment.

(2) Any person who visits or enters a quarantine facility, if such entry is not authorised by directive 18 commits an offence and is on conviction liable to a fine not exceeding N\$2 000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to both such a fine and such imprisonment.
