



mineral resources & energy

Department:
Mineral Resources and Energy
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON THE REVISED MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINING INDUSTRY (SAMI)

1. Background

The South African Mining Industry has gone through the COVID-19 pandemic, the virus has evolved over time and so has legislation and policies, hence the need to align the sector's response to current relevant legislation on COVID-19 by the National Department of Health (NDoH) and other relevant legislative bodies. The National State of Disaster under the Coronavirus was lifted from midnight of 5 April 2022.

The regulations (pertaining to COVID-19) under the Disaster Management Act (Act No. 57 of 2002, as amended) ceased to have legal effect on 5 April 2022, and the COVID-19 pandemic has subsequently been managed under the health regulations. There is an ongoing need to prevent and mitigate the risks associated with SARS-CoV-2 exposure in the mining sector. It is for this reason that the *Guideline for the compilation of a mandatory code of practice for the prevention, mitigation and management of COVID-19 outbreak (Ref no: DMRE 16/3/2/5-A4)* (Shall be referred to Rev 1 of the COVID-19 Guideline, throughout this document) and its annexures remain in effect, except for the provisions revised/introduced as per this document.

As such, the following Guiding Principles are issued on the revised measures for the prevention, mitigation, and management of COVID-19 to give effect to the revised provisions of Rev 1 of the COVID-19 Guideline and these are applicable from the date of issue. The provisions are stipulated below in section 3.

2. PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THESE PROVISIONS

- a) The Chief Inspector of Mines (CIoM) may determine that the measures in Rev 1 of the COVID-19 guideline, in part or in their entirety, are no longer necessary to contain the spread of COVID-19 and give notice of this determination through the Guiding Principles, whereupon the measures concerned will no longer be in operation; and
- b) At any time after having made such a determination, determine that the measures concerned are once again necessary to contain the spread of COVID-19 and give notice of this determination in an instruction, whereupon the measures concerned will resume operation.

These revised measures contained in these Guiding Principles shall apply from the date of signature until rescinded by the Chief Inspector of Mines.

3. REVISED PROVISIONS

3.1 Wearing of masks to contain the spread of COVID-19:

To contain the spread of COVID-19 in mines the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies shall apply regarding the wearing of masks, however in designated workplaces/areas this shall be determined by the mine's risk assessment.

3.2 Gatherings to contain the spread of COVID-19

On mass gatherings at the mine, the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies shall apply.

3.3 Social Distancing

To contain the spread of COVID-19 in mines, the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies on social distancing shall apply, however in designated workplaces/areas, this shall be determined by the mine's risk assessment.

3.4 Mining employees entering and leaving the country (to contain the spread of COVID-19)

On mining employees entering and leaving the country, the prevailing NDoH and other relevant government departments' legislation and policies shall apply.

3.5 COVID-19 Screening

- a) The employer needs to take measures to ensure that education/training on the identification of such symptoms for anyone entering the mine.
- b) The employer must take measures to require employees and any other person entering the mine to immediately inform the employer if they experience any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- c) The employer should put a system in place for COVID-19 symptoms self-reporting for all individuals entering the mine's premises, and this shall replace the use of symptoms screening questionnaires and thermal screening.
- d) A person with COVID-19 symptoms, who self-reports should be investigated and managed as a Person Under Investigation (PUI) as per Rev 1 of the COVID-19 Guideline.
- e) Subsection (d) above does not apply to COVID-19 vaccinated workers who report the presence of COVID-19 symptoms between one to three days after vaccination.

3.6 Quarantining

Quarantining for COVID-19 in the mining sector shall be according to the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies.

- a) All quarantine should be stopped. This applies to everyone including health care workers.
- b) An exception to this is where a cluster of COVID-19 cases (three or more people COVID-19 infected in a group within the same time-period) occurs in a mine health facility.
- c) Those who had exposure to COVID-19 should closely watch out for COVID-19 symptoms, and where symptoms appear; they should test and isolate if diagnosed positive with severe Covid-19 disease.

3.7 Isolation

Isolation for COVID-19 in the mining sector shall be according to the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies.

3.7.1 Isolation is reserved for Severe Symptomatic COVID-19 infection

Employees with symptomatic COVID-19 infection, who have severe disease (they have been admitted to hospital for COVID-19 pneumonia should continue as prescribed by the NDoH. There is no need for testing prior to de-isolation.

3.8 Contact tracing

Contact tracing for COVID-19 in the mining sector shall be according to the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies.

- a) Active contact tracing should be stopped.
- b) An exception is where a cluster of COVID cases (3 or more people COVID infected in a group within the same time-period) occurs in a mine health facility
- c) Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 should be encouraged to inform other employees that they may have been in contact with of their status.

3.9 Outbreak Investigation and Containment activities (COVID-19 section 11.5 investigations)

For Section 11.5 investigations and containment activities for COVID-19 in the mining sector, the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies shall apply.

- a) Section 11.5 investigations and containment activities (quarantine and active contact tracing) of a cluster of COVID cases (3 or more people COVID infected in a group within the same time-period) should be limited to mine health facilities; and
- b) Cases where there are sufficient grounds to suspect occupational COVID-19 disease (where it is suspected COVID-19 was contracted at the mine), for purposes of submission for compensation.

3.10 Complex scenarios for Isolation, Quarantine and Contact Tracing

Management of complex scenarios for Isolation, Quarantine and Contact Tracing in the mining sector shall be according to the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies.

While the above recommendations on isolation, quarantine and contact tracing cover most scenarios, there might be some unique complex scenarios not covered by the above, and in those unique situations the clinicians or OMPs involved should use their discretion on how to proceed, by balancing the safest option against the socio-economic cost.

3.11 Appointments and designations

The appointments and duties of a COVID-19 Compliance Officer (as stipulated in subsection 8.4.1 of the rev 1 of the COVID-19 Guideline) and the steering committee (in line with subsection 8.4.2 of the same guideline), remain applicable.

3.12 Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination in the mining sector shall be according to the prevailing Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) guide. (Annexure 1: guiding principles on COVID-19 vaccination).

3.12.1 Vaccination and Categorization of Vulnerable employees

Vaccinations are intended to reduce the risk of severe disease especially among those who were regarded as vulnerable. It is envisaged that vaccination will improve vulnerability categorization, but those who opt not to vaccinate, should be managed as per the guiding principles on COVID-19 vaccination (See Annexure 1) in the SAMI.

3.13 COVID-19 Vaccine Injury no-fault compensation

This shall be managed in line with the prevailing COVID-19 Vaccine injury no-fault compensation provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 and any other relevant legislation.

Note

For all other provisions that are not addressed in these guiding principles; the prevailing NDoH legislation and policies shall apply, however in designated workplaces/areas the measures shall be determined by the mine's risk assessment.

4. APPLICATION

These revised measures contained in this Guiding Principles shall apply from the date of signature until it is rescinded by the Chief Inspector of Mines.



PRINCIPAL INSPECTOR

05/07/2022
Date: