

8 July 2020

Dear Valued Member

COVID-19 - RAMP UP PRECAUTIONS AS THE NUMBERS INCREASE BEYOND ANTICIPATION

It is now over 100 days since COVID-19 lockdown level 5 when South African business came to a standstill in an attempt to contain the spread of the virus.

The media has reported on varying views of scientists and economists debating the threat to human life versus concurrent unlocking of the economy to maintain economic stability. There is no question this is a very difficult set of balls to juggle for our Government. Of late, the number of positive cases has significantly increased beyond anticipation to almost 200 000 with over 3 000 deaths. New cases per day in South Africa have surpassed 10 000 and our accelerated rate of infection has now had a mention in world news.

Since the start of Lockdown, the RMI has taken a number of proactive steps to keep member businesses' informed of the necessary safety measures for their business, staff and customers. Now more than ever we need to remain vigilant. With economic activity almost reaching normality, there is a risk of complacency amongst some consumers and staff. You need to remind staff that they need to be particularly aware of their hygiene protocols, both at work and at home.

The World Health Organisation says you can protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19 and reduce your chances of being infected by taking simple precautions:

- **Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands** with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- **Use appropriate PPE** (mask and eye protection – e.g. mask and/or shield) when leaving home. The main benefit of everyone wearing a cloth mask is to reduce the amount of virus droplets being released by those with the infection and transmitted to others and to surfaces that others may touch.
- **Maintain at least 1 metre distance** between yourself and others. Why? When someone coughs, sneezes, or speaks they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person has the disease.
- **Avoid going to crowded places.** Why? Where people come together in crowds, you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COVID-19 and it is more difficult to maintain physical distance of 1 metre.
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.** Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you.
- Make sure you, and the people around you, **follow good respiratory hygiene.** This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used

tissue immediately and wash your hands. Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

- **Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms** such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others. Why? Avoiding contact with others will protect them from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- **Keep up to date** on the latest information from trusted sources, such as WHO, your local and national health authorities or www.sacoronavirus.com. Why? Local and national authorities are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.
- **If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention**, but call by telephone in advance if possible and follow the directions of your local health authority. Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
- **You are at higher risk - Co-morbidity factors:**
 - Hypertension
 - High blood pressure
 - Diabetes
 - Obesity
 - Cardiovascular disease (heart disease)
 - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (lung disease).
- **Symptoms**
According to the Department of Health the most common symptoms are:
 - Cough
 - Fever
 - Sore throat
 - Shortness of breath

Remember, this is the time to ramp up your safety efforts; revisit the precautionary steps previously outlined and collectively help SA to contain the spread. We also recommend you revisit the RMI recommended Business Continuity plan and risk adjusted strategy attached.

