



the dpsa

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TO ALL HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS

Dear Colleagues

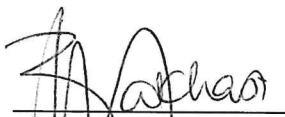
STATE OF DISASTER COVID-19: GUIDELINES ON PROVISION AND UTILIZATION OF FACE MASKS

1. The importance of wearing face masks in preventing the transmission of the COVID-19 virus must be stressed again.
2. In paragraphs 2.3.2 to 2.3.4 of DPSA Circular No 18 of 2020, dated 1 May 2020, some guidelines were provided to departments on the issuing and wearing of face masks in the workplace. The guidelines in this letter are aimed at elucidating the matter further.
3. As mentioned in Circular No 18 of 2020, departments must provide every employee who is required at the workplace with two cloth masks to wear at work and while commuting to and from work. This guideline emanates from the requirements in paragraph 31 of the Directive issued by the Minister of Employment and Labour in respect of COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces, 2020. All departments must comply with this Directive.
4. In summary, the Directive of the Minister of Employment and Labour referred to above, requires amongst others the following as far as the provision and wearing of face masks are concerned:
 - a. All employers must provide each of its employees, free of charge, with a minimum of two cloth masks, which comply with the requirements of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (which can be accessed at http://www.thedtic.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/Updated_Recommended_Guidelines_Fabric_Face_Masks.pdf) to be worn while at work and while commuting to and from work.
 - b. The number of cloth masks to be provided, and whether and how often it should be replaced, must be determined in view of the employees' conditions of work, and in particular, where these may result in the mask becoming wet or soiled.
 - c. Employees must be informed, instructed and/or trained as to the correct use of cloth masks.
5. Departments must understand that due to their unique circumstances and requirements, it is not

possible for DPSA to issue detailed instructions on the issuing and utilization of face masks that will be applicable to all departments. Departments must use their discretion in this regard. The following are however broad guidelines that departments may consider:

- a. Face masks should be provided as soon as possible to employees who are currently at work. In the case of other employees, masks should be provided as and when they return to the workplace. Directions should be displayed at the entrances to workplace as to where employees may collect the masks. A register must be kept in which the issuing of the masks to employees are recorded.
- b. Masks should only be replaced where there is sufficient proof that a mask has become unusable. The original mask should be returned in order to receive a new mask. Employees who lose masks should replace it at their own cost.
- c. As far as the washing, drying and ironing of masks are concerned, departments should consider an arrangement in terms of which employees would be responsible for the washing, drying and ironing of the masks allocated to them. Such an arrangement will prevent additional costs, associated with the washing, drying and ironing of masks, to the department. It is anticipated that many employees will prefer to make their own arrangements in this regard so as to prevent a situation where a mask that was previously used by another person, is issued to them.
- d. Departments should consider adopting a clear set of policy guidelines on the issuing, utilization and wearing of masks that will apply for the period until the COVID-19 restrictions have been completely lifted. These guidelines should also contain instructions to employees on the correct utilization and wearing of masks.

Kind regards



Ms Yoliswa Makhasi
Director-General

Date: 07 May 2020