

Home Affairs Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi provides an update on the partial re-opening of borders and services during Alert Level 1

04 October 2020

The Minister of Home Affairs Dr Aaron Motsoaledi convened an inclusive meeting involving senior immigration officials and ports of entry managers to address the challenges arising from the implementation of Regulations pertaining to travel into the Republic, including opening the tourism industry and promoting trade in order to stimulate economic recovery.

The Minister of Tourism, Ms Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, was consulted prior and during the meeting and fully endorses its outcome.

The visa free status of citizens of some countries and territories was temporarily suspended at the start of the lockdown period. In line with the commitment of Government to take urgent steps to address the economic and tourism stagnation brought about by the outbreak of Covid-19, the visa free status of citizens from the following countries and territories has been reinstated:

- South Korea;
- Spain;
- Italy;
- Germany;
- Hong Kong;
- Singapore;
- USA;
- UK;
- France;

- Portugal; and

- Iran.

However, the visa free status does not alter the current Covid-19 Regulations.

The Minister has instructed officials to communicate this decision to the aviation industry, embassies and other stakeholders as a matter of urgency.

The port managers have been instructed to adhere to the SADC protocol and guidelines regulating the movement of essential goods under Covid-19 Regulations. The guidelines regulating truck drivers travelling across the border will continue to apply as has been the case for the past seven months.

In view of the confusion regarding the 72 hours negative test requirement, we reiterate that business persons providing services across the borders of SADC are allowed multiple entry subject to the following:

- Producing a certificate of negative Covid-19 test result not older than 72 hours from the time of departure. This certificate is valid for 14 days.

Minister Motsoaledi is fully aware of the issue of airline and maritime crews and he has been informed that the Minister of Transport is resolving the matter and a statement to that effect will hopefully be issued by the Minister of Transport today.

Immigration officers will be required to assess the movement and place of origin of the traveller and not the country of origin of the airline concerned.

Transit travellers through South Africa by air will be allowed to connect to their destinations, subject to them complying with applicable health protocols but need not produce the 72 hours negative certificate.

As communicated on 30 September 2020, visa services, including submission of applications through VFS Global, have resumed in the following categories:

Visitor's visas; study visa; treaty visa; business visa; crew visa; medical treatment visa; relative's visa; general work visa; critical skills work visa; intra-company transfer work

visa; retired person visa; corporate visa; exchange visa; waiver of prescribed requirement, as contemplated in section 31(2)(c); and appeals or reviews contemplated in section 8 of the Immigration Act.

Any person from a country listed as having a high COVID-19 infection and transmission rate, who wish to undertake a business travel into South Africa, may, in writing, apply to the Minister of Home Affairs and demonstrate reasons for their request to enter the Republic for business purposes during the period of the national state of disaster.

Such applications must be directed to email Covid19BusinessTravel@dha.gov.za and supported by—

- (a) a copy of passport and/or temporary residence visa;
- (b) proof of business activities to be undertaken in the Republic;
- (c) proof of travel itinerary; and
- (d) proof of address or accommodation in the Republic.

The list of high risk countries as published on 30 September 2020 is:

Albania	Brazil	France	India
Argentina	Chile	Georgia	Iran
Armenia	Columbia	Greece	Iraq
Austria	Costa Rica	Guatemala	Ireland
Bahrain	Croatia	Guyana	Israel
Belgium	Czech Republic	Honduras	Jamaica
Bolivia	Denmark	Hungary	Jordan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ecuador	Iceland	Kuwait
Lebanon	Nepal	Peru	Suriname
Luxemburg	Netherlands	Portugal	Switzerland
Maldives	North Macedonia	Puerto Rico	Ukraine
Malta	Oman	Qatar	United Emirates
Mexico	Palestine	Romania	United Kingdom
Moldova	Panama	Russia	USA
Montenegro	Paraguay	Slovakia	Venezuela

The list of these high risk countries will be updated fortnightly and can be accessed on the Home Affairs website: www.dha.gov.za

Immigration officers have been instructed to apply the requirements with a measure of flexibility in order to allow applications for business travel to be lodged at the ports of entry if and when necessary and await the outcome before entry into the Republic is allowed.

All other categories of travellers from medium and low risk countries are required to produce a certificate of negative COVID-19 test result not older than 72 hours from the time of departure. Any person who fail to submit the certificate will be required to quarantine at his or her own cost.

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