

Changes to Adjusted Alert-Level 1 COVID-19 Regulations

Members will recall that a special Cabinet meeting on 31 January 2022 approved changes to the adjusted COVID-19 Alert-Level 1 after gathering information that the country has exited the fourth wave. Critical changes include:

- Reduction of isolation days from ten to seven for those testing positive and showing symptoms.
- Removal of isolation period for those who test positive but showing no symptoms.
- Contact tracing will no longer be implemented and contacts do not have to isolate unless they develop symptoms.
- Resumption of full-time school learning and removal of one meter social distancing

Subsequently, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) issued Circular No 05 of 2022 on 4 February 2022, directing Heads of Departments to work towards 100% capacity in the workplace with due regard to personnel with co-morbidities. However, officials with comorbidities and/or relevant conditions are still required to apply individually for consideration by Accounting Officers to continue with remote working arrangements. Although Accounting Officers retain the legal responsibility to determine work requirements and ensure provision of service delivery to the public, consultation with employees remains critical in the workplace.

Experience has shown that upon the issuing of DPSA circulars, departments hastily recall employees without ensuring that proper consultation takes place. This often resulted in unnecessary tensions and increased positive cases, which must be avoided. It must be noted that departments must still adhere to the established safety protocols and PSA shop stewards are advised to continue monitoring workplace compliance to ensure that employees' health and safety are not compromised. Employees with co-morbidities are urged to submit their applications, together with detailed medical reports, for consideration by Accounting Officers for them to continue working remotely. Members of Health and Safety Committees must also ensure that meetings are convened to ensure the correct implementation of the said Circular.

Members experiencing problems in their workplaces can contact PSA Provincial Offices for urgent intervention as the health and safety of members remain a priority for the PSA.

GENERAL MANAGER