BERGRIVIER MUNICIPALITY

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1.   OBJECTIVE AND APPLICATION OF POLICY

1.1   The aim of this policy is to ensure a safe working environment for all employees and to stop the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19 virus). Section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (OHSA) requires every employer to provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of its employees. Similarly, the OHSA also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their fellow employees.

1.2   Information pertaining to COVID-19 is being provided by various authorities on a regular basis and it is important to ensure that updates are obtained and disseminated throughout the municipality. Employees are requested to refrain from forwarding information related to the virus without having checked it with credible sources such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). Spreading unverified information may contribute to unnecessary panic, stigma and discrimination.

1.3   This policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines and accordingly will be updated if, and when, required.

1.4   This policy includes measures being taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The municipality and its employees shall follow all these requirements to sustain a healthy and safe workplace and behave responsibly by adhering to these health measures.

2.   PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 INFECTION IN THE WORKPLACE

This policy provides guidance on how to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the workplace and the issues to address when dealing with employees infected with COVID-19.

The policy contains the following:

2.1   Background on how the coronavirus is spread and what can be done to prevent the spread of the virus;
2.2   Advice on what to do, should someone in the workplace become infected with the coronavirus;
2.3   Additional guidance to specific functions regarding the prevention and spreading of the coronavirus; and
2.4   Compliance related information regarding the coronavirus.

3.   PREVENTING CORONAVIRUS INFECTION IN THE WORKPLACE

3.1   How the Coronavirus Spread

The coronavirus is spread by fluid droplets when coughing, sneezing, shouting and talking. When people cough and sneeze these fluid droplets get onto their hands and

the objects or surfaces around them. The coronavirus is then spread by their hands touching the hands of others and touching objects such as equipment, money, door handles and counters. When this person touches their eyes, nose and/or mouth after they have touched the other person and/or objects with the coronavirus on it, then they can get infected.

3.2 Five Golden Rules to Prevent the Spread of Coronavirus

The following are the 5 Golden Rules to prevent the spread of the coronavirus:

3.2.1 *Separate yourself from other people*:
- By working from home where possible; and
- By staying home if unwell/sick.

3.2.2 *Physical distancing when around other people*:
- Keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres (2 arm lengths) from others, when you have to work with them or serve them; and
- Do NOT shake hands, hug, fist bump, or elbow bump - keep your distance.

3.2.3 *Hand washing/sanitizing*:
- Regular hand-washing with soap and water for 20 seconds;
- Or rub hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer; and
- Wash hands after touching people, surfaces and objects.

3.2.4 *Practising good hygiene measures*:
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and then put the tissue in a bin and wash your hands immediately; and
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.

3.2.5 *Using cloth face masks*:
- Use a cloth face mask to cover your nose and mouth;
- Do not touch the mask after you put it on; and
- Leave the mask on all the time except when you need to eat/drink.

3.3 Practical steps for preparation of the workplace and employees

3.3.1 *Perform a risk assessment of the workplace*

Every Director/Office of the Municipal Manager must perform a risk assessment according to the following, which will be audited by Internal Audit:

- Perform a risk assessment of the workplace in accordance with the attached annexure (**Annexure A**);
- Determine likely points where people would interact with each other and points /places where contact between people and objects would occur; and
- For each of these points devise practical measures to limit contact and to disinfect after contact.

- **Consider the following key areas:**
  - ➢ Employee entrances
  - ➢ Changing rooms / locker rooms
  - ➢ Customer entrances
  - ➢ Work stations
  - ➢ Shelving
  - ➢ Customer service areas
  - ➢ Pay points
  - ➢ Employee break room (kitchen)
  - ➢ Employee toilets
  - ➢ Customer toilets
  - ➢ Goods receiving areas
  - ➢ Waste storage areas
  - ➢ Smoking areas
  - ➢ Reception areas
  - ➢ Council and committee rooms
  - ➢ Stores
  - ➢ Recycling plants
  - ➢ Libraries
  - ➢ Resorts
  - ➢ Community halls, library halls and town hall
- **Consider the following key measures:**
  - ➢ Re-arranging work stations (surfaces, desks, chairs, equipment)
  - ➢ Placing floor markings to delineate 1.5 metre intervals
  - ➢ Placing hand sanitizer at wash stations, customer entrances, reception areas, pay points, offices, copy machines, council and committee rooms, stores, recycling plants, libraries, resorts, community halls, library halls, town hall, and
  - ➢ Display signage at customer entrances and throughout municipal buildings.

3.4 Perform an employee risk assessment and work procedure plan

Every Director/Office of the Municipal Manager must:

3.4.1 Perform an employee risk assessment which will identify employees at increased risk for severe disease (e.g. elderly (>60 years old), diabetic, chest disease, heart disease, other chronic diseases) and make arrangements for these employees to either work from home, or work in a low risk area, or be placed on special leave;

3.4.2 Identify which employees can work from home and let them do so;

3.4.3 Structure work processes and workspace layout to minimise contact between employees and contact between customers and employees;

3.4.4 Place employees in teams/shifts and minimise contact with other teams/shifts;

3.4.5 Do not move employees between teams and/or shifts; and

3.4.6 Designate an employee/s to screen all employees on arrival for symptoms and temperature checks.

3.5 **Train employees**

   3.5.1 Train employees on (at least) the following:
   - How coronavirus is spread;
   - Symptoms of coronavirus;
   - What to do if they suspect they have been infected with the coronavirus;
   - What measures must be taken to prevent spread; and
   - How to put on, take off, store and clean their cloth face mask.

   3.5.2 Reiterate training by frequent messaging and displaying appropriate signage.

3.6 **Ensure that the following is available:**

   - Alcohol based hand sanitizer at designated points;
   - At least two (2) cloth face masks per employee;
   - Sufficient supply of hand sanitizer, soap, paper towels, waste paper bins and other cleaning materials;
   - Additional uniforms for employees (where possible); and
   - Non-contact thermometer for daily employee symptom screening.

4. **PREVENTING CORONAVIRUS INFECTION DURING WORKPLACE OPERATIONS**

4.1 **Screening Employees every day**

   4.1.1 Employees should be encouraged to stay away from work and attend a coronavirus testing centre if they develop any of the following symptoms:

   - Dry cough
   - Sore throat
   - Shortness of breath/ difficulty in breathing
   - Redness of eyes
   - Body aches
   - Loss of smell
   - Loss of taste
   - Nausea
   - Vomiting
   - Diarrhoea
   - Fatigue
   - Weakness

   4.1.2 Advice on which testing centre to attend is available from the provincial **COVID-19 hotline number on 021 928 4102 OR 080 029 999**;

4.1.3   On arrival at the workplace, all employees should be screened daily to identify if employees may have developed any of the symptoms above;

4.1.4   Temperature checks of employees could also be done, but should be done with a non-contact thermometer (thermal scanner). Temperature above 38 degrees is suggestive of possible coronavirus infection; and

4.1.5   Anyone with any of these symptoms should not be allowed to commence work. They should be provided with a surgical mask or a cloth mask, should wash their hands, and should be transported to a coronavirus testing centre.

4.2   **Employees travelling to work**

4.2.1   When employees travel in public or designated employee vehicles such as a minibus taxi or bus, they should sit as far from other passengers as possible;

4.2.2   The vehicle should not be filled to more than 50% of its loading capacity, and all windows of the vehicle must be open to maximise ventilation;

4.2.3   Employees should wear cloth face masks at all times when travelling in public transport or designated employee vehicles; and

4.2.4   Employees should rub their hands with alcohol based sanitizer before getting in/on the vehicle and after leaving the vehicle.

4.3   **Workplace entrances for employees**

4.3.1   Use, where possible, a single entrance/exit as far as possible;

4.3.2   Do not allow employees to congregate at the entrance/exit;

4.3.3   If doors are not automated, keep the doors open where possible to minimise multiple people touching the door handles. Where this is not possible, consider positioning an employee at the door and instruct the employee to open the door for all employees/visitors to ensure that multiple people do not touch the door handles;

4.3.4   Employees and visitors entering the workplace must sanitise their hands on entering and again on exiting, especially if they touched the door handles; and

4.3.5   All employees and visitors should wear masks when entering the building.

4.4   **Physical distancing in the workplace**

4.4.1   Limit the number of people in the workplace (including employees and customers/visitors) to one (1) person per six (6) square metres (i.e. the floor space divided by 6). This number makes an allowance for the floor area which may be covered with shelves, equipment and tables;

4.4.2   Once the number is reached (one (1) person per six (6) square metres), people can only be allowed to enter as others leave;

4.4.3   Rearrange work spaces so that each employee can maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres from others (employees/customers/visitors);

4.4.4   If not possible to rearrange work spaces, limit the number of employees in a workspace at a time by allowing all employees who can do so to work from

home and/or rearranging work patterns so that employees can work in shifts/alternate days;

4.4.5 Where possible employees should not share work surfaces or use the same equipment. Please remember that shared workstations and equipment must be cleaned between shifts/use;

4.4.6 Prevent employees from contact with many other employees by keeping them working in the same small team and not shifting between teams;

4.4.7 Avoid handshakes, hugs and any physical contact with people. Greet people with a smile, or a nod, or a bow, or a wave; and

4.4.8 Reduce movement of managers and supervisors between workplaces where possible. When they are required to visit a workplace they should avoid touching surfaces.

4.5 Workplace entrances for customers/visitors

4.5.1 Use a single entrance/exit as far as possible to facilitate access control.

4.5.2 If doors are not automated, keep the doors open where possible;

4.5.3 Anyone entering the premises (customers/visitors) must wear a mask and sanitise their hands at the entrance and again on exiting;

4.5.4 An employee placed at the entrance can spray the sanitizer onto the hands of people entering/exiting the premises rather than multiple people handling the sanitizer bottle; and

4.5.6 Prevent people from entering the premises if there are too many people inside already. Allow one person (including employees and customers) per six (6) square metres.

4.6 Queues or waiting areas for customers/visitors

4.6.1 Minimise queuing where possible;

4.6.2 Where queuing is necessary, ensure that customers adhere to physical distancing by placing markers on the floor to delineate 1.5 meter intervals. Reiterate this by displaying appropriate signage and allocating an employee to monitor that this is being adhered to; and

4.6.3 If a seated waiting area is used, seat people away from each other and limit the number that can be accommodated in the waiting area. If the waiting capacity is reached, encourage customers/visitors to either make an appointment or return later rather than queuing outside the waiting area.

4.7 Regular hand-washing and hygiene measures

4.7.1 Ensure that facilities are available for all employees and customers/visitors to wash their hands regularly or to use alcohol based hand sanitizer frequently; and

4.7.2 Encourage employees to carry their own sanitizer dispenser in order to minimise multiple people handling the same dispenser;

4.7.3 When employees are in a situation where they have to touch people and/or take things from them, such as money or credit cards, then they should offer them alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean their hands before assisting

them. Spray the hand sanitizer on their hands. Do not give them the hand sanitizer container; and

4.7.4   Employees must also wash their hands after they have touched people and/or surfaces and objects.

4.8   Use of cloth face masks

4.8.1   Cloth face masks are recommended for use by anyone going out in public (including workplaces) and they must be used properly;

4.8.2   Each employee should have 2 cloth face masks, so that one is available for use while the other is being washed and ironed. Every employee is responsible for washing and ironing his/her own mask as agreed between the Municipal Manager and Union on 04 May 2020;

4.8.3   When employees are wearing a mask, they must still make sure to follow the other measures to prevent spread – keep a 1.5 metre distance from other people and wash hands regularly;

4.8.4   Employees must also make sure that they know the proper way to put on, wear and take off their mask;

4.8.5   Take note of the following advice for wearing cloth face masks:

- Wash hands before putting on the mask;
- Place the mask with the correct side facing the nose and mouth. Make sure both are covered well;
- Tie the strings behind the head or if the mask has elastic bands, make sure they are tight;
- When an employee puts on the cloth face mask and is comfortable with the fit of the mask, DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE OR THE MASK until you take the mask off;
- Leave the mask on at all times, except when you need to eat/drink;
- Remove the mask by untying the strings/elastic bands and holding it by the strings/elastic bands only, place it into a container ready to be washed;
- Do not touch the actual mask itself when you are taking it off;
- Do not store the mask around your neck when not in use;
- Wash your hands thoroughly after taking off the mask;
- Wash the mask in warm water and iron the cloth mask every day;
- If an employee needs to take off their mask during the work day (e.g. during tea/lunch break) it is then required to put it on again, care must be taken to only handle the masks by the strings/elastic bands of the mask.

4.9   Use of face shields or visors

4.9.1   There is currently no evidence to support the use of face shields in a work environment as they are bulky and impractical and employees would probably frequently touch them and potentially contaminate their hands; and

4.9.2   However, face shields theoretically provide some protection and so if employees wish to use them, then they are allowed to do so, BUT they must use them correctly;

4.9.3   The same precautions apply as for cloth face masks:

- Wash your hands before putting on the visor;
- Once you have put the visor on and you are comfortable with the fit, DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE OR THE VISOR until you take off the visor;
- Remove the visor by the forehead band;
- Do not touch the actual visor when you are taking it off;
- Do not store the visor flipped up on your head when not in use;
- Wash your hands thoroughly after taking the visor off;
- Clean the visor by wiping both sides with alcohol based sanitizer;
- If an employee needs to take off their visor during the work day (e.g. during tea/lunch break) it is then required to put it on again, care must be taken to only handle the visor by the headband; and
- The visor must be stored in a designated area (clearly labelled with the employee's name) when not in use and should be wiped with alcohol based sanitizer before using it again.

4.10   **Use of Gloves**

4.10.1   Gloves are NOT recommended for regular use outside of the healthcare environment;

4.10.2   If gloves are required as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) under normal circumstances i.e. depending on the nature of work carried out at the workplace, they should continue to be worn; and

4.10.3   All other employees that do not require gloves as PPE under normal circumstances must wash their hands frequently, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer instead.

4.11   **Customer Service Points**

4.11.1   Employees should sanitise their hands before and after assisting each customer;

4.11.2   Customers should also sanitise their hands before and after the interaction with the employee;

4.11.3   It is preferable for the employee to spray the sanitizer on the customer's hands rather than handing over the sanitizer bottle;

4.11.4   Perspex or glass guards may be used at customer service points to create a barrier between the customer and the employee. This should be accompanied by signage clearly indicating that the Perspex/glass guards may not be touched. Additionally, both sides of the guard must be cleaned regularly using soap, water and disinfectant;

4.11.5   Counters, credit card machines and any other objects that customers come into contact with must be cleaned after each customer;

4.11.6   Customers should where possible conduct the card payment themselves thereby minimising contact between cashier and customer;

4.11.7   For payment points, contactless systems should be encouraged; and

4.11.8   Electronic payments should not require further signing of paper receipts.

4.12   Employee break rooms/kitchens

4.12.1   Work shifts and break times should be staggered so as to minimise the number of employees in the break room/kitchen at a time.

4.12.2   Where possible (depending on the specific workplace and weather) encourage employees to spend their breaks outdoors and remind them to continue to practice physical distancing.

4.12.3   Display signage encouraging employees to wash their hands thoroughly before and after eating and to maintain physical distancing.

4.12.4   Ensure that there is a wash basin and soap available in the break room/rest rooms for employees to use.

4.12.5   Clean all surfaces thoroughly and frequently.

4.13   Employee and customer bathroom facilities

4.13.1   Encourage employees/customers to wash their hands by displaying appropriate signage;

4.13.2   Ensure that there is water and soap available for hand washing. Contactless tap systems or taps that can be operated with elbows are preferred;

4.13.3   Do not use shared towels in the bathroom. Rather make use of paper towels that can be disposed of into sealed bins (operated by a foot step);

4.13.4   Ensure that bins are large enough to hold multiple paper towels and/or empty the bins frequently;

4.13.5   Line the bins with a plastic bag to allow easy disposal; and

4.13.6   Employees responsible for emptying the bins should wear gloves and wash their hands before and afterwards.

4.14   Work Clothing

4.14.1   Advise employees to remove their work clothes at the workplace and place in a plastic bag. They should wash their hands after removing the work clothes and wash the clothes with warm water at home;

4.14.2   Alternatively employees are encouraged to remove their work clothes immediately when they get home and place them in a washing basket. They should wash their hands immediately thereafter;

4.14.3   Please note that clothes must not be shaken out as this can support the spread of the virus;

4.14.4   The top and outer surface of shoes should be wiped with alcohol sanitizer; and

4.14.5 The underside of the shoes should not be touched. If the underside of the shoes need to be cleaned, then wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly after removing and discarding the gloves.

4.15 Ventilation

Where possible, the employer must maximise natural ventilation at the workplace. This can be done, for example, by leaving a back door open with secured with a burglar bar, or opening windows, or using fans.

4.16 Daily Cleaning Routines and Waste Management

4.16.1 Areas frequently interacted in and surfaces and objects frequently in use should be cleaned and disinfected daily;

4.16.2 Personnel responsible for cleanliness and hygiene should use soap and water to clean areas where possible; then disinfect with a diluted bleach solution;

4.16.3 If the area cannot be adequately cleaned with soap and water, then it should be carefully wiped with a 70% alcohol solution;

4.16.4 Waste from waste containers should be disposed of into plastic bags and sealed before discarding into the general waste for refuse collection;

4.16.5 Employees handling waste must wear utility gloves when emptying the waste containers;

4.16.6 Waste handlers and cleaners should wear closed shoes; and

4.16.7 Clean the waste storage area daily.

4.17 Receiving goods from suppliers

4.17.1 Drivers should remain in their vehicles as far as possible;

4.17.2 Physical distance should be maintained when receiving goods;

4.17.3 Drivers and assistants must use hand sanitizer before handing any delivery documents or packages to employees; and

4.17.4 Ensure regular hand washing/use of sanitizer.

5. MANAGING EMPLOYEES INFECTED OR POSSIBLY INFECTED WITH CORONAVIRUS

If an employee at the workplace has become infected with the coronavirus then it is very important to assist that employee, as well as other employees, and re-evaluate what can be done to stop the further spread of the coronavirus, whether at the workplace or at the homes of the immediate family or who were in contact with the employee.

To do this effectively each of the following issues needs to be addressed:

- Provide support to that employee and assist with isolation;
- Provide support to other employees and prepare for counselling;

- Inform the Health Department that you have an employee with coronavirus infection 2019 (COVID-19): **South African COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999**;
- Attempt to establish how the employee was infected;
- Identify who the employee might in turn infected;
- Assist with contacting all these people and assist with quarantining;
- Continue to screen employees to detect signs of possible coronavirus infection;
- Take steps to prevent any further infections;
- Possible temporary closure of the workplace; and
- Re-opening of the workplace.

Each of these ten (10) issues are discussed below.

5.1   Support to COVID-19 infected employee

Since the employee tested for the coronavirus, the employee is likely to be in quarantine and would have been notified by a doctor or nurse that they are infected and need to be isolated for fourteen (14) days. However, sometimes there are miscommunications around this and the employee might still be at work.

5.1.1   If the employee is at work then:

a) Immediately separate the employee from other employees preferably by placing the employee in a well-ventilated room;
b) Ask the employee to wash their hands thoroughly;
c) Provide the employee with a cloth mask;
d) Assist the employee to follow the advice from the health department regarding isolation; and
e) Assist by establishing if the employee is able to effectively self-isolate or if isolation at a public facility would be required.

5.1.2   If the employee is at home or at a quarantine facility, then:

a) Assist the employee to follow the advice from the health department regarding isolation required to protect their family, friends and colleagues;
b) Assist by establishing if the employee is able to effectively self-isolate or if isolation at a public facility would be required; and
c) Provide suitable sick leave arrangements for the fourteen (14) days that the employee will be absent from work.

5.1.3   Additionally:

a) Provide supportive counselling via your health representative or via a trusted professional source; and

b)   If the likelihood is high that the infection was occupationally acquired (in other words it arose out of or in the course of work duties), then a workmans' compensation claim needs to be completed.

5.2   Support to other employees:

5.2.1   Reassure employees that the situation is handled following advice from the Department of Health and that necessary support is given to the infected employee.

5.3   Inform the Department of Health

5.3.1   The Department of Health is aware of all individuals that test positive for COVID-19 through laboratory reporting mechanisms. However, due to delays in reporting, the employee may be aware of the diagnosis before the health department;

5.3.2   The employer should contact the **provincial COVID-19 hotline number on 021 928 4102 OR 0800 029 999**; and

5.3.3   After contacting the hotline, the relevant Department of Health representative or a partner government department team, will be in contact to assist the employee and employer.

5.4   Establish how employee was infected

5.4.1   The employee could have been infected by fellow workers/managers, customers, or by someone within their home or social circle. Therefore, it is important to assist the employee to identify if he/she came into contact with anyone who had symptoms of a throat and chest infection. The most common symptoms are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath

5.4.2   Similarly, it is important for management to directly identify amongst the employees at the workplace, which employees have any of the symptoms listed above. Amongst these could be the person or persons who originally infected the employee and may still be unknowingly spreading the infection amongst other employees, visitors and customers;

5.4.3   Enlist the support of occupational health employees where possible to assist with the identification of contacts. Generate a list of all these employees and other people who have symptoms as they would need to be assessed, to determine whether or not they should be tested for the coronavirus. Include the name, surname, contact number and address of these individuals where possible; and

5.4.4   Depending on how many employees are involved it may be necessary to temporarily close the workplace while these investigations are underway.

5.5   **Identify who the employee may in turn have infected**

5.5.1   Any individuals who came into contact with the employee since he/she became ill could also have been infected with the disease and needs to be separated from other employees, by going into quarantine;

5.5.2   Ask the employee who he/she was in close contact with (i.e. face-to-face contact within 1 metre, or shared an enclosed space with the affected employee in the 48 hours before symptoms onset) or worked closely with. These could be:

- Other employees
- Visitors to the workplace
- Regular customers
- Suppliers
- People in their neighbourhood
- People they travel with
- People at social gatherings; and/or
- Family members

5.5.3   Similarly ask all the employees whether they recall being in close contact with or working closely with the employee since the date that he/she became ill;

5.5.4   Assist with contact tracing and management of contacts. Make a list of all these employees and other contacts as they may have to be quarantined to prevent further spread. Include the name, surname, contact number and address of these individuals where possible; and

5.5.5   Depending on how many employees are involved it may be necessary to temporarily close the workplace while these investigations are underway.

5.6   **Assist with tracing and quarantining people who may have been infected**

5.6.1   The Department of Health assisted by partner government departments will interview all these contacts to determine whether the level of exposure is sufficient for them to have become infected, and whether or not they need to be quarantined;

5.6.2   Allow the Department of Health access to employees via a quiet room or via the telephone;

5.6.3   For those employees who need to be quarantined approve special leave arrangements for the fourteen (14) days that they will be in quarantine;

5.6.4   Quarantine means that people who are at high risk of being infected with coronavirus are separated from other people for fourteen (14) days to prevent them from infecting others;

5.6.5   Depending on their home circumstance they may be quarantined at home or at a specially prepared quarantine facility;

5.6.6   To be allowed to quarantine at home they need to have a room in which they can stay alone, separate from the rest of the household; and

5.6.7   Depending on how many employees are involved it may become necessary to temporarily close the work workplace while they are in quarantine.

5.7   **Continue to screen employees to detect signs of possible coronavirus infection**

5.7.1   It is possible that some of the people who were in contact with the employee were not identified during the processes described above and therefor may still be working and at risk of becoming infected. Some people can be infected with coronavirus and yet be completely well, only becoming ill later. It is possible that such people could still be working and that they may even be the original source of the coronavirus at the workplace;

5.7.2   Therefore, all employees should be monitored by the employer on a daily basis (see section 4.1 for further details on daily screening of employees) to identify other employees that may develop symptoms;

5.7.3   If an employee develops symptoms they should not come to work, but should instead report this to their supervisor and the Department of Health **(call the provincial COVID-19 hotline number on 021 928 4102 OR 080 029 999)**, who will advise them which testing centre to report to in order to be tested for the coronavirus; and

5.7.4   However, some employees might come to work even if they have symptoms and therefore supervisors need to ask all employees about any symptoms they may have, every day before they start work.

5.8   **Steps to take to prevent any future infections amongst employees**

5.8.1   All areas where the employee worked or visited in the work workplace should be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water and wiped down with a diluted bleach solution. If the area cannot be cleaned with soap and water then it should be wiped down carefully with a diluted bleach solution, or a 70% alcohol solution;

5.8.2   This will be specific to each case and includes the kitchen, employees room, toilet facilities, trolleys, baskets, door handles, work stations, computers and reception counters among others;

5.8.3   If large surface areas and large numbers of objects need to be cleaned and disinfected, then the workplace may need to close temporarily while this is being done; and

5.8.4   Strictly follow the guidelines listed above on preventing and spreading of the coronavirus.

5.9   **Possible temporary closure of the workplace**

5.9.1   The Department of Health may need to advise on temporary closure the workplace as remaining open may pose a health risk for the public;

5.9.2　This will be done in consultation with the employee's managers and will depend upon a number of factors including the following:

5.9.2.1　**The** workplace **may need to be temporarily closed depending on the following factors:**

a)　If the number of employees who have symptoms is considerably large, because of the time needed to investigate and determine if they should be tested for coronavirus infection or not;

b)　If the number of employees who are contacts of the employee/s with coronavirus infection is large, because of the time needed to investigate and determine if they need to be in quarantine or not;

c)　If the area in the workplace and the volume of items that need to be cleaned is large, because of the time required to complete this important task;

d)　If the number of employees diagnosed with coronavirus infection and therefore needing isolation is large, since there may be insufficient employees for the workplace to continue its operations; and

e)　If the employees complement that are identified as contacts of the infected employee and therefore need to be placed in quarantine is large, since there may then be insufficient employees for the workplace to continue its operations.

5.9.2.2　**Temporary closure of the** workplace **can be prevented by:**

a)　Rapidly cleaning and disinfecting the surfaces and items that were contaminated;

b)　Seconding employees from other workplaces to replace those placed in isolation and quarantine, but avoid employees working at multiple workplaces in the short-term i.e. the seconded employees would have to then work only at one workplace at a time for the medium term;

c)　Temporarily employing suitably skilled employees to replace those placed in isolation and quarantine;

d)　Preventing infection of employees with coronavirus by following the prudent steps outlined below; and

e)　Training employees on how to prevent coronavirus infection.

5.10　Re-opening of the workplace

In order for the workplace to be re-opened, the following minimum requirements should be in place:

5.10.1 An assessment of the circumstances which resulted in the exposure of the employee/s to the coronavirus;

5.10.2 A description of steps that will be taken to remedy any shortcomings in prevention activities identified during the assessment;

5.10.3 Full training of employees on coronavirus prevention activities has been achieved;

5.10.4 Cleaning and disinfection of all surfaces and objects that have been contaminated has been done; and

5.10.5 Procedures are in place to implement all the prevention activities listed above.

6. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR VARIOUS FUNCTIONS

This section of the policy provides additional guidance to specific functions with regards to preventing coronavirus infection. It attempts to draw attention to some areas within the sector that needs to be attended to. There will be some overlap with advice in the general section of the prevention guidelines but that is intentional as the issue is being highlighted as being important to the sector. Sectors covered here are:

A. Office Workplaces without Public Access;
B. Municipal Services for the Public;
C. Construction; and
D. Meetings, Seminars, Training and Conferences.

A. Office Workplaces without Public Access

a) Where possible work from home;

b) Wear a cloth mask when around other people. Don't touch the mask. Remove the mask by the strings/elastic bands. Wash hands after removing the mask;

c) Leave the buildings main doors open if they are not sensor controlled.

d) Move turnstiles with your body and not your hands;

e) Usually employees have to touch biometric sensor pads, lift buttons and door handles to access their offices and most importantly to wash your hands before you commence work and touch surfaces and equipment;

f) Separate desks and work surfaces;

g) Don't share equipment, if possible or wipe with sanitized cloth;

h) Stagger tea breaks;

i) Sit widely separated when having meetings;

j) Have teleconference and video conference meetings;

k) Sanitise your hands with alcohol sanitizer after you have left the building; and

l) Change your clothes and wash your hands when you get home.

B. Municipal Services for the Public

a) Where possible allow customers to arrive with timed appointments.
b) Employees and customers must wear cloth masks;
c) Spray alcohol hand sanitizer onto hands of customers when they arrive and exit;
d) Space queues 1.5 metres apart by using tape on the floor;
e) Customers to sit far apart (>1.5 metres) in waiting area.
f) Place clear glass or perspex barriers between customers and employees;
g) Spray alcohol hand sanitizer onto hands of customers before and after use of biometric sensor pads;
h) Customers should bring their own pen;
i) Provide alcohol wipes to clean communal pens before and after use.
j) Use contactless payment systems where possible;
k) Customers and employees to use alcohol hand sanitizer before and after exchanging money and using cards; and
l) Wipe all equipment with alcohol wipes after it's been used by a client.

C. Construction

a) A risk assessment must be conducted at each new site prior to construction commencing. As far as possible this must be done with the assistance of an occupational health practitioner;
b) Continue to use PPE that is required for each construction activity;
c) Where possible to be used with other safety equipment, cloth face masks must be used by all workers;
d) There must be no sharing of PPE;
e) Where possible don't share equipment;
f) When equipment is shared, then clean it with alcohol-based hand sanitizer before the next person uses it;
g) Travel to work and to construction sites must adhere to social distancing measures and all windows in the vehicle to be open for the duration of the trip. Only 50% occupancy of the vehicle allowed and all occupants to wear cloth face masks. Upon entering and exiting the vehicle all occupants should sanitise their hands. The vehicle must be cleaned daily;
h) Site supervisors must design work patterns to allow for physical distancing of 1.5 metres between workers and limit the number of workers on site accordingly;
i) Tools are not to be shared or if not possible then tools must be cleaned between use;
j) Employers must ensure that there is access to soap and water, hand sanitizer and bins for disposing of waste at various points around the site; and
k) Avoid portable toilets where possible, however, if this cannot be avoided then clean them more frequently (4 times per day) with a

diluted bleach solution. Use 20 ml bleach with a litre of water. Wear disposable gloves. Wash hands afterwards.

D.   **Meetings, Seminars, Training and Conferences**

a)   Consider whether a face-to-face meeting or event is needed - could it be replaced by a teleconference or any other electronic platform. Determine if meeting/s can be scaled down so that fewer people attend;

b)   Ensure that all participants in the meeting have washed their hands for 20 seconds or utilised a hand sanitizer prior to the meeting commencing;

c)   Ensure that all delegates are seated at least one and a half metre apart;

d)   The names and contact details of all participants in the meeting should be retained for at least one month. This may be done through the completion of a register and will assist healthcare authorities in tracing those who have been exposed to COVID-19 if a participant does become ill with the virus shortly after the meeting;

e)   If a participant should contract the virus shortly after the meeting, the company must inform all participants; and

f)   No employee may attend external seminars, training or conferences, unless approved by the Municipal Manager. The presentation of seminars and training to customers will be converted to online/blended facilitation.

7.   COVID-19 COMPLIANCE MANAGER/OFFICER

7.1   COVID-19 Manager

A COVID-19 Manager will be appointed to ensure the implementation of and adherence to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace, as required by Government Notice No. 479 of 29 April 2020 – No. 479 of the Disaster Management Act (Act 57of 2002), COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces- COVID-19 (C19 OHS) 2020 and the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations of 29 April 2020. It is recommended that a COVID-19 response team is also appointed to assist, where necessary, with the implementation of and adherence to the SOP for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace.

7.2   COVID-19 Compliance Officer

A COVID-19 Compliance Officer will be appointed, which may be the same appointee as the COVID-19 Manager. The Compliance Officer is required to develop a plan for the phased-in return of employees to the workplace, prior to reopening the workplace for business. The plan must include the following:

- Which employees are permitted to work and when;
- What the plans for the phased-in return of employees to the workplace are;

- What health protocols are in place to protect employees from COVID-19; and
- The details of the COVID-19 Compliance Officer must be communicated to all employees.

8.   CONTACT TRACING

The Municipal Manager and Directors has an obligation to assist in enabling contact tracing in the workplace. These obligations include:

8.1.1   A register (**Annexure B**) containing the details of all employees, visitors and service providers that enter the workplace on a particular day;

8.1.2   The following details should be contained in the register: date, name, surname, identity number, residential address and cellular number of all employees, service providers, visitors and service recipients; and

8.1.3   All employees, service providers, visitors and service recipients must sign the register with above details on entering the workplace.

9.   COMMUNICATION

9.1   The focus of communication on Covid-19 should be on prevention and containment. The prevention of fake news should be a priority. All relevant information on Covid-19 must be from official sources and packaged in a format that is easily understood and disseminated to employees and service recipients.

9.2   All available communication platforms should be used to ensure information is disseminated quickly, accurately and cost effectively.

10.   CONSEQUENCE OF BREACH

If an employee breaches this policy, the necessary disciplinary action will be taken. It is important to note that the municipality's sick leave policy will not be adjusted or become flexible during the outbreak of COVID-19. The normal sick leave policy which is in line with the Main Collective Agreement / Labour Law legislation will still apply.

It is the responsibility of an employee to contact management should he/she have any queries related to this Policy.