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Best Practice Guidelines for Citrus Industry Workplaces during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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In January 2020, the world became aware of a viral disease that had transferred from animal hosts to human hosts and had acquired the ability to transmit from human to human. Although the original outbreak occurred in the Wuhan province of China, the disease soon spread to more than 100 countries around the globe. The disease was named Covid-19 (**Coronavirus disease 2019**). On the 11th of March the World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 to be a global pandemic, and a travel ban was announced in South Africa, with a warning that South Africans should practise physical distancing and personal hygiene to avoid transmission. Schools were also closed and public meetings were limited in size. On the 23rd of March, a lockdown was announced for South Africa, which came into effect at midnight on the 26th of March. Businesses involved in food production and distribution, and businesses providing critical goods and services to those in the food production supply chain, were excluded from the lockdown, although certain regulations were put in place to protect people involved in those business operations.

There are two reasons to implement protective measures in citrus industry workplaces: firstly, and most importantly, to protect the people in the workplace – if there were to be an outbreak of this disease in a nursery, on a farm, or in a packhouse, the future of the business would be jeopardised; and secondly, to comply with legislation, regulations and directives that have been issued by the South African government.

This document aims to provide information and recommendations for best practice to workplaces in the citrus industry. The document draws information from a wide range of courses, and it reflects what is considered to be best practice in the local conditions. It furthermore aims to provide guidance and recommendations that are not only applicable during certain periods, such as during a lockdown, but that will be helpful during the entire period that Covid-19 remains a risk factor.

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1. What you need to know about Covid-19

It should be noted that there is a large amount of inaccurate and fake news going around. The facts about Covid-19 and that we currently know and relevant are:

- ✓ Covid-19 is a type of serious flu caused by a coronavirus.
- ✓ The virus is transmitted person-to-person via respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- ✓ Apart from being directly infected by the droplets, healthy person can also be infected when the virus settles on surfaces from where it can transfer to their hands and infect them when they touch their eyes, nose or mouth.
- ✓ Symptoms of the disease are a sore throat, slight fever, fatigue and a dry cough.
- ✓ 82% of cases will present with only these mild symptoms, and patients will recover within two weeks after which they will no longer be contagious and will have some immunity to the disease.
- ✓ 6% of cases will develop severe pneumonia and require intensive care treatment, often with assisted breathing.
- ✓ The mortality rate is estimated to be 0.9% overall of those infected.
- ✓ Any person of any age can be infected by the disease, but older people are more likely to develop severe illnesses.
- ✓ The only group in which severe cases seem not to emerge is healthy persons under the age of 14.
- ✓ The disease is more likely to be severe and even fatal for the following:
 - Persons over the age of 80 (although it should be noted that the severity increase with age, starting with those over the age of 60);
 - Smokers;
 - Persons with compromised immune systems (due to for instance HIV/AIDS and cancer); and
 - Persons with comorbidities, including cardiovascular disease (10.5% mortality), diabetes (7.3% mortality), chronic respiratory disease (6.3% mortality) and hypertension (6% mortality).
- ✓ Healthy, fit individuals are more likely to develop only mild symptoms and to recover quickly.
- ✓ The virus is denatured by strong sunlight, soap and water, and most disinfectants.
- ✓ On surfaces, the virus can survive for up to 24 hours if left untouched and unsanitised, although there is some indication that the virus may remain active for up to 5 days on hard, shiny surfaces, fabrics and paper (please see <https://www.webmd.com/lung/how-long-covid-19-lives-on-surfaces>)
- ✓ There is currently no antiviral treatment or vaccination against Covid-19, but there are a number of trials that are being conducted worldwide. It is estimated that an antiviral treatment could be available in the last quarter of 2020, and a vaccination in the second half of 2021.
- ✓ Covid-19 will be more prevalent in the winter months, as is the case with other flu-like diseases.
- **The transmission of the disease can be prevented by:**
 - ✓ **Washing hands regularly with soap or using an appropriate hand sanitiser (see list under 5.1).** (Please note that ordinary soap works well enough as long as hands are washed for long enough (more than 20 seconds), and that anti-bacterial hand wash soap is no more effective against viral contamination. Washing hands properly and for long enough with soap and water is also more effective than using hand sanitiser.)
 - ✓ **Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**
 - ✓ **Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.**
 - ✓ **Coughing or sneezing into a flexed elbow or covering it with a tissue which is then immediately discarded.**
 - ✓ **Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.**

2. General management best practice

Business owners and executive managers have a special responsibility in dealing with this situation and limiting the risk and damage to their operations while protecting their employees.

2.1. Inform yourself!

Firstly, and most importantly, stay informed on the latest news, in particular on transmission rates in South Africa, your province and your area. Identify and use reliable information sources – there is a lot of fake news and misinformation doing the rounds. The following are reliable sources of information and contacts:

General information

- ✓ <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>
- ✓ Emergency Hotline: 0800 029 999
- ✓ WhatsApp Support Line: 0600 123 456
- ✓ Provincial department of health
- ✓ Local municipality

Industry-specific information

- ✓ CGA Covid Memos – available on www.cga.co.za and www.crw.org.za (member login required)

2.2. Inform your people!

With all the misinformation doing the rounds, it is much better for employers to take responsibility to inform their employees on the real facts and the latest developments. The following are good practices in this regard:

- Appoint at least one person in the workplace to be responsible for communication around Covid-19, and make sure that this person is accessible to all workers and has the necessary resources and capacity to answer their questions and assist them in every way necessary.
- Put up information posters in the workplace, in particular to create awareness around preventative measures and personal hygiene.
- Make available information pamphlets with the above information, but also include information on how workers can be safe at home, and keep their families and communities safe. Also use this means to encourage workers to live healthily and stay fit.
- Hold training sessions with teams, bringing them up to speed on the facts about the disease, on the regulations that are in place, and on the workplace practices and procedures that have been implemented. Remember to maintain physical distancing when meeting for training.
- Hold daily briefing sessions with all workers, informing them of the latest news about the disease (even if you think they may already know it), changes in regulations that may have been put in place, and changes in workplace practices and procedures, always remembering to maintain physical distancing. Short team-talk scripts for supervisors are a practical way to ensure that a consistent message is given.
- Allow workers to ask questions during these sessions and take the time to allay fears and address misconceptions. Fake news spreads faster than any virus – it should be debunked before it gets a chance to spread and take hold.
- Consider setting up a WhatsApp group to communicate with workers.

Keep records of all communication with workers, in particular any reports by employees of feeling unwell.

2.3. Manage risk

Put in place a risk management plan which aims to identify and address as many risks as possible related to the threat of a Covid-19 outbreak in the workplace, and related to the regulations and restrictions being put in place by the South African government and governments of importing countries.

The steps below can be followed for compiling a Covid-19 risk management plan. Develop the plan in the form of a matrix.

➤ **Identify potential risks**

Identify and evaluate each business function in the operation, such as input supply, production, marketing, financial management, human resource management, business management, and worker health and safety, and identify potential risks related to Covid-19. List this in the first two columns. Use what-if scenario planning to assist with identifying risks, for example:

- What if an input supplier or service provider is forced to close down due to a Covid-19 outbreak? (Classify suppliers according to how critical they are for your operations.)
- What if a supplier is unable to import inputs due to restrictions on goods movement?
- What if a worker in the production unit tests positive for Covid-19?
- What if a percentage of workers in the production unit has to self-isolate for 14 days?
- What if a family member of a worker tests positive for Covid-19?
- What if a misconception created by fake news take hold under workers and causes unrest?
- What if the usual transport services used by workers are no longer operational?

➤ **Assess the risks**

Rate the likelihood and impact or consequence of each risk that has been identified, on a scale that makes sense for the operational environment, adding columns for the likelihood and impact to the matrix. Indicate whether and how each risk is controlled at present, such as by way of elimination, substitution, engineering, administration, through use of protective equipment and clothing, etc.

➤ **Manage the risks**

Determine cost-effective ways to deal with each risk, according to the level (likelihood and possible impact) of that risk and indicate this on the matrix. Risks can be managed through avoiding the risk (for instance by changing processes or inputs), reducing the risk (for instance by decreasing the likelihood and / or decreasing the impact), transferring the risk (for instance by taking out insurance or tightening up contracts), or accepting the risk. If a high-level risk is accepted, it is critical that those situations should be monitored very closely and plans should be in place to react if the risk materialises.

The risk management plan should be developed in collaboration with business unit managers to ensure that all possible risks are identified. The plan should also be communicated to clearly to all key staff members in order to ensure that management activities are put in place.

The plan should be reviewed regularly during this critical period. Should the situation change (i.e. should restrictions or regulations from government change, should a treatment or vaccine be found, should transmission rates in South Africa and in particular in your area and the area where your workers reside increase or fall significantly, etc.), the plan should be immediately reviewed.

2.4. Review policies and SOPs

Review all the policies and SOPs that are currently in place and make the necessary changes. As an essential service, the operation may be open to scrutiny to ensure that all necessary measures were taken to ensure the safety of workers, input suppliers and service providers. The basis of such a review will be the policies and SOPs that were implemented. Add emergency measures SOPs if necessary.

Ensure that changes to the policies and SOPs are clearly communicated to all relevant staff members. Keep record of such communication.

2.5. Classify workers – essential, enabling, non-essential

The regulations that have been put in place by the South African government requires that business that have been classified as delivering essential services must identify the staff members that are essential to providing that service.

The purpose of this exercise is to limit the people coming to the workplace every day as much as possible during the critical period – such as during a lockdown – while still ensuring that business operations can continue without major disruption.

The following procedure can be used, making use of a matrix:

- Identify the business functions of the operation, similar to those identified for the risk management plan, but more specific to the operation itself. This will most likely include some or all of the following: business management, financial management, human resource management, office administration, production operations, marketing, and logistics, although this is not an exhaustive list.
- Rate each business function as “Essential”, “Enabling”, which means a function without which an essential function cannot continue, or “Non-essential”. Non-essential does not mean that the business function is not important to the operation of the business, it merely means that the business can carry on with its operations if that business function did not carry on for a period of three weeks. For example, providing workplace training for workers may be one of the business functions, but the business will still be able to carry on its operations in the short term if this function was suspended. For many businesses, the same may be true for a function such as office administration.
- For each essential and enabling business function, list the job titles related to that business function. It is helpful to consult the company organogram for this purpose.
- Rate each job title as “Essential”, “Enabling” or “Non-essential”. For instance, for the financial management function, the financial manager may be essential to keep the wheels turning, but the creditors and debtors clerk may be considered non-essential in the short term, while the cash book clerk may be seen as enabling for the financial manager.
- Now consider whether workers who are classified as essential and enabling can work from home, partly or completely. Indicate this for each essential and enabling job title, and add notes about what will be required to make it possible for as many workers as possible to work from home.

It is best to develop and document a policy and procedure for identifying essential workers. The procedure will encapsulate the process that was followed (as per the example above) to identify essential and enabling workers. The policy will define how each of these categories of workers will be treated during a critical period when emergency measures are implemented.

This policy and procedure will form part of the documentation supporting the case for the operation to be registered as an essential service.

Inform each worker in writing of the category into which they fall and the reasoning behind the classification. Hold meetings and briefing sessions with small groups of employees at a time, giving them sufficient opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

2.6. Assess essential and enabling workers

Assessment procedures for essential and enabling workplace-based workers must form part of the policy described above. The following assessment procedure is recommended for essential and enabling workers:

- Use an assessment questionnaire similar to the following:

Covid-19 Personal Health Risk Assessment			
{Company Name} {Company Address 1} {Company Address 2} {Company Address 3}		Workplace Details:	
{Contact person} {Contact number}			
Assessor Name:		Assessment Date:	
Section 1: General Information			
Employee Name:		Payroll Number:	
Business Unit:		Telephone Number:	
Job Title:		Job Title Classification:	
Section 2: Health Status			
Have you had Covid-19 and recovered (tested negative)?		Yes	No
Age:		Gender:	
Do you smoke?		Yes	No
Have you been diagnosed with a condition that may put you at risk of developing a severe case of Covid-19, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, high blood pressure, cancer or TB?		Yes	No
Have you returned from a foreign country in the last 14 days?		Yes	No
Have you been had close contact with a person that had travelled from a foreign country in the last 14 days?		Yes	No
Have you returned from another province in the last 14 days?		Yes	No
Have you in the last 14 days been in contact with or cared for a person that has tested positive for Covid-19?		Yes	No
Do you currently have a sore throat?		Yes	No
Do you currently have a cough?		Yes	No
Are you currently feeling fatigued?		Yes	No
Do you currently have a fever?		Yes	No
Temperature measurement			
I declare that the information in this document is correct to the best of my knowledge.			
Employee Signature:		Date:	
Assessor Signature:		Date:	

- Communicate clearly to workers during briefing sessions that an assessment procedure will be undertaken to determine the health status and risk profile of all essential and enabling workers.
- State the purpose of the assessment procedure clearly. The purpose should be to protect the health and wellbeing of all the workers in the workplace, and the health and wellbeing of their families and communities, while enabling the business operation to continue with minimum disruption so that the livelihoods of everyone involved in the business are protected.

- Reassure workers that the purpose of assessment is not to penalise anyone, or exclude any workers from the workplace, or to threaten their livelihoods. Give ample time for them to raise concerns and ask questions.
- Ensure that exactly the same procedure is followed to assess all workers, including administrative and management personnel.
- Appoint a qualified person or persons to conduct the assessments and ensure that they are equipped with handheld infrared thermometers.

The information gathered in the assessment cannot and should not be used to discriminate against any individual. Set out clearly in the policy what will happen as a result of the assessment outcomes, with the following being recommended:

- Workers who have had Covid-19 and have recovered and tested negative for the virus, should be allowed to work. They are at present considered to be at low risk of re-infection.
- Workers with conditions that put them at higher risk of developing severe cases of Covid-19 (comorbidities, smoking and advanced age being the most significant) should be given extra protection against infection in the workplace.
- Workers that could have had recent exposure to Covid-19 should be asked to voluntarily isolate themselves for 7 days. If they do not develop symptoms during that time, they can return to work but they should be monitored closely. This should be treated as sick leave.
- Workers that are currently displaying symptoms of Covid-19 should be non-voluntarily isolated for 14 days. If after this time they are free of symptoms and / or have tested negative, they should be allowed to return to the workplace.

Please Note



Handheld infrared thermometers are preferred to other types of thermometers because they eliminate the need for contact. It ensures that the thermometer itself does not become a vector for transmitting the disease between people. The reading is also more accurate. Ensure that the manufacturer's user instructions are followed, and that the thermometers are maintained and calibrated correctly.

2.7. Structure work teams

Work teams should be structured in such a way that the risk of an outbreak is limited – in principle, if a person in the workplace should contract Covid-19, the number of people exposed to that person should be limited and traceable, and that exposure should not be at close quarters or for extended periods. The following practices are recommended, in as far as it is practical:

- The size of work teams (including picking teams) must be limited to as few workers as possible. The size of teams depends on the size of the enterprise, the tasks that those teams have to perform, and the availability of supervisors and team leaders, but no team should be larger than 30 workers.
- The teams should be fixed and remain the same – workers should not be allowed to move between teams.

- Teams should be transported together, so it will be sensible to make up teams of workers that reside reasonably close together.
- Shifts should be arranged so that work teams arrive, depart and take breaks at different times, so that members of different work teams have minimum interaction and contact.
- Workers should be encouraged to spend breaks outside instead of in breakrooms.

2.8. Recruit and screen new workers

It may become necessary to recruit more workers during this time. The regular recruitment channels may not be as effective due to physical distancing and travel restrictions. The following suggestions might be useful:

- It is better to recruit in the area where the workplace is located to avoid problems with moving people too far while travel restrictions are in place.
- Use electronic means, such as social media, direct messaging or SMSs, for recruitment.
- Develop an interview questionnaire that will allow for interviewing prospective employees electronically, without making it necessary for them to come to the workplace.
- Conduct the Personal Health Risk Assessment as part of the interview.
- Change the policy on new appointments and probation periods in accordance with these practices.

Once new employees have been appointed, they need to be thoroughly briefed on the procedures and measures that have been implemented in the workplace to limit the risk of infection and to protect workers and all others that come to the workplace. New employees must be assessed for symptoms of Covid-19 when they first enter the workplace.

2.9. Manage off-site essential and enabling workers

For most companies it is a new experience to have workers who are still doing all their tasks and duties, but who are not on-site. Essential and enabling workers who are able to work from home will be mostly administrative staff members, such as financial staff, human resource management, marketing, logistics, etc.

To enable this arrangement and to make the transition as smooth as possible, the following is recommended:

- Ensure that workers have the necessary infrastructure at home to enable connectivity without interruptions.
- Ensure that the electronic document storage systems and software systems enable workers to access what they need to in order to perform their tasks and duties.
- Encourage workers to set up a home workstation where they can focus on the work at hand without distractions.
- Ensure that workers are clear on the tasks and duties that they need to complete on a daily and weekly basis, and put in place systems making it easy for them to report on, and for you to monitor the completion of these tasks. It is impractical and futile to try and manage the amount of time workers work every day – they are after all compensated for the work they do, and not the number of hours they sit at their desks.
- This requires a trust relationship between the manager and the worker, for which communication is essential. Set up and make use of electronic communication tools, such as Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp and even telephone calls, to stay in touch and in reach of your team members at all times. Speak to your team members often and make sure that they know you are always available.

3. Compensation and leave

The South African government is encouraging employers to continue paying all their workers during this time, in order to limit the impact of the Covid-19 regulations on the wider population. Various schemes and programmes have also been put in place to assist small business during this time.

It must be remembered, though, that for private companies, as per the Companies Act, directors must consider their fiduciary duty and act in the best interests of the company when deciding whether to send employees home with a promise of payment where there is a risk of jeopardizing the continued operation of the company and rendering it insolvent.

It is important that a policy must be drafted to set out the approach that will be taken for each of the groups below.

3.1. Essential and enabling workers

Essential and enabling workers, whether they are working on- or off-site, will continue to receive full compensation if they are still expected to work the hours they usually do, and / or perform the tasks and duties they usually do.

3.2. Compensation for non-essential workers

There are two options for dealing with workers that have been identified as non-essential and that will not be required to work at all during a lockdown period, namely annual leave and a temporary layoff.

Employees may be asked to use their annual leave during this time. This only applies to the statutory portion of annual leave (i.e. 15 business days). Statutory annual leave is regulated by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. Section 20 sets out the framework for statutory annual leave. An employer must grant statutory annual leave in accordance with an agreement between the parties. In the absence of an agreement the employer may determine the time for statutory annual leave to be taken. If workers have been classified as non-essential, the employer may choose to inform employees that they are to take their annual leave during a period of lockdown.

Employers may also consider temporary layoffs. Temporary layoffs mean the temporary suspension of workers' employment for a period when workers are unable to meet their employment obligations because of, for instance, the lockdown. This should be the second option, used only when workers no longer have annual leave available. If workers are laid off, it will be possible to claim compensation in the form of the National Disaster Benefit under the Temporary Employer / Employee Relief Scheme from the UIF. Please see accompanying quick guides, or visit www.labour.gov.za.

Take care however not to recruit new workers in the place of workers whose employment has been suspended through a temporary layoff. If an employer were to recruit replacement workers, the layoff would be considered unnecessary, and the employer will become liable for paying the salaries of the workers that have been laid off for the duration of the layoff.

3.3. Compensation during self-quarantine

The Minister of Employment and Labour, Mr Thulas Nxesi, announced on 17 March 2020 that if employees must subject themselves to be quarantined for 14 days or longer, they will be considered to be on special leave for that period. During this time, workers can apply for UIF benefits which will be paid on condition that the reason for the quarantine meets the necessary requirements.

Please see accompanying quick guides, or visit www.labour.gov.za.

3.4. Compensation while sick

When a worker has been diagnosed with Covid-19, the period for which they are absent from work will be considered sick leave, during which the worker must receive full compensation, provided that they still have sufficient sick leave available.

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act regulates sick leave entitlement. In terms of section 22 of the BCEA, the sick leave cycle means the period of 36 months' employment with the same employer immediately following an employee's commencement of employment. During every sick leave cycle, an employee is entitled to an amount of paid sick leave equal to the number of days the employee would normally work during a period of six weeks. For an employee who works five days a week, this equates to 30 days' sick leave per 36 months of employment.

An employer is not required to pay employees for sick leave taken when the sick leave entitlement has been exhausted.

3.5. Retrenchment of workers

Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 applies if an employer contemplates dismissing one or more of its employees for reasons based on its operational requirements, defined as requirements based on the economic, technological, structural or similar needs of the employer. A retrenchment is as a result of no fault on the part of the employee. In the current circumstances, retrenchment cannot be used to terminate the employment of ill employees.

3.6. Dismissal due to Covid-19

In terms of Schedule 8: Code of Good Practice Dismissals, an employer must investigate the extent of the illness if the employee is temporarily unable to work. If the illness may result in a prolonged absence from work, alternatives to a dismissal must first be considered. The factors to take into account in considering alternatives to dismissal include, the seriousness of the illness, the period of absence, the nature of the employee's job and whether a temporary replacement may be secured.

During this process, the ill employee should be given an opportunity to make recommendations as well. Only once all these processes have been followed, a clear case of incapacity has been established, and no alternative to dismissal found, should an employer consider dismissal in line with labour legislation.

3.7. Compensation for contracting Covid-19 in the workplace

On the 20th of March 2020, the Compensation Commissioner issued a notice to the effect that the Workmen's Compensation Fund will cover the following if it can be proven that an employee contracted Covid-19 at the workplace:

- ✓ Compensation for temporary total disablement and permanent disablement
- ✓ Medical aid
- ✓ Death benefits

Please see the accompanying COIDA notice for more information. Or visit www.labour.gov.za.

4. Workplace access best practice

Access to the workplace sites must be strictly controlled while the Covid-19 pandemic is ongoing. Once the workplace site itself is sanitised and secured, the only way that the virus can come into the workplace is by being transmitted by a person coming onto the site. Therefore, this is a critical control point for managing the risk of Covid-19 contamination.

4.1. Worker transport

During lockdown periods, public transport may be limited. Even if certain forms of transport are still allowed, the capacity of these may be restricted. Employers may need to arrange transport for workers who depend on public transport.

It is also very difficult for workers to maintain the prescribed personal distance on public transport, which will expose them to the risk of infection. It is therefore best practice to arrange dedicated transport for workers. As mentioned before, in the section dealing with structuring work teams, it is also best practice to transport only members of the same work teams together.

Please also take note that during lockdown periods, other regulations may be in place, such as permit requirements, restrictions of the times during which workers may be transported, and restrictions on the carrying capacity of vehicles.

All vehicles must be sanitised every time before and after they are used. Please see 5.1.

4.2. Site access for workers

All essential and enabling employees must be made aware and continuously reminded of how to keep themselves healthy and protected from infection when they are away from the workplace. Remind them to practice physical distancing, to stay at home as much as possible, and particularly to avoid contact with anyone that have Covid-19 or symptoms of the disease.

All workers must be screened every time before they come onto the work site.

For employees who make use of their own transport, the following is recommended:

- Every employee should be screened at the entrance to the site.
- Equip access guards with handheld infrared thermometers.
- Monitor the access guard for symptoms regularly as they are at high risk by coming into contact with many different people.
- Use a *Site Access Register* with the following columns:

Date	Employee name	Time of entry	Do you have the following symptoms?				Temperature	Signature
			Sore throat	Cough	Fatigue	Fever		

- Allow only the access guard to handle the sheet and pen.

For employees who make use of transport provided by the employer, the following is recommended:

- All workers must be screened before getting onto the transport vehicle.
- Ensure that workers keep a distance of at least one metre when lining up.
- Carry a register similar to the *Site Access Register* in each vehicle, with one page completed for each trip.
- Allow only one person to handle the sheet and pen.
- Take and record the temperature of each worker every time.
- No person that has not been screened and whose details have not been entered into the register should be allowed onto the transport vehicle.
- All workers must use hand sanitiser before entering the transport vehicle.

Any person who has any symptom and / or has a temperature higher than 37.3°C should be turned away and asked to go home. They should monitor their symptoms and go into voluntary isolation for a 7-day period. They should only be allowed to return to the workplace once they no longer have any symptoms and / or have tested negative for Covid-19.

Keep all access and transport registers must be kept on record and available for inspection, making note of when workers were turned away from the workplace.

4.3. Site access for visitors

Other visitors that come to the workplace, such as transporters, service providers and suppliers, the following is recommended:

- All visitors must complete the following access questionnaire, in addition to the other access registers that are normally used:

Covid-19 Workplace Access Questionnaire			
{Company Name} {Company Address 1} {Company Address 2} {Company Address 3}		Workplace Details:	
Section 1: General Information			
Visitor Name:		Contact Number:	
Reason for Visit:		Person Visited:	
Have you returned from a foreign country in the last 14 days?		Yes	No
Have you been had close contact with a person that had travelled from a foreign country in the last 14 days?		Yes	No
Have you returned from another province in the last 14 days?		Yes	No
Have you in the last 14 days been in contact with or cared for a person that has tested positive for Covid-19?		Yes	No
Do you currently have a sore throat?		Yes	No
Do you currently have a cough?		Yes	No
Are you currently feeling fatigued?		Yes	No
Do you currently have a fever?		Yes	No
Temperature measurement			
I declare that the information in this document is correct to the best of my knowledge.			
Visitor Signature:		Date:	

- The access guard must ask the questions without handing over the form for signature until a “no” answer has been obtained to all the questions.
- Sanitise the pen immediately after contact.
- If a person answers “yes” to any of the questions on the questionnaire, they should not be allowed access to the site.
- Keep all access questionnaires on record and available for inspection.

4.4. Access between areas in the workplace

- Work out the movement of work teams through the workplace required to perform their duties, including at the start and end of their shifts.
- Manage shift changes so that different work teams will not meet each other while moving to and from their workstations.
- Keep doors and other access barriers on these movement paths standing open, so that workers do not have to touch door or gate handles unnecessarily.

- Limit access to certain parts of the workplace to limit the movement of workers and reduce the chance of contact.
- It is particularly recommended that access to enclosed spaces, such as storerooms, is limited and that more than one person is never allowed to enter such an area at the same time.

5. Sanitation best practice

Keeping workers, equipment, vehicles, and the working environment clean and sanitary is essential to limiting the spread of Covid-19 and managing the risk of an outbreak.

5.1. Sanitising worker transportation

- Designate a person to sanitise the entire inside of transport vehicles (rails, backs of seats, windows where faces may touch, doors, etcetera) before workers enter the vehicle.
- Use a backpack spray unit with one of the sanitisers listed below. Dilute according to the label if not specifically indicated:
 - Sporekill solution at 0,5% for hands and 1% for surfaces
 - Commercial sanitisers with at least 70% alcohol – not advisable for long-term use for equipment, reserve for use as a hand sanitiser
 - Polybiguanidine products such as Vantocil
 - Nonylphenol Polyethylene Glycol Ether products such as HD313, Tergitol or Agral 90
 - Household bleach (~3,5% sodium hypochloride): add 30-35ml per litre of water
 - Chlorine such as Frexus or DryTec (~0.1% calcium hypochlorite with 68% active): add 5g to 2 litres of water
 - At least 0,5% peroxide solution
 - A 2 to 3% soap solution
- Please note that vinegar is NOT recommended.
- Wipe down all surfaces treated as above.
- Once workers have been unloaded, the vehicle must be sanitised again.

5.2. Sanitising goods and goods transportation

- Goods delivered to the workplace should be sanitised by being sprayed or wiped down with one of the sanitising agents above.
- Delivery drivers of goods transport vehicles and their helpers must sanitise their hands on arriving at the workplace.
- Before loading goods transport vehicles, the inside of the loading area should be sprayed with a sanitising agent.

5.3. Sanitising the workplace

- Every access point to the workplace must be sanitised at least once every hour. Clean door and gate handles, frames and surrounding walls. Keep doors and gates standing open, if possible, to limit touching of doors and gates.
- Workstations must be sanitised completely between every shift change by spraying and wiping down all surfaces and all equipment. In some workplaces, such as packhouses, this practice should already be part of regular packhouse sanitation, but care should be taken to ensure that the sanitising agent is sufficiently able to deal with viral contamination as well.
- For equipment, ensure that every surface is sprayed and wiped down, in particular surfaces, buttons, switches, handles, levers, etc. that are touched often.

- Sanitise storage, office and administrative areas at least twice a day, in particular doors and door handles, light switches, cupboard doors and handles, and work surfaces.
- Sanitise all ablution facilities between every shift change and at least once during each shift, and in particular taps, toilet cubicle doors and handles, toilet handles and seats, locker doors and locks, and light switches.
- Sanitise common areas, such as the canteen and other social areas, between every shift by spraying and wiping down all surfaces, including tables and chairs (in particular chair backs), and washing and sanitising all condiment containers, utensils and crockery. Encourage work teams to spend break times outside rather than in an enclosed area.

6. Personal hygiene best practice

Remind staff regularly that the spread of Covid-19 can be prevented by:

- ✓ Washing hands regularly with soap or using an appropriate hand sanitiser (e.g. 70% alcohol-based).
- ✓ Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ✓ Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- ✓ Coughing or sneezing into a flexed elbow or covering it with a tissue, which is then immediately discarded.
- ✓ Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

In the end, the only way that any individual can avoid being infected with Covid-19 is by consistently distancing themselves from others and practicing personal hygiene. Ensure that all workers know what to do and what not to do, and the reason for each of these practices.

6.1. Distancing measures

Keeping your distance is one of the most important things any person can do to stay safe. Even if you are certain that the people surrounding you are not infected with Covid-19, you need to keep up physical distancing – it is a habit that can save you and it is better to be safe. Personal contact between employees should be avoided at all times, including shaking hands, hugging, etc.

When reporting to work, the following distancing practices are recommended:

- Where possible, avoid using a biometric clocking systems in order to limit touching possibly contaminated surfaces. Where this cannot be prevented, hands should be sanitised before and after clocking.
- If workers have to sign in, make sure that they do not use the same pen and limit touching surfaces as much as possible.
- Work teams should arrive and clock in one by one.
- If practical, ensure that workers are at least one metre apart when lining up.

During operations, the following distancing practices are recommended:

- Where possible, ensure that workers are more than 1.5 metres apart.
- If workers cannot be separated by this distance, create barriers (e.g. Perspex, cardboard, curtaining) between workstations.
- More than one employee should never be allowed to operate in the same workstation.
- Prevent workers from encountering each other unnecessarily.

During breaks and meals, the following distancing practices are recommended:

- Ensure that work teams have their breaks and meals at different times to avoid mingling of teams.
- Encourage workers to spend breaks and meals outside, but ensure that they keep 1.5 metres apart. Use paint to draw circles that are the appropriate distance apart.

- Set up the canteen in such a way that workers sit at least 1.5 metres apart.
- Each worker must use their own food container and utensils.
- Sharing condiments (salt, pepper, sauces, etc.), containers and utensils is not allowed under any circumstances.

When receiving raw material, packaging and other supplies, the following distancing practices are recommended:

- Receiving workers should wear disposable gloves and mask when receiving raw material (such as fruit), packaging and other inputs.
- The driver should preferably not leave the vehicle during this process.
- Paperwork that must be completed should be done with separate pens for those that need to enter information of sign forms.
- Sanitise clipboards and pens after each use.

6.2. Protective equipment and clothing – gloves and masks

There are differing opinions on whether gloves and masks assist with the prevention of Covid-19 infection.

Wearing gloves can create a false sense of security, as the virus can still adhere to the glove and infect a person when they touch their face, and it can lead to reduced hand-washing.

Surgical masks are in short supply and it is best to leave those that are available to very high risk workers, such as medical personnel and emergency workers (who are also skilled at using them properly). Masks can also create a false sense of security in that they don't cover the entire area that can be infected, as the eyes is also vulnerable. People who are wearing masks are also more likely to touch their faces more regularly in order to adjust their masks.

The Department of Health however recommends that all persons should wear cloth masks wherever they are in contact with others. Masks has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of spreading the virus by an infected person (even though there is no evidence that it reduces the risk of being infected).

It is therefore essential that all workers must wear a fabric mask at all times (including during breaks) while they are in the workplace. They must however:

- **NEVER touch the mask to adjust it**
- **NEVER remove the mask for any reason whatsoever**
- **NEVER touch the inside of the mask**
- **ALWAYS replace the mask regularly and wash the used mask with soap and warm water**

Remember that the virus can contaminate paper and plastic surfaces and remain active on them for some time. It can therefore contaminate gloves and masks themselves, making them into another and very dangerous vector for infection. Masks must be washed or replaced at least every hour for them to remain effective and not pose an additional risk. If gloves are used, they should be changed after each activity. It is essential to keep emphasising the need for not touching the face, regular hand washing, physical distancing and good respiratory hygiene.

Where gloves or masks are used in the normal course of production (e.g. for picking fruit or handling chemicals), remind workers that these can be sources of contamination and that they should be especially careful not to touch their faces while wearing them. They must be cleaned and sanitised after every time they are used.

6.3. Hand washing

- Promote frequent handwashing with soap, running water and use paper towels to dry hands.
- Make sure employees have easy access to places where they can wash their hands.
- Wash hands using the right method, which have always been promoted in workplaces before as a food safety practice.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Hands should be washed at least before the start of every shift, before entering any area where there will be contact with the product (the orchard, the packline, loading areas, etc.), after going to the toilet, after eating or smoking, after breaks, after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose, and after handling refuse.
- Regularly clean and disinfect the tap where hand washing takes place.
- Display posters on promoting the correct method to wash hands.
- Hand sanitizer should be available from allocated points in the packhouse, which should be applied at least every hour to the employees' hands.

6.4. Good respiratory hygiene

- Cover the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or bent elbow.
- Discard a tissue immediately after use.
- Ensure that tissues are available at all workstations.
- Ensure that closed bins are placed within easy access for hygienically disposing of tissues.
- Ensure that workers do not spit or blow their noses onto the ground.

6.5. Sharing items

Workers must be made aware and constantly reminded that sharing items and equipment pose a direct risk.

The following is recommended in this regard:

- Issue workers with individual eating containers, utensils and water bottles, or ask them to bring these items to the workplace.
- Issue each worker who needs to make notes or complete reports or schedules with their own pen.
- Drinking directly from a water tap must be strictly prohibited.
- Discourage workers to share cigarettes during smoke breaks and in smoking areas.

6.6. Laundering clothing

It is suspected that the virus that causes Covid-19 is able to adhere to and stay active on fabrics for a number of hours after contamination, and it is therefore essential that clothing should be kept clean. Washing with laundry soap and water at a regular temperature is sufficient for deactivating the virus – it is not necessary to use very hot water or detergents that can damage clothing.

The following is recommended:

- Wash all protective clothing that is used in regular production (overalls, aprons, etc.) every time after it is used.
- Wash gloves used for fruit picking after every shift, and have replacement gloves at hand in the orchard should a worker need them while picking.

- Remove all other fabrics, such as table cloths, seat cushions, decorative curtaining, etc., from the work area during this time, launder it and put it into storage. It is much easier to spray and wipe down hard surfaces with sanitation agent than to constantly launder fabrics.

7. Workstation and work flow setup

Workstations and work flows for teams should be set up with the following objectives in mind:

- ✓ Enabling and encouraging distancing practices.
- ✓ Limiting contact between employees as much as possible, especially between workers belonging to different work teams.
- ✓ Avoiding the necessity for sharing any items.
- ✓ Preventing an outbreak of Covid-19 should a person in the workplace contract the disease.

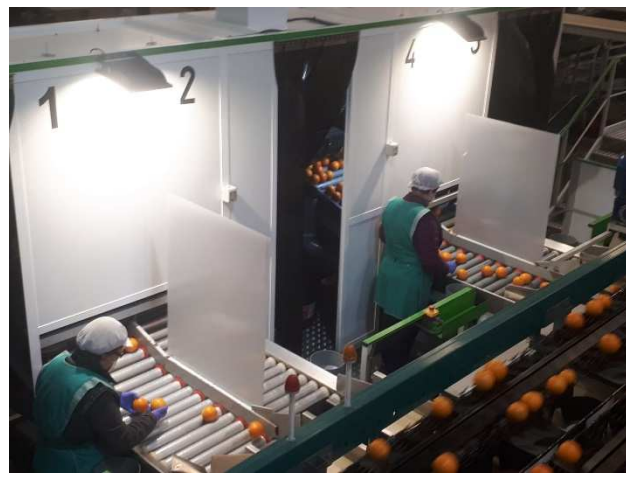
7.1. Picking teams

Isolating picking teams may compromise picking efficiency and create the need for more supervisory staff, and picking and transport equipment, but it is a small price to pay for keeping workers safe from contamination and preventing an outbreak.

- Select the picking areas so that picking teams are kept isolated, for instance by having teams work in different orchards.
- Allocate separate picking trailers or picking bins and trailers to each picking team.
- Allocate a tractor driver to each picking team and don't have drivers move between teams.
- When unloading fruit at the packhouse, the driver should stay at the tractor and not mingle with the receiving team.
- Allocate a supervisor to each picking team.
- Sanitise all equipment before and after each shift, including recording equipment (pens, clipboard, tickers, etc.), clippers, picking bags, ladders, bins and trailers by spraying and / or wiping them down with a sanitising agent.
- Allow only the supervisor to handle pens, clipboards, tickers or other counters, or any other recording equipment during picking.
- Have workers empty their own picking bags into bins / trailers.
- Designate certain pickers to use ladders, and issue a ladder to each of these pickers. Ladders are not to be shared.
- Ensure that each picker only use the clippers and picking bag that was issued to them, and that this equipment is not touched by any other person.

7.2. Grading stations

On many packing lines it should be possible to adjust the workstation setup to allow distancing and / or separation between graders. The important thing is to ensure that workers are not within range of each other's respiratory droplets, are not forced or at risk of making physical contact, and are not forced to share equipment or touch the same surfaces.



Example of separating graders in the packline.

7.3. Packing stations

Packing stations are usually much closer together and may be more difficult to distance. One option is to use only every second packing station, but this may lead to an unacceptable lowering in productivity. Physical barriers between packing stations may however be as effective.

Examples of separating packing stations.



7.4. Palletising and loading

It may be difficult to effectively maintain distancing between workers in palletising and loading, because the workers are more mobile in these areas. The purpose however is still to limit the physical contact between workers and the mingling of workers from different teams. The following is advised:

- Assign a small team of workers to each palletising station and have them work together throughout this time period.
- If necessary, change the flow of packed boxes in the packhouse so that palletisers from different stations do not fetch boxes from the same spot. For example, separate the line where packed boxes into different spaces by using barriers, and assign each team to a space.
- Assign forklifts to specific drivers and allow only that driver to use the forklift for that shift.
- If pallets are being moved to the loading area, assign a separate space in the loading area to each forklift driver so that they are not constantly crossing paths.
- Sanitise palletisation equipment and stations, and forklifts thoroughly between each shift.

7.5. Hand washing stations

- Every worker should have easy access to handwashing stations with soap and running water, where paper towels for hand drying, tissues, and sealed bins for disposing of these items, can also be found. Washing their hands regularly should not be a chore for workers.
- If it is difficult to install more permanent hand washing stations, consider making use of water tanks that can be rigged to make temporary hand washing stations.
- If this is not possible, have available hand sanitiser dispensers. Please remember, however, that hand sanitisers is less effective than washing properly and for long enough with soap and water.

7.6. First aid and health care services

First aid officers and health care professionals play a critical role during this time.

Firstly, first aid should be centralised during this period to limit the exposure of workers to those that may be infected with Covid-19. The following is recommended:

- Assign a first aid officer to particular areas in the workplace, or to certain work teams.
- The first aid officer must be the only person allowed to treat an injury that occurs in those area(s) or work team(s). A supervisor or other worker should under no circumstances be allowed to treat an injury in the field or in the workplace.
- The first aid officer must be close by and able to respond quickly should an injury occur (e.g. there should be a first aid officer on call that can move between picking teams and treat injuries, should they occur).
- The first aid officer must use a mask and gloves which are discarded after each treatment.

Secondly, if there is an onsite healthcare facility, such as a clinic or a sickbay, the healthcare professional who works there will play a very important role during this time. The following is recommended:

- The healthcare professional must be fully briefed by a medical professional on symptoms, preventative measures, isolation and quarantine procedures, and all other relevant information related to Covid-19.
- The healthcare professional should have at hand all the emergency contact numbers that may be required.
- The healthcare facility must be equipped with all the protective clothing, equipment and supplies required to respond effectively.

7.7. Isolation rooms

- If a person in the workplace displays symptoms of Covid-19, that person should be isolated immediately if they cannot be sent home and go into self-isolation.
- Set up an isolation room in the workplace where these workers can stay until they can be tested for the disease.
- If more than one person is held in the isolation room, they must practice physical distancing.
- Ensure that the isolation room is sanitised regularly.
- Only healthcare professionals should be allowed into the isolation room, whether there is a patient in the room or not.
- Every person entering the room when there is a patient in the room must wear gloves and a mask, which must be discarded as soon as they leave the room.

- Reserve one bathroom for the exclusive use of those in isolation. If this is not possible, the bathroom must be thoroughly sanitised after each use.

7.8. Isolation on-farm accommodation

- If workers live on the farm, it will be necessary to set up accommodation on the farm for workers who are in self-isolation and those that are infected with Covid-19.
- Ensure that there is a separate room for each patient.
- Only healthcare professionals should be allowed to enter the isolation accommodation apart from the patients.
- Every person entering the accommodation must wear gloves and a mask, which must be discarded as soon as they leave.

8. Communication

At times like these, one of the greatest threats to stability in a workplace is misinformation which can lead to uncertainty, distrust and panic, and ultimately may lead to worker unrest. Communication is key to ensure that all workers are clear at all times on the following:

- ✓ The facts and latest news about the disease;
- ✓ What to do to stay safe and healthy and to keep your family safe and healthy;
- ✓ What to do when you think you may be infected;
- ✓ Government regulations that are currently being enforced; and
- ✓ Workplace practices and procedures that have been implemented.

Remember that fake news spreads like wild fire and that it can do more damage, more quickly than any virus. Take this threat as seriously.

8.1. Regular information sharing

- As recommended in section 2.2, it is essential that daily briefing sessions must be held with all workers, communicating to them the latest news about the disease, changes in regulations that may have been put in place, and changes in workplace practices and procedures.
- Develop short team-talk scripts for supervisors to ensure that a consistent message is given, and ask the supervisors to write down questions so that standard answers can be formulated where necessary.
- Allow workers to ask questions during these sessions and take the time to allay fears and address misconceptions.
- Ensure that every work team is briefed before they start their shift.
- If there are notice boards in common areas, develop daily briefs in all the languages spoken in the workplace and post them there. Make sure though that physical distancing is maintained at notice boards. A good measure is to make the font large enough so that workers do not have to congregate in front of the notice boards in order to read them.

8.2. Communicating policies and operating procedures

It is essential that all workers must be aware of the policies and operating procedures that are applicable in the workplace during this time. Workers are likely to be particularly concerned about policies around remuneration and leave, and about procedures aimed at protecting their health. Make sure that there is absolute clarity about the policies and procedures and that the reasoning behind them are well-understood.

The following is recommended:

- Hold training sessions with all managers, supervisors and team leaders and inform them in detail on the policies and procedures, their implications and their practical implications. Use scenario planning to help them to better understand what will happen in particular circumstances.
- Make sure that managers, supervisors and team leaders are immediately informed of any changes in policies or operating procedures.
- Managers, supervisors and team leaders must inform their work teams around policies and procedures and changes in them during daily briefing sessions.
- Develop information pamphlets and FAQs in all the languages used in the workplace, put them up on notice board and make them available in common areas where workers can study them or take them home to read. Encourage workers to inform themselves.

8.3. Signage and posters

Put up signage and posters at appropriate places in the workplace with graphic illustrations of the following:

- The symptoms of Covid-19
- Preventative measures
- Personal hygiene practices
- Correct handwashing procedures

8.4. Communicating with stakeholders

During this time there is a lot of uncertainty everywhere about what regulations, restrictions, etc. will be imposed next, and what this will mean on a personal level, and for the ability of a business to maintain economic activity. You can control how your operation handles these challenges, and how you communicate to all your stakeholders. Uncertainty is a big challenge and the more you can do to manage it, the better for your operation.

- Develop a communication strategy that identifies all the relevant stakeholder groups. Groups are, for example, customers, suppliers, service providers, financial institutions, employees, and government agencies.
- Develop a communication plan for each of these groups, indicating the what, when and how of communicating with these groups.
- Assign a person responsible for communicating to each group. For large groups, such as customers, it may be necessary to assign more than one person. If this is the case, ensure that the message and methods are consistent.
- Monitor communication by inviting stakeholders to contact you directly with their concerns and feedback. This is the best way to ensure that there are no developing crises of which you are not aware.

8.5. Information sources

During this time, stakeholders are more likely to consult online information sources to get the latest information about your business. Whereas the previous section dealt with active communication, it is also essential to ensure that passive communication is being used to convey a consistent message.

- Take a critical look at your website and decide what information is best conveyed through that channel. It might be appropriate to have only a “still open for business” message on the home

page of the site, or it may be useful to have more detailed information. It is however essential that the website must be updated to indicate that your organisation is responding to the situation and taking steps to deal with it in the best possible way.

- Look at social media channels on which you may be active and consider who is most likely to access information through each of these channels. Decide what is the most appropriate and relevant message to send through each channel.
- It is critical during this time to be aware of taking a stand that might be interpreted as political, such as criticising measures put in place by our government or a foreign government, or complaining about interruptions in supply chains or disruptions in infrastructure. Decide what overall message your organisation wants to promote, and ensure that any political messaging is purposeful.
- Ensure that all staff members who have access to and can be connected to the electronic presence of your organisation are aware of the communication strategy and messaging.

9. What to do when a worker tests positive for Coronavirus

This section deals with operational and business considerations when it is confirmed that a worker tests positive for coronavirus. What does this mean for the business as a whole and for the immediate operations where that individual was involved?

Currently there are no official regulations instructing businesses what they need to do from a business perspective when cases of coronavirus occur within their employees. Every food business has a different set up and how to proceed when a positive case is notified will be guided by that context. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to the following:

- Care for the worker and those in direct contact with that worker is the priority and managers should act immediately to ensure this care is provided (see relevant sections above).
- The ability to react effectively and appropriately when a positive case occurs will depend largely on how well prepared the business is and to what extent they have adopted the practices discussed throughout this document. For example, the impact on other workers and the overall business operations will be significantly reduced where teams have been kept independent and are smaller, regular sanitation of workplaces is taking place, workers maintain physical distancing, etc.
- It is critical to have a long-term view in mind and decisions and actions should align to the long-term sustainability of the business. Such decision-making may involve trade-offs, such as lost production time in the current week versus a situation where all production activities must cease if infection cases explode in the workplace.

When managers become aware of the positive case the approach followed should be risk based and include:

- **Identify the risk**
Is the worker still at work? At what point could the worker have been infected? Where could the infected worker have come into contact with other workers? What is the role of this individual in the business? What type of materials and environment are associated with this work (the virus will survive longer on some surfaces than others)?
- **Assess the risk**
Who has the infected worker been in contact with, both at work and elsewhere? What areas of the business have they been involved with? Who else might be at risk of infection due to this case? What will the impact be without this employee, or the group of employees that must be isolated? Can the work be done differently, perhaps by parties outside this group? Have the teams been set up so that all the critical skills are shared across teams so that by isolating employees the work can continue?

➤ **Manage the risk**

- Based on the outcome of identified hazards and the associated level of risk, appropriate intervention must be taken. These range from short-term pauses in operations on the one end of the scale to full shut down of the worksite on the other. In large facilities that employ many people, shutting down will have detrimental consequences for the entire business, so in these cases extra proactive effort needs to be taken to limit the impact of on positive case BEFORE they occur.
 - At the very least, thoroughly clean and disinfect any places or things which were in contact with the infected employee. Ensure cleaning staff are wearing PPE and clean with detergent, followed by bleach. Allow time for the disinfectants to work and, where possible, time for the virus in that area to die naturally outside the body.
 - Confirm the case has been reported to the relevant local authorities. In reporting the case, follow the instructions provided by the authorities in relation to shutting down. Closing a facility might happen where multiple cases occur at the same premises.
 - Work with the authorities if they need information about tracking and tracing of other possibly affected people.
 - Communicate the incident to all the employees. Find ways to communicate without physical gatherings, and without causing alarm. Workers should be prepared during training sessions and daily briefing sessions on what to expect in this scenario. Ensure the communication is both ways, and that you listen to and address employees' concerns.
 - Determine who needs to self-isolate and communicate that directly to them, including any provision made by the business to assist them during this time.
- If the business is unable to enforce a separation of workers or implement tight controls to prevent the spread of the virus, then operations must cease until such measures are introduced.

10. Conclusion

The citrus industry is privileged to be in a position where we can continue working. As an essential service that provides food to our country and the world we have a responsibility to do so well and ensure that we do not compromise our business, our employees or our customers. With this in mind, take all the possible measures to keep everyone safe and productive, while still providing good quality citrus exports.

We must help each other during this challenging time so if you have any suggestions or amendments to this document, please email them to Jacomien de Klerk, at jacomien@citrusacademy.org.za.

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