

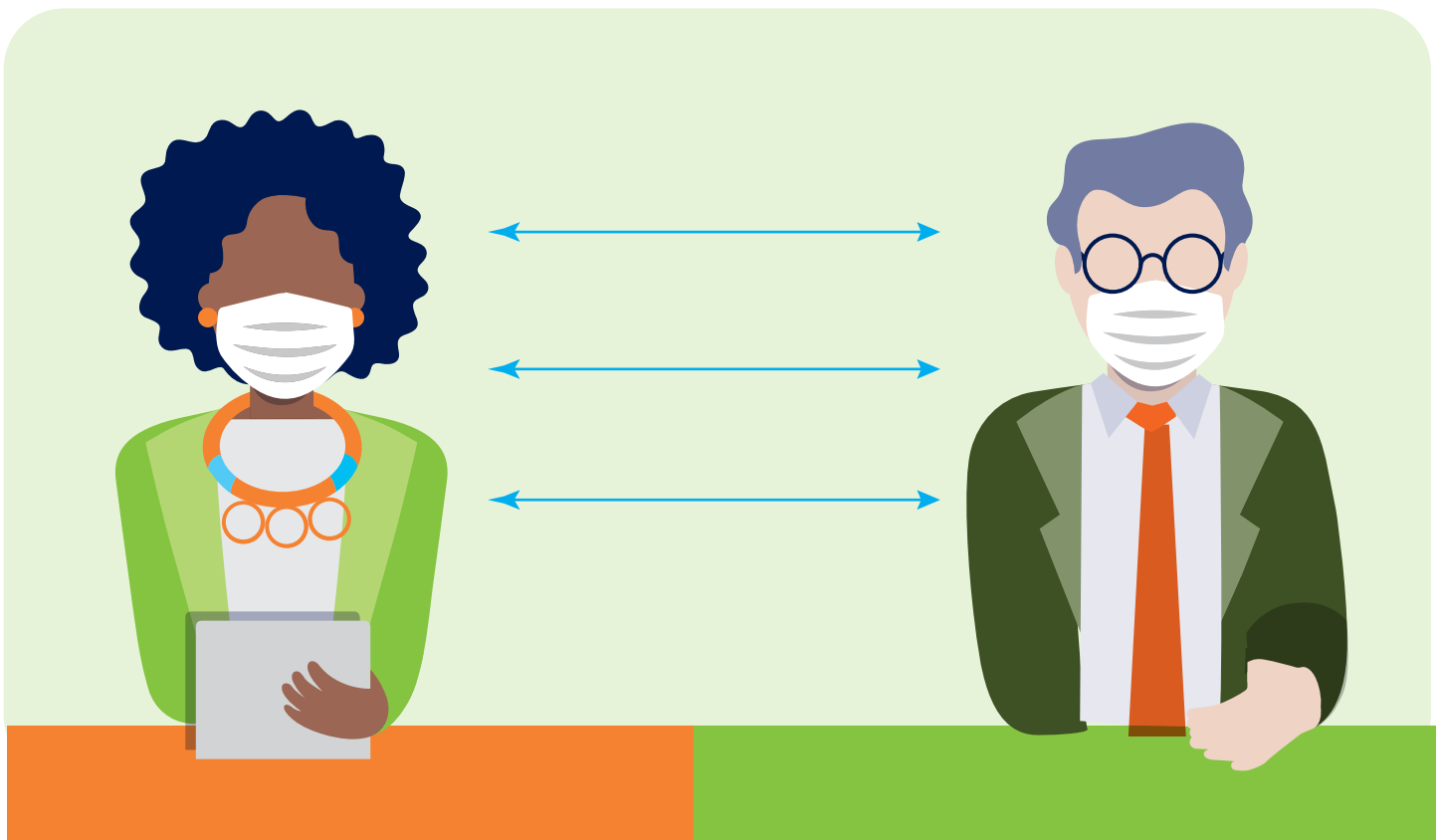


THEBEMED
MEDICAL AID SCHEME

COVID-19 Return to work

Return to Work Guidelines

Safety and Risk



**Providing and maintaining a working environment
that is safe and without risks
to the health of employees.**

A **momentum** |  **TYB** initiative

POWERED BY **momentum**
wellness

Momentum OCSA (Pty) Ltd, trading as Momentum Wellness, is part of Momentum Metropolitan Holdings Limited.

Return to work services:

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THEBEMED
MEDICAL AID SCHEME

Introduction

South Africa has entered a lockdown period with regard to the safety and protection of all South Africans against the COVID -19 pandemic. The objective of the lockdown was to flatten the curve of infection and for all employees to be able to return to work healthy.

As employees return to work, it is important for companies to implement measures to reduce the exposure risk / transmission of Coronavirus (Covid-19), by so doing, protecting the health and safety of employees, as well as members of the public who enter their workplaces or are exposed to their working activities.

NOTE: This document is subjected to the directives received from Government and will be updated accordingly.

Wednesday 11 May 2020.

Regulatory requirements governing safe workplaces

The following regulatory requirements apply:

- The Department of Employment and Labor has determined that it is necessary to adopt and implement occupational health and safety measures to reduce and eliminate the escalation of COVID-19 infections as set out by the directive that has been published on 29 April 2020 (Government Gazette No. 43257, Notice No. 479).
- The OHS Act (85 of 1983) read with the Hazardous Biological Agents Regulations requires the employer to provide and maintain as far as is reasonably practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees.
- Regulation 6 of the Regulations for Hazardous Biological Agents and Section 8(2) of the OHS Act (85 of 1993) requires that every employer conduct a risk assessment to determine if any employee may be exposed to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

COVID-19 Direction on Health and Safety in the Workplace

In order to protect the health and safety of employees at their workplace it is crucial to control the exposures to occupational hazards. SARS-CoV-2 is a biological hazard that can lead to COVID-19, a severe acute respiratory illness, which can result in complications including death.

The COVID-19 direction on Health and Safety in the workplace as per the Department of Employment and Labour can be used as a framework for the implementation of appropriate and effective preventative controls which include:

Control strategy




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Risk assessment

Requirements	Recommended actions
<p>Implement measures in the workplace to prevent and reduce the exposure risk / transmission of the Covid-19 virus</p>	<p>Review and update risk assessments in respect of Covid-19 to identify the new hazards and the basic measures to eliminate or minimize the risks.</p> <p>The risk assessment will determine the level of risk for various job categories, vulnerable workers, work spaces and required control measures to mitigate the risks.</p>



Engineering controls

Requirements	Recommended actions
<p>Engineering controls to mitigate risk</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce / limit the number of building / workplace entrances and exits to facilitate control of movement of employees. • Provide adequate ventilation of the workplace in accordance with requirements of OHS Act. Ensure appropriate means of ventilation in working environment, particularly in the designated isolation area at the entrance of the company premises. • Continuous evaluation of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) levels within the workplace to ensure sufficient dilution of used air. • Installing physical barriers such as clear Perspex guards especially in areas such as reception and security. • Disease Control and Prevention - Regular microbiological swab sampling to evaluate the effectiveness of cleaning practices.

Administrative controls

Requirements	Recommended actions
<p>Administrative controls need to be implemented and should include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Work Practices • Education & Training 	<p>Return to work (RTW) policy and procedure needs to be implemented that includes, amongst others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the number of employees at the workplace through rotation, staggered working hours, shift systems and remote working arrangements. • Considerations for the identification and protection of vulnerable employees (Annexure C). • Appoint a manager to address employees or workplace representative Covid-19 concerns and to keep them informed. • Companies that employ more than 500 employees must submit record of its risk assessment together with written policy on the protection of the health and safety of its employees to the H&S Committee and the Department of Employment and Labour. • Implement social distancing measures. • Inform the mandatory authorities when an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and conduct the necessary investigations. • Update the company's leave policy as per COVID-19 direction.


Administrative controls

Requirements	Recommended actions
 	<p>Screening policy / procedure for RTW needs to be implemented that includes, amongst others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-risk assessment questionnaire (Annexure A) that will evaluate the level of risk and whether the employee can be cleared to return to the workplace. • Infrared scanning thermometers to be used to measure the temperature of all employees / visitors / contractors entering the work premises daily. • Management of the “High Risk” employees (Annexure B). • Management of employees diagnosed with COVID-19 returning to work. • Identification of the closest testing facility to refer employees for testing. • Employees at work to report any symptoms of cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, feeling feverish, diarrhea and body pains to their line manager and to follow the high risk process. (Annexure B) administrative. • Recordkeeping of the employees allowed entering the work premises and the identified high-risk employees. <p>Workplace protocols in place for occupational health medical surveillance including fit for work certification.</p> <p>Education and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide up to date education / training on the COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviors (e.g. cough etiquette and care of PPE); • Ensure that training material is easy to understand and available in the appropriate literacy level for all workers. • Encourage self-isolation based on the risk outcomes of risk assessment questionnaire.


Health and safety work practices

Requirements	Recommended actions
<p>Health and safety work practices need to be implemented and should include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Housekeeping • Personal Hygiene • Sanitisers 	<p>Good Housekeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient disinfecting of all surfaces, bathrooms and equipment should take place at least 24 hours before employee return to work. • Once daily operations are resumed, sufficient disinfecting of all surfaces, bathrooms, equipment, computers and laptops should take place on a daily basis. • Establish designated isolation areas to temporarily isolate employees who are possibly infected or are contacts of possibly infected employees until they are appropriately assessed and managed. • Proper waste management of face mask / gloves, etc. to be in place. • Avoid sharing of work equipment and tools. Where this is not possible, ensure frequent disinfection of shared work equipment and tools such as, computers / laptops, printers or work stations.

Health and safety work practices

Requirements	Recommended actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsory hand washing / sanitisation at building entrances and exits. • Increase the frequency of cleaning in high density populated areas. <p>Hand Sanitizer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide hand sanitizers sufficient quantities of hand sanitizers at identified areas and promote the use of regular hand sanitizing especially using public transport. <p>Personal Hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place risk control measures including education and awareness, use & disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE), etc. • Promote regular use hand sanitizing and the use of PPE.

Personal protective equipment

Requirements	Recommended actions
<p>Provision of the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</p> 	<p>Personal Protective Equipment :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the necessary PPE to employees that they require for the work they are doing including cloth masks. • Provide additional PPE to cleaners, security staff & health care workers. • Make additional masks available for higher risk categories. • Train employees how to use protective clothing and equipment. • All employees to use a cloth mask especially where social distancing is not possible, e.g. making use of public transport.

Abbreviations

HRA	Health Risk Assessment
NIOH	National Institute for Occupational Health
OHS	Occupational Health & Safety
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RTW	Return to Work
SRA	Self-Risk Assessment

References:

1. COVID-19 Occupational Health And Safety Measures In Workplaces COVID-19 (C19 OHS), 2020; Department of Employment and Labour.
2. Risk-adjusted strategy for economic activity - Guidelines issued by the Government of South Africa in terms of Risk Assessments to be instituted: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/covid-19-risk-adjusted-strategy>
3. Medical surveillance and fitness for duty in the time of Covid-19: <http://www.nhls.ac.za>; <http://www.nioh.ac.za>; <http://www.nicd.ac>.

Annexure A

COVID-19 Self Risk Assessment

Are you at risk?

Firstly, to determine whether you were potentially exposed to the virus in the 14 days prior to onset of symptoms, read through the following questions and tick where applicable.

Employee details	
Company :	Department:
Surname:	Name:
Company No:	ID No:
Date:	Time:
Temperature Reading:	

COVID-19 Related questions	YES
Do you have any of the following symptoms: Cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, body pains, and diarrhea or feverish (>38 degrees)?	
Have you been tested for COVID-19?	
Were you diagnosed with COVID 19?	
Were you in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 or a person with symptoms of COVID-19?	
Have you travelled abroad or domestically (within SA In the last 14 days)?	
Have you worked in, or attended a health care facility where patients with COVID-19 infections were being treated?	
Have you attended group gatherings e.g. funerals in last 14 days?	
Have you self-isolated during the past weeks because you may have had contact with someone with COVID 19 infections?	

What should you do?

If you responded positively to any questions, you should immediately follow the self-isolation procedures and contact one of these service providers.



Corona Virus
Hotline
080 002 9999
or
NICD Hotline
082 883 9920



Your nearest health facility or medical practitioner to notify them about your symptoms and recent travels as well as possible exposure before you go to your appointment, **do not just arrive.**



www.nicd.co.za
WhatsApp:
Say "Hi" to
0600 123 456

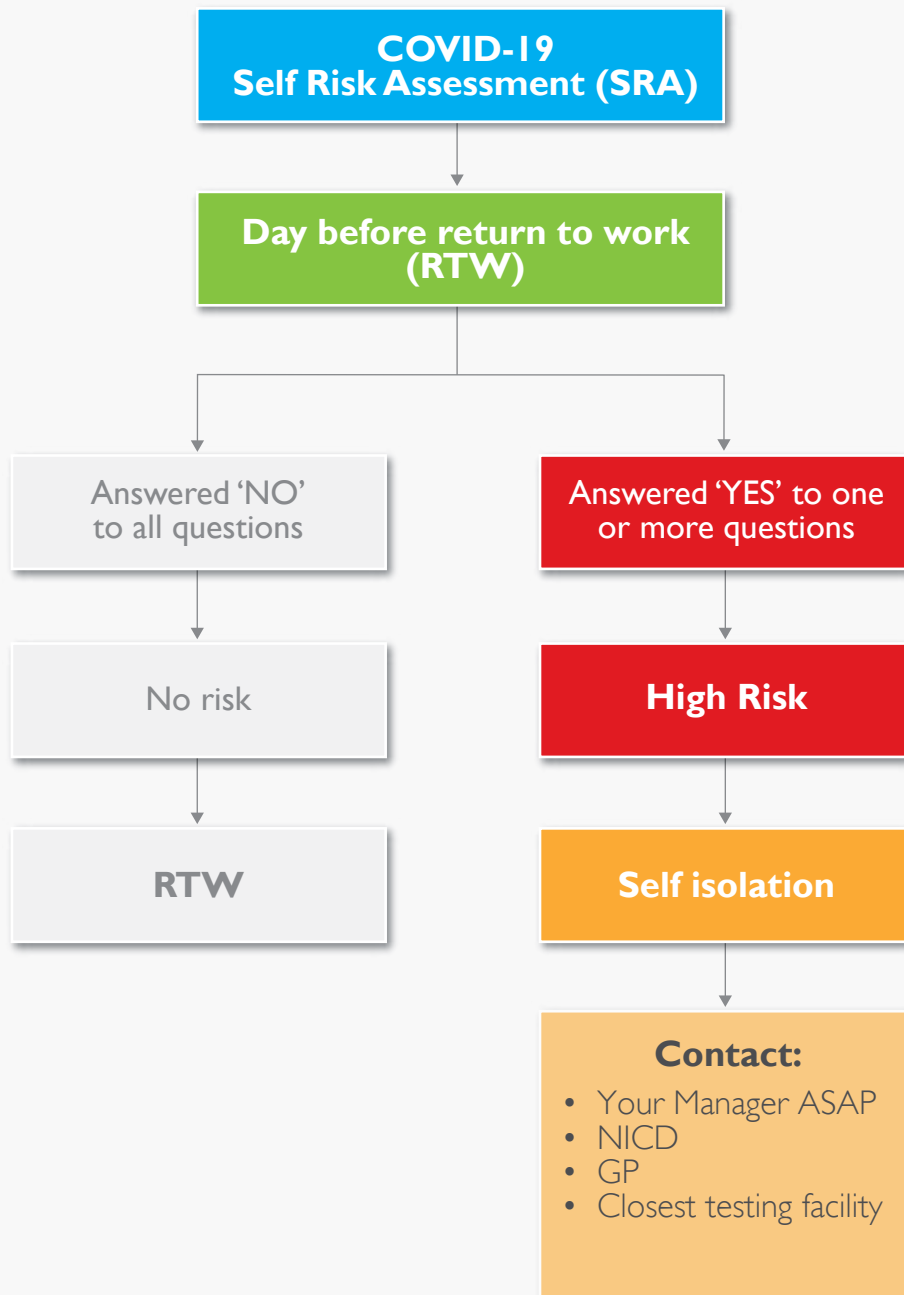
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Annexure B

Return to Work Screening Process Flow

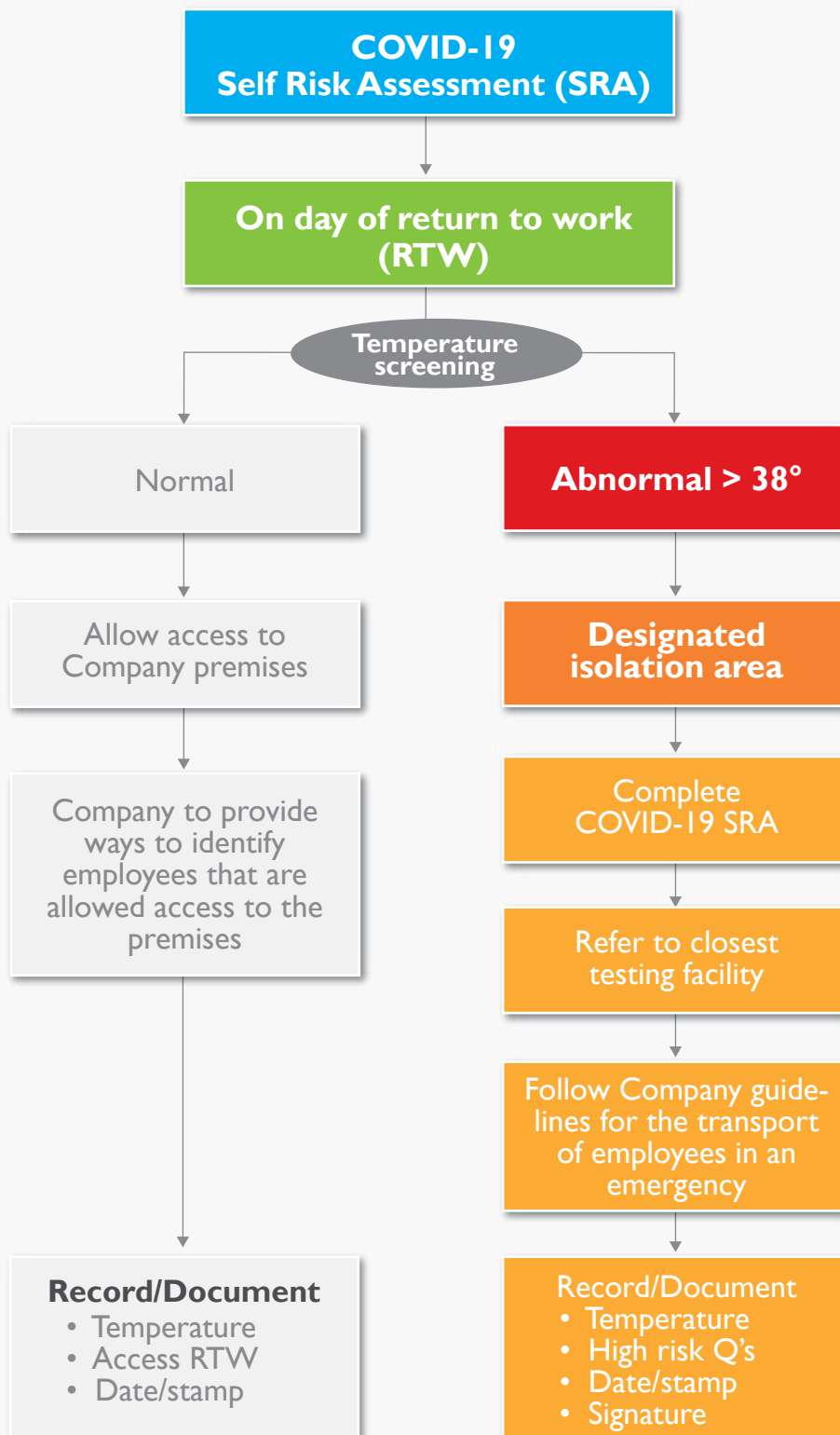
Diagram 1: Covid-19 Self Risk-Assessment DAY BEFORE Return to Work



Annexure B

Return to Work Screening Process Flow

Diagram 2: Covid-19 Self Risk-Assessment ON THE DAY of Return to Work



Annexure C

Considerations for identification of vulnerable persons

The following categories of employees to be considered as vulnerable:



Employees who have been diagnosed with any of the conditions listed below:

- Any malignancy (cancer) that is not in full remission
- Asthma (that requires the "use of an inhaler at least twice a week")
- Emphysema, chronic obstructive airways disease and other chronic lung diseases
- Tuberculosis
- HIV (irrespective of degree of viral suppression)
- Diabetics (both Type I and Type II)
- Hypertension and other cardiovascular conditions like heart failure, ischaemic heart disease
- Had organ transplants, diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylosis, SLE, sarcoidosis or psoriasis taking any immunosuppressant drugs.



Any employee that had been admitted into a hospital for a period exceeding 7 days for any medical or surgical condition will need to submit



Any employee that had major surgery in the past 60 days that required general or spinal anaesthesia will need to submit medical certificate.



Pregnant women. They need to submit medical certificate.



Persons older than 60 with any chronic conditions.

NOTE:

Employees categorized as "vulnerable" should be considered case by case before returning to work.