

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

AGRISEKER BCM

In January 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the new coronavirus in Hubei Province, China, to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. While COVID-19 continues to spread across the world, there is still much to be learned about its transmission, severity and other features.

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases confirmed on Thursday, 05 March 2020 the first case of the Coronavirus in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.

AgriSeker has plans in place across its various business units to ensure the appropriate response to a Coronavirus outbreak at its premises. These plans include:

- Travel bans for non-essential international travel to high risk areas.
- Cancellation of non-critical face to face meetings in favour of teleconferences, Skype, etc.
- Potential activation of remote work policy.
- Travel alerts for employees traveling for personal reasons.
- Heightened access control at all AgriSeker office buildings.
- Distribution of hand sanitisers at all office buildings and dispatchable staff.
- All third-party service providers have been instructed to activate their business continuity plans and report any cases suspected or confirmed.

We continue to encourage employees to follow the hygiene guidelines that have been shared on how to avoid possible infection and spread of the virus.



For employees based in affected areas as reported by governmental and regulatory authorities – for anyone present with flu like symptoms, they must immediately self-isolate and consult a medical practitioner for medical attention. The sick person must ensure that the Doctor takes samples and submits them to the National Institute of Communicable Diseases for testing and diagnostics.

What should employees do:

If you display any signs of the virus, do not go to your medical practitioner's office and infect more people in the waiting room. Contact the **Coronavirus Hotline** instead: **080 002 9999**

Should you have symptoms, including fever, persistent coughing and difficulty breathing, it is important to seek medical care early. The Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) advises that you should not go out if you're feeling unwell. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms. They will then best advise you regarding going for diagnostic testing to confirm or refute your suspicion. In the meantime:

- Separate yourself from other people in your home and do not go out, except to get medical care.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and wash your hands with soap and water, often.
- Avoid sharing personal household items.
- Continue to monitor your symptoms, follow doctor's orders and remain calm and rest.
- Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure.

Heightened access control changes at AgriSeker offices:

In response to the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak AgriSeker identified measures that must be instituted across all Business Units to manage the risk of exposure within the work environment. The following are focus areas and action items by Business Units supported by AgriSeker Management with effect from 09 March 2020 until further notice:

• Hand sanitisers

Hand sanitisers, as an extra measure to minimise infections, will be installed around the AgriSeker buildings to help to ensure that everyone maintains good hygiene levels. Process to buy bulk sanitisers is in progress for the dispatchable workforce.

• Meetings

We encourage all employees to cancel all face-to-face meetings in affected areas and / or any meetings scheduled abroad and use alternatives such as teleconferences, Skype, or any other platforms supported by our IT.

• Travel

Employees are encouraged to cancel any non-essential local and international travel, specifically trips to affected areas. If returned from affected areas after 5 March 2020, the employee should self-quarantine for 14 days and follow the following steps:

- Employee to notify his / her line manager when presented with any symptoms associated with the coronavirus.
- The line manager notifies HR and Manco.
- Employee to be immediately declared unfit for duty and consult a treating medical practitioner for diagnosis. The employee's access to the workplace must be restricted immediately.
- Employee to submit a medical letter to HR.
- No employee will be allowed back into the workplace without clearance by a medical practitioner.

• Personal travel

Inform your line manager of any personal travels. Upon return the employee should self-quarantine for 14 days and follow the steps above.

• Masks

AgriSeker is in the process of procuring masks and these will be handed to our employees where and when necessary. Distribution will be facilitated by Head Office. Please note: Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Disposable face masks can only be used once. If you are not ill or looking after someone who is ill then you are wasting a mask. There is a world-wide shortage of masks, so the WHO urges people to use masks wisely. The most effective ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 are: frequently cleaning your hands, cover your cough with the bend of elbow or tissue and maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from people who are coughing or sneezing.

• Offices, meeting rooms, canteens/kitchens, bathrooms

Revised processes will be in place to maintain high levels of hygiene in offices, meeting rooms, canteens/kitchens and bathrooms at all Business Units.

How to handle affected employees:

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers, which could be useful in forming a corporate plan of action, in the instance of a COVID-19 outbreak. It includes the following points:

- **Encourage sick employees to stay at home**

Employees who have symptoms of respiratory illness should stay at home and not return to work until their fever has subsided for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medicines). They should advise their supervisor if they are sick and keep them updated. At this time, it is important that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of this. Sick employees may try to continue to work, if they fear their health benefits may fall away. Advise agencies or companies that provide temporary or contract workers to follow the same protocol with regards to sick workers and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies. Relax the rules about having a medical certificate from a health provider to validate time off work, as medical facilities or healthcare providers could be under strain and unable to provide certificates timeously. Employees with sick family members should be permitted to stay home and care for them. Employers should be aware and prepared that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick family members than usual.

- **Separate sick employees**

Any employees arriving at their place of work with symptoms of acute respiratory illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath), or those developing symptoms during the work day, should be separated from other employees immediately, and sent home.

- **Emphasise the importance of respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for all employees**

Place posters that encourage staying at home when sick, coughing and sneezing etiquette and hand hygiene at the entrance to the workplace and in communal areas where they are likely to be seen. Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for employee use, as well as alcohol-based hand sanitiser, soap and water, in good supply.

- **Perform routine environmental cleaning**

All touched surfaces, such as work stations, door knobs and countertops should be routinely cleaned, with the usual cleaning agents. Provide disposable wipes for employees to wipe down surfaces regularly, including telephones, remote controls, keyboards and other related desktop equipment.

- **Review the need for travel and if necessary, advise and prepare employees accordingly**

Check the CDC's Traveller Health Notices, for specific information and recommendations on travel and COVID-19. Advise employees on the risks, the symptoms and what to do if they feel sick while travelling. Emphasise how important it is for employees who feel they might be sick, to inform their supervisor, as well as the appropriate healthcare provider. Since the incubation period of COVID-19 is known to be 14 days, it is important that any employees who have travelled, monitor themselves carefully for symptoms after they have returned. Any employees who fall into the high-risk category of contracting COVID-19 – older employees or those with existing medical conditions like diabetes, heart or lung disease – should not travel for business. It is very important during this time not to make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin. The plan should address how to keep the business running, even if employees, contractors and suppliers are unable to come to their place of work, due to travel restrictions or if they are ill or having to care for the sick. Quite importantly, the plan should also address the mental health and social consequences of an outbreak in the workplace or community and offer support and information. Once a plan has been developed, it is advisable to share it with other businesses in the community. One of the best actions you can take as an employer or corporate custodian is to stay informed, both of new developments or discoveries about the coronavirus, and the situation reports as to its spread. WHO head, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said in a recent news conference, "This is a time for facts, not fear. This is a time for rationality, not rumours. This is a time for solidarity, not stigma."

Issued by: **AgriSeker Management**



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