

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL WELCOMES REVISED DISASTER REGULATIONS AS THEY PERTAIN TO THE MINING SECTOR

Johannesburg, 16 April 2020: The Minerals Council South Africa has noted the amendments to the Disaster Management Act regulations as they pertain to mining. The industry welcomes these amendments that allow a phase-up in mining capacity to 50% during the lockdown period, but with all the preventative and mitigating controls in place to fight COVID-19.

The Minerals Council is completely aligned with the letter and the spirit of the amendments insofar as they prioritise the health and safety of those employees who will be returning to work, and in so doing also protecting the health of their communities. The Minerals Council has in place a 10-point plan, based on a risk-based approach that is designed to ensure a preventative and mitigating approach to fighting COVID-19, which was implemented prior to the current lock-down. Subsequently, the Minerals Council has finalised a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), which encompasses all the DMRE Principles and those five conditions included in the regulations, to manage the phased build-up of mining operations, and the ongoing efforts to fight COVID-19 in the workplace and in communities.

Given the mining sector's comprehensive healthcare infrastructure, the industry is well equipped to screen, test and manage employees who are COVID-19 positive; to prevent infection, manage the sanitising of work areas and transport; to help with quarantine and health care facilities; to provide proper PPEs and enable social distancing. The Minerals Council and organised labour have engaged on the SOP and there is broad alignment.

At the same time, it is crucial for South Africa's economy to be gradually restarted during and after the COVID-19 lock-down. This means a phased process of increasing production but ensuring all the preventative and mitigating controls are in place in parallel. This will help preserve the economy, while at the same time fighting COVID-19 in a systematic manner.



Says Minerals Council CEO Roger Baxter: “We commit the industry to the prioritisation of health and safety of employees as this phase-in gathers steam, with all the preventative and mitigating controls to fight COVID-19 in place. It is Minerals Council’s view that government has adopted a pragmatic and practical approach to fighting the pandemic and enabling the economy to survive the crisis. We commit to working hard with government and organised labour in this national effort.”

As mentioned, the Minerals Council has developed a SOP which provides guidelines for the management of healthcare workers and employees returning to work during and at the end of the lockdown period. The guidelines address, screening, testing, possible exposure to COVID-19 and subsequent illness, isolation and quarantine, in addition to the usual return to work procedures of the industry. The SOP may be accessed at www.mineralscouncil.org.za/downloads/send/68-covid-19/943-sop-following-covid-19-lockdown.

Media queries:

Charmane Russell: +27 82 372 5816 or crussell@mineralscouncil.org.za or charmane@rasc.co.za

Alan Fine: + 27 83 250 0757 or alan@rasc.co.za

Memory Johnstone: + 27 82 719 3081 or memory@rasc.co.za

Web: www.mineralscouncil.org.za