



FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

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MINERALS COUNCIL
SOUTH AFRICA

What plans are in place for the return of foreign nationals to SA miners? Will they be quarantined? When will they be recalled?



Foreign national mineworkers have played an important role in the mining industry for many decades, and their employment in South Africa is a critical component of the GDPs of these countries. The number of foreign national employees has decreased over the years and is currently estimated around 10% of the national mining workforce.

With the move towards the substantial opening of the economy, including the mining industry, the Minerals Council South Africa has been engaging with the National Department of Health (DoH) over the return of foreign employees from their places of origin. The DMRE is also participating in these talks, as is Dirco and the departments of transport and home affairs.

The industry has some 44,500 foreign employees registered through TEBA.

Around 9,500 employees who are located outside of the country are currently scheduled for return to work.

Some of these employees remained in South Africa during the lockdown period. However, as miners based in South Africa during the lockdown returned to work, this was not possible for foreign miners who returned to their families for the lockdown, due to lockdown conditions in their own

countries and the closing of borders to human traffic.

The industry has also been engaged with the DoH over the return to work of employees who spent the lockdown period in areas within South Africa that have become COVID-19 epicentres. It has been agreed in principle that similar conditions will apply in their cases.

The return of the foreign employees will take place under strict agreed conditions. While some aspects await full finalisation, these are the key points:

- 1:** The Minerals Council will have the responsibility for facilitating the coordination of screening, testing, border logistics, transportation, and quarantining of all returning foreign mine workers for 14 days
- 2:** Initially quarantine facilities will be located near the mines. Employees will need to be kept isolated during the trip from the border post to the quarantine facilities. Especially where this involves long road trips, the issue of keeping people from entering public spaces such as roadside facilities will need to be dealt with through ensuring, for example, that buses have proper toilet facilities. It is possible that some quarantine facilities will be established elsewhere if it becomes necessary, such as

currently closed resorts. The capacity of the industry's quarantine facilities will determine how quickly employees can return to work.

3: The Minerals Council has commissioned TEBA to manage the logistics of returning workers to South Africa. TEBA will carry out screening of individuals in their country of origin, and their transport and, where necessary, their overnight accommodation. TEBA will also work with all countries' border authorities to facilitate the return, and with countries' health authorities in respect of employees who fail screening tests.

4: Screening and testing of employees in quarantine will be carried out according to NICD guidelines.

5: Returning foreign employees will be advised that they will not be able to return to their home countries for the duration of the pandemic, so as to avoid the dangers presented by continual cross-border travel.

6: Those who fail the test will be diverted to local district health system. Mining companies will have a duty of care in respect of these people, including through facilitating testing where required, provide medication and care.