

COVID-19

3 April 2020

Stats SA COVID-19 Lockdown Communique

Our work and mandate continues

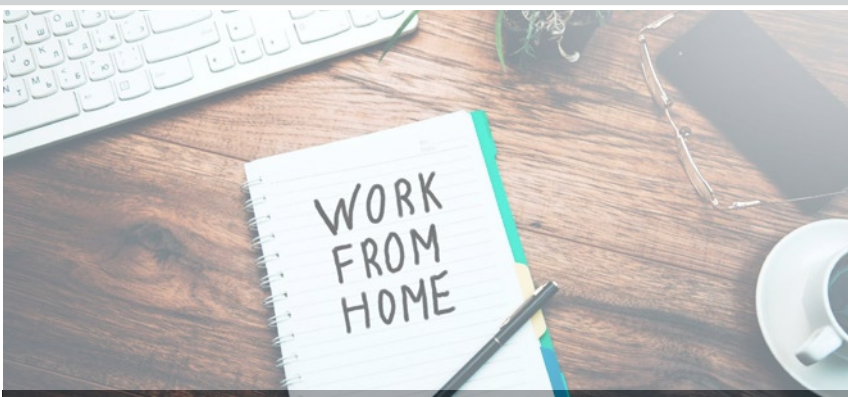
From the SG's desk

8 days ago we went into day 1 of the 21-day lockdown announced by President Ramaphosa in an effort to flatten the curve and save our health system from collapse, and the most vulnerable among us from the possibility of death. I want to salute all essential service workers – medical professionals, social workers, grocery clerks, truck drivers, petrol attendants, safety and security, and others – for the courage and determination they are showing in being on the frontline of keeping us healthy, fed and mobile.

In the midst of the lockdown, the work of government does not stop, and neither does the work of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). Members of SMS have been designated as critical, and we all need to be prepared to go wherever we are needed. Staff at all levels who can work from home are, to ensure that the work of the organisation continues to inform the nation.

Exco met via Microsoft Teams yesterday, with a focus on our response to the COVID-19 crisis. We are assessing the impact of the lockdown and the continuing social distancing measures on data collection activities. One of the decisions taken was that the relevant precautions will be taken at all levels once the lockdown has been lifted.

We have been requested to take part in some initiatives to measure the impact of COVID-19, and while it is critical to assist with these, we will take the proper care to ensure that we are not party to the production of statistics that may not prove reliable.



Day 

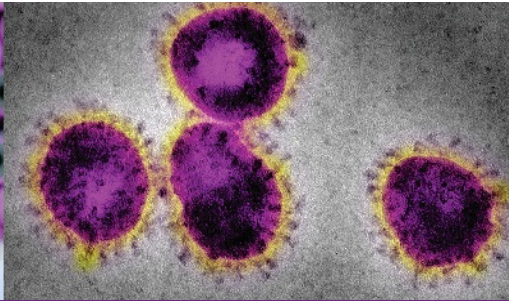
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From the SG's desk

I am appealing to you to show the same discipline and resolve in the coming weeks. The situation is changing on a daily basis, and I advise that you keep abreast of these changes. Please adhere to all government directives as best you can; remember, this lockdown is not a punishment but a means of showing solidarity and protecting the most vulnerable amongst us.

Let us all observe a moment's silence as we remember the 5 lives lost to date to this illness.

Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds; try and avoid touching your face; sanitise the surfaces in your home; observe social distancing; and above all, for the sake of those on the frontline fighting this epidemic, unless you are getting groceries or medication, stay home! The more we adhere to the current restrictions, the sooner they will be lifted.

THE 21-DAY NATION-WIDE LOCKDOWN (MARCH 26 – APRIL 16) GUIDELINES



YOU MAY ONLY LEAVE YOUR HOME FOR THE FOLLOWING:



To seek medical care



To buy food, medicine and other supplies



To collect a social grant



‘Please adhere to all government directives as best you can; remember, this lockdown is not a punishment but a means of showing solidarity and protecting the most vulnerable amongst us’.

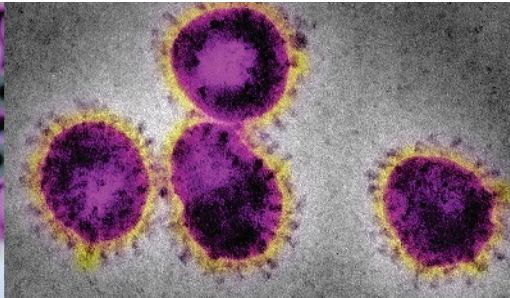
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The Deputy Director-Generals (DDGs) continue to oversee the work being done by those who are working from home.

Economic Statistics

Management and other staff from the economic statistics branch are continuing to work during the 21-day lockdown. Some of these activities include:

- Working on the unpublished quarterly panel survey of capital expenditure in the economy in order to be able to engage the Statistics Council and the user community during this quarter;
- Continuation of the benchmarking of National Accounts, including the development of new deflators and system improvements;
- Continuation of the harmonisation of seasonal adjustment between source data and national accounts with support from colleagues in the Chief Directorate: Methodology;
- Collection of online prices for March and April for use in the Consumer Price Index;
- Continuing with the Natural Capital Accounting donor-funded project in order to meet the June deadlines;
- Updating questionnaires;
- Revision analysis; and
- Finalising outstanding matters relating to the Census of Commercial Agriculture.



Strategic Planning

- The financial year came to an end on 31 March 2020. Chief Directors are currently capturing actual performance on the strategic reporting system. As on 1 April 2020, only 11 Chief Directors are still outstanding.
- The Strategy Division has commenced with the verification of evidence for the quarter as well as the compilation of the organisational and service delivery improvement 4th quarterly reports.
- The organisational quarterly report is due for submission to the Minister by the end of April 2020. These quarterly reports form the basis of the two annual reports that need to be compiled and submitted to the Minister and tabled in Parliament.

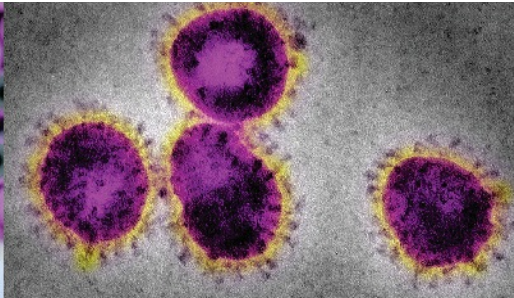
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Methodology, Standards and Research and South African National Statistics System (SANSS)

- Preparing a response to a request from University of Stellenbosch on a proposed telephonic panel survey on the impact of COVID-19, the Corona Rapid Mobile Survey (CRAM).
- On behalf of the Statistician-General (SG), SANSS is handling a request from Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on the impact of COVID-19 on Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) operations.
- Business Register completed an online questionnaire related to Statistical Business Register (SBR) (units, counts, plans for the next 3-5 years and questions on the guidelines for building SBRs). Information was requested by the African Development Bank (AFDB).
- Work is being done related to 2020/21 performance management memos, which will determine the various component's targets as well as individual targets.
- SANSS received a response from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) on the socio-economic assessment system for legislative reform.
- SANSS received a second opinion from the Office of Chief State Law Adviser.

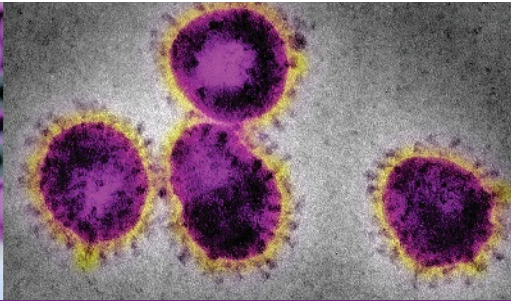


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Statistical Support and Informatics

- The Chief Director: Geography forms part of the multi-faceted national task team on COVID-19, led by the Department of Health. Two additional staff members have been assigned to provide technical support to avail datasets and expertise in ensuring the establishment of a fully-functioning data hub to monitor the geographic spread of COVID-19.
- Geography has also provided data assistance as per requests from the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and researchers from the University of Cape Town (UCT) Centre for Actuarial Research's Demography unit.
- Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Business Modernisation (BM) divisions: All staff that requested laptops, relevant support programs and connectivity have been assisted. Prompt remote response is still available to employees and minimal support (on appointment) is being provided at the office for issues that can't be handled remotely. All backups are occurring as planned.
- To date, the following releases have been remotely released successfully, namely: Volunteer Activities Survey 2018, Labour Market Dynamics in SA, 2018 and Quarterly Employment Statistics. Further to that, meetings are conducted remotely through Microsoft Teams and other connectivity tools. With everyone working from home this would be a



perfect opportunity to stress test our capability to adapt to fast-changing technology within a business environment driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and propelled by the effects of COVID-19.

Stats SA ICT Helpdesk:

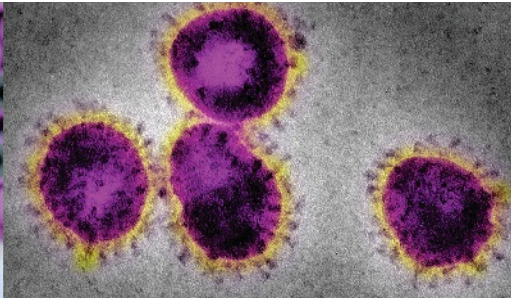
Call 012 310 8299 for
ICT-related assistance

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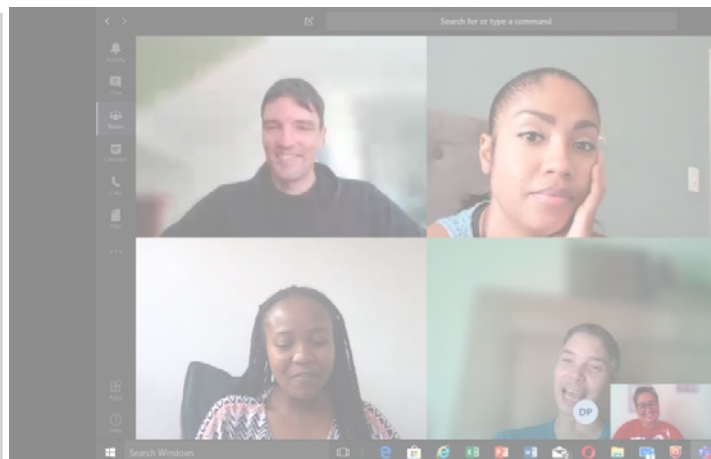
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Population and Social Statistics

- Population and Social Statistics is participating in supporting the National Department of Health (NDoH) with demographic and poverty data, provided provincial and district population totals and proportions of poverty head counts.
- Participating in conceptual thinking of projection models for COVID-19. The two branches are looking at alternative data collection models in case the lockdown is extended or fieldworkers are denied access beyond 20 April 2020.
- Preparations for Census 2021 are ongoing and analysis of data for National Household Travel Survey (NHTS), Domestic Travel Survey (DTS), Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS) and Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) are being undertaken.
- Attending to users request is continuing.



Communication, Marketing and Publishing

- Stakeholder Relations Management (SRM) is continuing to assist with user requests.
- Corporate Communication activities are continuing as usual.
- Publication services are:
 - Updating the website and working on the unpublished data policy.
 - Working on Mbalo Brief
 - Translating the Census 2021 questionnaire
 - Design team in operation
 - Ensuring proper functioning of online tools and monitoring use of online tools

Corporate Services

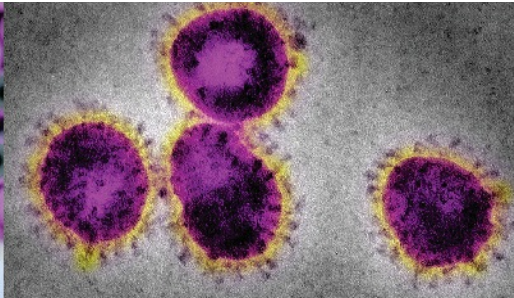
- Corporate Services activities are continuing as usual.

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COMMUNITY HEALTH SCREENING DURING THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN



We are ramping up the fight.

- In the coming days and weeks, 10 000 Community Health Care Workers will be deployed across the country to conduct door-to-door screening in our most vulnerable communities.
- Community Health Care Workers will be provided with uniforms and identity tags, which will make it easier for the community to identify them.
- The deployment will follow a phased and targeted approach and high-density areas such as Alexandra, Diepsloot and Khayelitsha will be visited in the first wave.
- Screening in other areas will be rolled out following the same phased and targeted approach.

Screening is essential in this fight.

- Screening is a way for health workers to find out if you may have COVID-19 or not. The health worker will ask you questions and scan your forehead to take your temperature.
- The health worker will ask if you:
 - Have travelled to a high risk country in the last 14 days
 - Have had contact with anyone with confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days
 - Have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty in breathing
- If you have travelled to a high risk country or have had contact with someone with COVID-19 you must self-quarantine.

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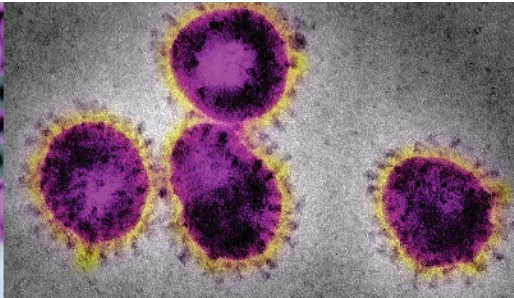
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- This means that you should stay at home for 14 days and monitor yourself for symptoms such as a dry cough, fever and difficulty breathing. Stay away from older people and people with a compromised immune system or underlying condition such as high blood pressure or diabetes.
- Community Health Care Workers will refer persons suspected of having COVID-19 to the nearest community health centre, clinic or hospital.
- Tests will only be conducted at health care facilities and mobile testing sites.
- Not everyone will be tested; health workers will use a formula by looking at how serious your symptoms are and what high risk factors you have.
- Testing includes collecting a biological sample such as a nasal swab or a blood sample from a patient, which is then tested by a laboratory for the virus or its antibodies.

The safety of frontline staff is a priority.

- We wish to reassure South Africans that field workers and frontline medical staff will be provided with adequate personal protective equipment.
- We have heard the concerns of our health care workers and wish to reassure them that their safety is paramount.
- We will do all we can to keep our health care professionals safe.

Together we can flatten the curve.

- South Africans have responded to government's call in great numbers. The majority have been playing their part to limit the spread of the virus.
- However, we must remain vigilant and cannot afford to let our guard down.
- Winter is coming and this could change the dynamics of the current situation.
- We know that lockdowns work from positive trends in other countries that have instituted similar restrictions.
- By observing the regulations, staying at home, observing good hygiene practices and working together, we have a real chance of containing the spread.
- We are, however, concerned about those who have not yet appreciated the seriousness of this disease.
- The disease is very real and it poses a great danger to every one of us and to our society.
- It infects the rich and the poor, the young and the old, black and white, those who live in the cities and those in the villages.
- Every time you violate the regulations, you are putting yourself and others at risk, and helping the virus to spread.

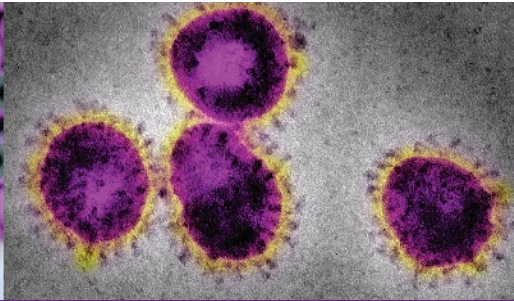
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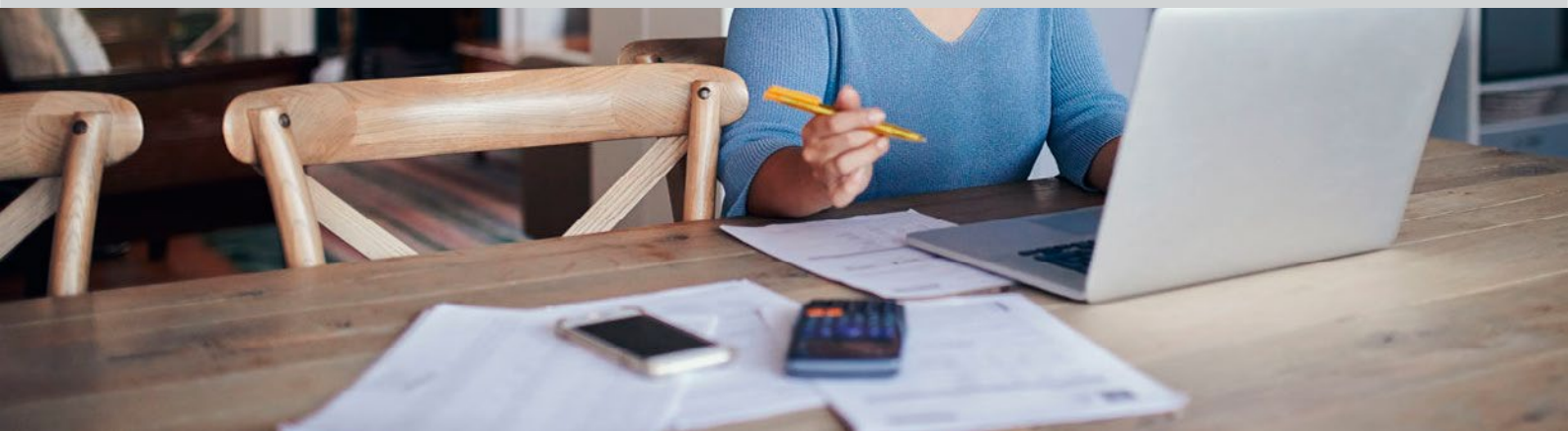


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Our work and mandate continues

OPINION | A survival guide to working from home during lockdown



As South Africans face the reality of a 21-day lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19, working from home has become the “new normal” overnight. If properly managed, it can be just as productive as being in the office.

South African companies now join millions of businesses across the globe forced to learn fast and on-the-job how to manage a completely remote workforce.

At the same time, scores of employees suddenly experiencing the “freedom” of working from home may also be experiencing anxiety sparked by a lack of supervision and direction, having little time to adjust to a new way of working, fears of job losses, along with challenges of managing technology, keeping productive, staying connected and juggling family and work responsibilities.

Work in the time of COVID-19 – remaining productive while staying home to “flatten the curve” to contain impact on a strained healthcare system – presents unprecedented challenges for workers, business and the economy as a whole.

The spread of COVID -19 has made the adoption of technology and remote and flexible working inevitable, with a likely lasting change in the way we work.

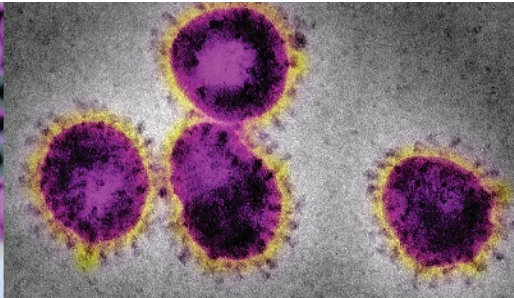
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Being cooped up with children, spouses and even extended family also poses additional challenges and requires us to become masters of adaptability and agility overnight.

Successful working from home is dependent on an individual's self-sufficiency (such as time-management skills, self-discipline and motivation), communication skills, adaptability and technological skills.

For those suddenly adapting to the new reality of working from home, it is easy to fall into the trap of poor discipline – ditch your daily routine, eat junk food, take “power naps” or tackle those DIY projects that there's never time for.

To stay on track while working from home, try these eight strategies:

Operate in a business-like manner. Set aside a separate, dedicated workspace, free from distractions, and customise it with the equipment and connectivity you need to be productive.

Limit and manage disruptions and interruptions. Set down clear boundaries for family and friends and establish a routine.

Keep to your daily routine. Get ready for work as you would on a normal day (don't work in your pajamas!) and don't be too comfortable and laid back – this will negatively impact your motivation and productivity. Make a to-do list at the beginning of the day, prioritise the tasks you need to accomplish, and plan your time accordingly.

Stay “in the loop”. When working from home, it is very easy to miss out on the casual exchange of “passage information” and to feel isolated. Keep up the corridor chat and tea-break conversations with colleagues in a virtual way – by phone, online chat or social media – and make the effort for daily check-ins with teams and co-workers using online work platforms or just a WhatsApp group. Technology makes it possible to stay connected as though we were sitting in our office, rather than at home.

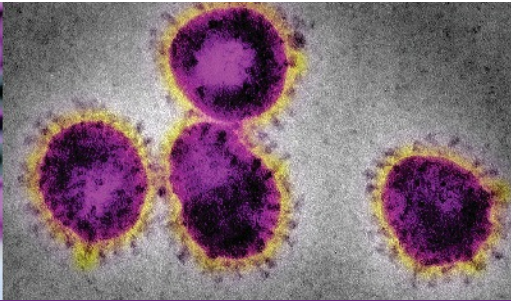
Stay professional and be connected. Use video-conferencing (set reminders to “show up” on time and remember to mute yourself when not talking), and make sure to be reachable and responsive during working hours.

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Maintain your physical and emotional health. Very diligent workers are at risk for burnout as the boundaries between work and home blur, and employees may also feel the need to “prove” that they are being trustworthy and productive. Set boundaries for when your workday starts and ends. Stay healthy. Eat well, exercise regularly, keep to your sleeping routine, limit non-work-related screen time and connect with your family and friends, even if via phone, online chat or social media.

For employers fearing lack of productivity in employees working out of sight and without conventional supervision, several studies had shown remote workers having greater productivity (separate studies from Stanford University found productivity levels increasing between 13 and 21%) due to less interruptions, such as colleagues popping in for a chat, and fewer inefficient meetings.

Employees are less stressed due to avoiding traffic and commuting time (which also saves time, money and environmental impact), having the ability to stay at home with children, especially with the current shutdown of schools, and better work-life balance due to more flexibility in how they allocate their time.

The greater independence of remote or flexible work helped employees to develop skills in self-management (self-motivation, self-discipline, focus, and concentration), communication, and the use of technology.

Less stress, healthier eating habits and more physical activity means healthier, happier employees who take fewer sick days and don't put others at risk when ill – especially important at this time. A final thought for employees working from home: always strive to be a better worker – be responsible and accountable. You are the master of your integrity.

And for the employers? Develop measurable goals and metrics for work to be performed during this time and make a determined effort to improve communication and technological capabilities. That will make remote working a win-win experience for all – not only in the time of a global pandemic.

Professor Renata Schoeman is head of the MBA in Healthcare Leadership at the University of Stellenbosch Business School. Views expressed are her own.

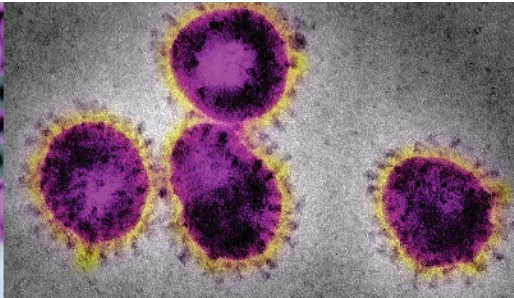
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EMERGENCY NUMBERS
to keep during
21 DAY LOCKDOWN
#SOUTHAFRICALOCKDOWN

COVID-19 testing
KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR SYMPTOMS.
IF YOU HAVE A SEVERE FEVER, COUGH OR CANNOT BREATHE
CALL THE COVID-19 HOTLINE
0800 029 999

AMBULANCE 10177	FIRE BRIGADE 998 or 999	POLICE 10111
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STAY SAFE. STAY HEALTHY. STAY INDOORS.
SASSA CALL CENTRE
0800 60 1011

RAPE CRISIS CAPE TOWN TRUST 021 447 9762	STOP GENDER VIOLENCE HOTLINE 0861 322 322
POLICE CHILD PROTECTION UNITS 08600 10111	CHILDLINE 0800 055 555
SA DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY GROUP SUICIDE LINE 0800 567 567 SMS 31393	MARIE STOPES CLINIC 0800 117 785 info@mariestopes.org.za

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
0861 435 722

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