

ECONOMICS & TRADE

COVID-19 Lockdown: Implications for transport in Agriculture

[Draft subject to change]

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We develop the South African Agricultural Industry.
Ons ontwikkel die Suid-Afrikaanse Landbou Industrie.

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Selected definitions relevant to agriculture

Which goods are essential¹:

1. Food

- (i) Any food product, including non-alcoholic beverages;*
- (ii) Animal food; and*
- (iii) Chemicals, packaging and ancillary products used in the production of any food product.*

Which services are essential¹:

24. *Production, manufacturing, supply, logistics, transport, delivery, critical maintenance and repair in relation to the rendering of essential services including components and equipment;*

25. *Transport services for persons rendering essential services and goods, and transportation of patients;*

Additions²

(e) 31. *Harvesting and storage activities essential to prevent wastage of primary agricultural goods*

Sources:

(1) South African Government, (2020). Frequently Asked Questions - Coronavirus Covid-19. Available online: <https://www.gov.za/coronavirus/faq>

(2) Government Gazette, (March 2020) . No. 43168 – Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Available online: http://www.gpwonline.co.za/Gazettes/Gazettes/43168_26-3_COGTA.pdf

Transport overview: Aspects relevant to agriculture

Cross-Border Road Transport

- “Cross-border freight movement for essential goods will continue to and from our neighbouring countries.”

Maritime

- “Essential cargo will be allowed at our 8 Sea Ports. However, cargo from high-risk countries must be sanitized.”

Aviation

- “Only essential air cargo will be allowed. However, cargo from high risk country must be sanitized.”

Services by Department of Transport entities:

- “Vehicle Testing Centres and Drivers’ Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs) will be closed.
- Should your drivers’ licence expire during the duration of the lockdown it shall be deemed to remain valid until the end of the lockdown, with the grace period of renewal within 14 working days thereafter unless otherwise determined.”

Transport overview: Aspects relevant to agriculture

Transport of abnormal vehicles: Combine Harvesters etc.

- *Note the following is not expressly stated in the regulations, the below is based on discussions of the special task team appointed by the minister and director-general of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to address industry issues associated with COVID-19.*
- *Where Government's services are closed e.g. permits for abnormal vehicles, the Minister suggests we use permits as per Regulations.*
- Agri SA will follow up with the task team and relevant department if the suggested approach does not work in practice.



Transport of staff (Bakkies & Trucks) pre-lockdown

Regulation 247 of the Regulations (amended)³

“(1) No person shall operate on a public road a goods vehicle conveying persons unless that portion of the vehicle in which such persons are being conveyed is enclosed to a height of-

- a) at least 350 millimetres above the surface upon which such person is seated; or*
- b) at least 900 millimetres above the surface on which such person is standing,*

- in a manner and with a material of sufficient strength to prevent such person from falling from such vehicle when it is in motion.

*2) No person shall convey more than 5 persons in the **goods compartment** of a goods vehicle, the gross vehicle mass of which is less than 3 500 kilograms.*

*(3) The provisions of this regulation shall **only apply in respect of a person conveying persons as their employer during the scope of employment of such persons.***

Provided that no person shall be conveyed in the goods compartment together with any tools or goods, except their personal effects, unless that portion in which such persons are being conveyed is separated by means of a partition, from the portion in which such goods are being conveyed."

Source:

(3) Government Gazette, (May 2015) . No. 38772 – Department of Transport. Available online:

http://www.gpwonline.co.za/Gazettes/Gazettes/38772_11-5_Transport.pdf

Transport of staff (Bakkies & Trucks) during lockdown

Relevant regulation⁴

3. Regulation 11C of the Regulations is hereby amended by the substitution for subregulation of the following subregulation:

"(1) All commuter transport services including passenger rail services, bus services, taxi services, e-hailing services, maritime and air passenger transport are prohibited, except bus services, taxi services, e-hailing services and private motor vehicles for purposes of rendering essential services, obtaining essential goods, seeking medical attention, funeral services and to receive payment of grants: Provided that—

- (a) bus services, taxi services and e-hailing services shall not carry more than 50% of the licensed capacity; and
- (b) private vehicles shall not carry more than 60% of the licensed capacity, and that all directions in respect of hygienic conditions and the limitation of exposure of persons to COVID-19, are adhered to."

- Note that point (b) is applicable to agriculture, using private vehicles (bakkies or trucks) to transport staff: (NOT transporting for reward).
- Based on the reference to 60% of licenced capacity, for bakkies and trucks this would imply reference to the cab: a single cab would then likely allow for 1 person (the driver).
- The above does NOT CURRENTLY make direct reference to the “*goods compartment*” mentioned in Regulation 247 outlined on the previous page.

Source:

(4) Government Gazette, (March 2020) . No. 43168 – Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs.
Available online: http://www.gpwonline.co.za/Gazettes/Gazettes/43168_26-3_COGTA.pdf

Transport of staff (Bakkies & Trucks) proposal for lockdown period

Accordingly, this is still an area of uncertainty. Agri SA has requested the Government to consider an allowance as follows:

- ❖ *That farmers be allowed to transport farm workers on bakkies as follows: workers keeping at least a one-meter distance apart, 4 people, each seated in one of the four corners of the bakkie's goods compartment – whilst adhering to the current transport sanitary requirements.*
- ❖ *That farmers be allowed to transport farm workers on trucks as follows: workers keeping at least a one-meter distance apart, number of people dependent on the size of the trucks goods compartment allowing for the minimum one meter apart distance, each person seated – whilst adhering to the current transport sanitary requirements.*

Note: the above outlines Agri SA's request to government.

- It may be seen as a possible solution or alternative to using a bus service; however, it is **NOT YET** contained in the current regulations.
- Agri SA will communicate as soon as the Government has confirmed any allowance that could bring the suggestions into practice/effect.
- Along with the above, when transporting staff, all necessary precautions for good hygiene and disinfection control should be taken, i.e. on regular intervals provide adequate sanitizers or other hygiene dispenser for washing of hands and disinfection equipment for workers.

Disclaimer

Everything has been done to ensure the accuracy of this information, however, AGRI SA takes no responsibility for any loss or damage incurred due to the usage of this information.