

Door-to-door testing: What you need to know

Around 10,000 field workers will be going door-to-door in villages, towns and cities to screen residents for Covid-19 symptoms.



Judge Kate O'Regan has been appointed to protect citizen's privacy during Covid-19 screening

To keep the community safe from imposters and criminal elements, all field workers must meet the following criteria:

- have ID badges;
- wear the same T-shirts;
- be in possession of their ID document;
- be accompanied by a member of the SAPS; and
- Tests may also be conducted outside your home.

People with symptoms will be referred to local clinics or mobile clinics for testing. Those who are infected with coronavirus, but who have no or moderate symptoms, will remain in isolation at home or at a facility provided by government and those with severe symptoms will be transferred to hospitals.

National database

The National Department of Health will now also develop and maintain a national database to trace people known or reasonably suspected to have come into contact with any person known or suspected to have contracted Covid-19.

All information obtained by the department will remain confidential and may only be disclosed for the purposes of addressing, preventing and or combatting the spread of Covid-19.

Everyone tested must provide their name and surname, identity or passport number, residential address, cellular phone number as well as a copy of their identity document, passport or drivers licence to the person administering the test. This information must be submitted to the director general (DG) of health for inclusion in the Covid-19 Tracing Database.

Similarly, laboratories performing testing and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) must forward all information, including the results of tests conducted, to the director general of health.

The Regulations also specify that accommodation establishments must transmit to the DG for inclusion in the Covid-19 Tracing Database, the following information regarding every person staying at the accommodation establishment during the period of lockdown:

1. the first name and surname, identity or passport number, residential address and cellular phone numbers of the person concerned; and
2. a copy or photograph of the passport, driver's licence, identity card or identity book of the person concerned.

In order to assist with the tracing and or monitoring of infected persons and the further prevention of Covid-19, the DG may direct cellphone companies to provide her with the following information:

1. the location or movements of any person known or suspected to have contracted Covid-19;
2. the location or movements of any person known or suspected to have come into contact with an infected person.

The Regulations are clear that the contents of any electronic communication may, however, NOT be intercepted.

To safeguard the right to privacy of all South Africans while still ensuring the ability of the Department of Health to engage in urgent and effective contact tracing, former Constitutional Court judge Kate O'Regan has been appointed in order to play an oversight role and to make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the database.

Anyone whose information was obtained, will be notified within six weeks after the national state of disaster has been terminated. The information on the database will accordingly be de-identified and will only be used for research, study or teaching purposes.

Should you require any further clarity on the home screening programme you can contact the following number: 0800 029 999.

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