

MBA North launches new services to help construction get back to work

Reopening construction sites after the lockdown is set to be a challenging process, says Gerhard Roets, construction health and safety manager at Master Builders Association North (MBA North). In order to help the region's sector prepare for a return to work, the organisation has launched various Covid-19 health and safety consulting and training services.



© Alexey Klementiev – [za.fotolia.com](https://www.fotolia.com)

“Over and above your Covid-19 Workplace Readiness Plan, the construction industry will be required to update their current health and safety files and re-induct employees on site. Preparing to return to work in a safe and compliant manner could take some time, therefore any company hoping to resume work next month should be preparing to do so now,” he says.

Challenge of compliance

“Many members are asking how they should prepare. All construction may resume in Level 3 – this includes both commercial and residential construction. But before resuming work, they must prepare a Workplace Readiness Plan and apply for a certificate or permit with the Companies & Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC).”

The workplace readiness plan should include:

- Thorough risk assessments and site-specific protocols in place.
- Detailed plans for the phased-in return of workers to the workplace, and staff rotational arrangements.
- Health protocols to protect employees from Covid-19, including screening and testing facilities and systems.
- The appointment of a compliance officer to oversee implementation of the plan.
- Policies on site visitors.
- Reporting and escalation measures.

Compliance with Covid-19 health and safety directives are expected to prove costly for the sector, and will likely slow down work, says Roets. “There are many different areas of work involved, in many cases people need to be working side by side, which complicates compliance with physical distancing guidelines. Preparing the Workplace Readiness Plan may

take some time before they are able to begin physical work, and daily screening and health and safety checks will add hours to each working day.”

The association says compliance may be particularly difficult for SMMEs. Having generated no revenue in the past two months, they will now have to fund additional Covid-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) and incur other expenses.

Cost of non-compliance

However, the cost of non-compliance could be devastating. A single worker infected with Covid-19 may spread the virus resulting in site closure; and infractions could result in penalties and fines.

To help the sector prepare to reopen sites safely and in line with new regulations and guidelines, the MBA North is offering consulting and training services to both members and non-members in preparing a Covid-19 health and safety plan, conduct risk assessments, and can send its mobile training unit (ToM) to sites to raise workers' awareness of the new safety protocols in place.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>