

Minister checks on Covid-19 compliance at mines

Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe has visited three mines to monitor compliance with the country's 21-day national lockdown.



Glencore's Impunzi Colliery

The minister used the visits to the Glencore's Impunzi Colliery, Exxaro's Matla Coal and Seriti's Kriel Colliery, which all supply coal to Eskom, in Mpumalanga to assess the implementation of the directive and guiding principles issued by the department to all mines on how to manage risks associated with Covid-19 at an operational level. This is in line with provisions in the Mine Health and Safety Act.

"The primary objective of our interventions is to ensure that as many people as possible are protected from Covid-19, and that the sector is able to bounce back from this challenge when the lockdown is lifted," said Mantashe.

All mines are required to, among others, conduct a risk-based assessment covering all workings at mines, reduce numbers of employees transported on common transport per shift, and where applicable, reduce the number of shifts per day.

"The mines are not at the same level in terms of their state of readiness to deal with the pandemic. We are encouraging all mines to work together - employers and labour unions - to share best practice and ensure their systems are complementary, in order to proactively manage risks beyond each mine," said the minister.

The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy said there are three confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the mining and energy sectors - one each in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape.

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