

Adjusted Alert Level 1 restrictions eased

President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced the easing of several restrictions as part of Adjusted Alert Level 1 from Wednesday, 23 March 2022.



Image source: Thirdman from [Pexels](#)

Addressing the nation on developments in the country's response to the Covid-19 pandemic Tuesday evening, President Ramaphosa said the approach going forward is that both indoor and outdoor venues can now take up to 50% of their capacity provided that the criteria for entrance are proof of vaccination or a Covid test not older than 72 hours.

The President said following consultations and the recommendations of the National Coronavirus Command Council, Cabinet has decided to ease restrictions on gatherings and previous regulations.

He said the emphasis was on placing an upper limit on the number of people who could attend a gathering.

"But where there is no provision for proof of vaccination or a Covid test, then the current upper limit will remain – of 1,000 people indoors and 2,000 people outdoors," the President said.

This change, he said, to the restrictions on gatherings will be of great benefit to the sporting, cultural, entertainment and events industries, in particular.

“This means that if we are vaccinated or have recently tested negative, we will be able to return to watching sports in stadiums and attending music concerts, theatre performances, conferences and other events,” the President said.

Funerals and after tears

The maximum number of people permitted at a funeral will increase from 100 to 200.

As before, night vigils, after-funeral gatherings and ‘after-tears’ gatherings are not allowed.



New code on vaccination in the workplace

Tania Broughton 22 Mar 2022



Wearing of masks

The President also announced important changes to the regulation on the wearing of masks.

“As before, it is mandatory to wear a cloth mask or similar covering over the nose and mouth when in public indoor spaces.

“However, a mask is not required when outdoors.

“This means that we still need to wear masks when in shops, malls, offices, factories, taxis, buses, trains or any other indoor public space.

“But we do not need to wear masks when walking on the street or in an open space, when exercising outdoors or when attending an outdoor gathering,” President Ramaphosa said.

Social distancing

The President said that the regulations on social distancing are also being changed, requiring that a space of 1 metre is maintained between persons in all settings, except schools.

International travel

The President also announced changes to the regulations on international travel.

“Travellers entering South Africa will need to show proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test not older than 72 hours.

“All unvaccinated travellers entering the country who want to be vaccinated will be offered a vaccination,” the President said.

The President said these measures will take effect from Wednesday, 23 March 2022, once the new regulations are gazetted.

With these changes, almost all restrictions on social and economic activity will have been lifted.

Vaccinations

Going forward, the President said the most important defences against the disease are, firstly, vaccination and, secondly, the observance of basic measures, such as wearing masks indoors.

“The further easing of the remaining restrictions will require that we increase the rate of vaccination among South Africans.

“The vaccine has been shown to significantly reduce severe illness.

“Statistics from our health facilities, clearly show that people who are not vaccinated stand a higher chance of being hospitalised or dying from Covid-19,” the President said.

He said vaccination is likely to reduce transmission at home and at places like schools and universities where there is close contact.

“It is vitally important that we get many more of our people between 18 and 35 years vaccinated, and that is why government has launched the #KeReady campaign last month.

This campaign includes messages developed by young people and focuses on making the case for people between 18 and 35 years to vaccinate.”

The President further encouraged those who are vaccinated to go and receive their booster doses.

“If we are all vaccinated, we can turn our energy, resources and effort to rebuilding our economy and creating much-needed jobs.”



Covid-19 Health Regulations published for public comment

17 Mar 2022



Have your say on National State of Disaster

“Due to the changing nature of the pandemic, and due to the progress that has been made through our collective efforts, we intend to lift the National State of Disaster as soon as public comment on the health regulations published by the Minister of health has been completed.”

These regulations, when finalised, will replace the State of Disaster regulations as the legal instrument that government uses to manage the pandemic.

All South Africans are invited to make comments on the draft regulations before the 16th of April.

The President however emphasised that what should be clear is that the end of the National State of Disaster does not mean the end of the pandemic.

“It just means that we are changing the way we manage the pandemic, and we will be relying on health regulations rather than disaster management regulations.

“It means that we are learning to live with the virus in our presence.

“It means that we are returning, as far as possible, to the lives that we lived before the pandemic.

“It means that we are opening our economy still further, and that we are resuming many of the social and cultural activities

that we have missed over the last two years.”

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