

Tourism regulations do allow intra-provincial travel

There has been some confusion on the interpretation of the gazetted tourism regulations that were issued on Friday by the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and a press briefing subsequently held by the National Department of Tourism.



www.123rf.com

While the regulations themselves do not allow for inter-provincial domestic leisure travel, as indicated by Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, the gazetted regulations allow travel for leisure (for anything that is allowed under level 3), such as golf, hiking, going to a casino or a restaurant, visiting game reserves. The regulations also allow “formally accredited and licensed accommodation” to operate. Nowhere in the gazetted regulations does it state that domestic leisure overnight stays will not be allowed.

In his presidential address on 17 June, President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed that there would be an easing of restrictions on certain economic activities including “accredited and licensed accommodation” with the exception of home sharing accommodation like AirBnB. The Presidency confirmed at the time that “commercially licensed accommodation” would be ‘allowed’ at Level 3 with “strict health protocols in place”.

In his preamble he said “this pandemic has also been a global economic crisis of ever-increasing proportion”. The president added that some businesses have had no revenue and people have had no income for 80 days and that even with government’s various support packages, there is a limit to how long these businesses can remain closed. The opening of accommodation is in support of this statement to save jobs and livelihoods through enabling more businesses to trade.

Regulations

Tourism regulations issued on Friday do outline specific economic exclusions, including short-term home-sharing, letting, leasing, rental for leisure purposes, and for now, domestic passenger air travel for leisure purposes. There are no exclusions outlined for intra-provincial domestic leisure overnight stays in “accredited and licensed accommodation”.

Further, nowhere in the regulations is there a requirement for restaurants to restrict the number of persons allowed to no more than 50% of capacity or 50 guests, contrary to reports that have been circulating.

The regulations state: "All gatherings are prohibited except a gathering at ... restaurants, subject to strict adherence to all health protocols and social distancing measures as provided for in directions that must be issued by the responsible cabinet member, after consultation with the Cabinet member responsible for health".

The tourism sector has worked tirelessly to ensure that stringent health and safety protocols have been put in place to welcome and keep safe, not only business travellers, but also leisure travellers.

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