

The logo for EOHCB features a stylized graphic of three curved lines in shades of pink, purple, and blue on the left side. The letters 'E|O|H|C|B' are displayed in a bold, sans-serif font, with vertical bars separating each letter.

E|O|H|C|B

Employer's Organisation for
Hairdressing • Cosmetology • Beauty

ADDING VALUE TO
YOUR BUSINESS

THE JOURNAL

COVID-19 Direction on Health & Safety
in the Workplace

Dear EOHCB Member,

The Regulations issued in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Regulations) and the COVID-19 Direction on Health and Safety in the Workplace issued by the Department of Employment and Labour (Directive) set out specific measures that employers are required to take to protect their employees in the workplace from COVID-19.

The Hairdressing, Cosmetology, Skincare, and Beauty Industry has sector-specific guidelines which every employer that is permitted to operate will need to adhere to and apply to their business in addition to the measures set out in the Directive and the Regulations. As soon as the Industry specific regulations have been published by Government, the EOHCB will share the sector-specific guidelines with members.

Employers with less than 10 employees are not required to comply with all the measures in the Directive and only need to comply with a list of measures applicable to them set out in the Regulations and clause 46 of the Directive.

1. A Work Plan & Risk assessment

Prior to commencing operations, employers must undertake a risk assessment to give effect to the health and safety directives issued by the government and the specific conditions of their workplace. This includes identifying all areas within the workplace that are a transmission risk for Covid-19. The Regulations provide that all businesses that are permitted to operate must develop a plan for the phased return of employees to the workplace prior to re-opening the workplace, which plan must be available for inspection. The plan must set out which employees are permitted to return to work, what the plans are for a phased return of employees to the workplace, what the health protocols are, and the details of the COVID-19 compliance officer.

The workplace plan must contain the following:

- The date of re-opening of the business and trading hours.

- A timetable reflecting the phased return to work of employees, to enable appropriate measures to be taken to avoid and reduce the spread of the virus in the workplace.
- The steps and measures taken by the employer to get the workplace COVID-19 ready.
- A list of employees who can work from home, including employees who are 60 years or older and/or those with comorbidities who will be required to stay at home or work from home or whose choose to continue with his/her duties and does so completely at his or her own risk and indemnifies the employer of any liability for occupational health and safety claim as such an employee is at high risk of contracting COVID-19.
- The arrangements for employees in the workplace such as:
 - Sanitary and social distancing measures and facilities at the entrance and exit to the workplace.
 - Screening facilities and systems.
 - Attendance record system and infrastructure.
 - The work area of employees.
 - Any designated area where the public is served.
 - Kitchen/canteen, staff leisure/dining area, and bathroom facilities.
 - Testing facilities (for workplaces with more than 500 employees).
 - Staff rotational arrangements (where less than 100% of employees are permitted work).
 - Arrangements for customers or members of the public, including sanitation and social distancing measures.

If an employer employs more than 500 employees that employer must submit a record of its risk assessment together with a written policy regarding the protection of employees from COVID-19 to its health and safety committee and the Department of Employment and Labour (Department).

2. A Screening processes

All employers must develop a mandatory screening process for employees upon entry to the workplace to assess whether the employee exhibits any symptoms of Covid-19 prior to the employee being allowed access to the workplace. Every employer must take measures to screen employees

when they report for duty to determine whether they have any observable COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, shortness of breath, cough, sore throat and redness of eyes. Furthermore, the employer must require every employee to report if they suffer such symptoms or any additional symptoms such as body aches, loss of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness. The employer must also comply with the guidelines issued by the Department of Health regarding symptom screening.

If an employee presents symptoms or advises the employer of such symptoms the employer must not permit entry into the workplace and must ensure that the employee is tested or referred to a testing site. If the employee is already at work then the employer must isolate the employee and provide the employee with a FFP1 surgical mask. The employer must then arrange transport for the employee to a location where the employee is able to self-isolate or transport to seek medical examination or testing. The employer must then disinfect the work area and refer those employees who may have been exposed for screening.

Where an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the employer may not allow the employee to return to work until the employee has undergone a medical evaluation confirming that they have tested negative for COVID-19. An employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 the employer must inform the Department of Health and the Department of Employment and Labour and investigate the cause and review its risk assessment to ensure that the necessary controls and PPE are in place. The employer must also give administrative support to any contact-tracing measures implemented by the Department of Health.

3. Emergency protocols

Employers must develop emergency protocols to contain an outbreak of Covid-19 in the workplace as well as a protocol to evacuate employees who screen positive for Covid-19.

4. Employee health and safety training

The health and safety directive issued by the government makes it mandatory for all employers to train their employees on the contents of the directive and the manner in which employers intend to implement the directive in their respective workplaces.

5. Personal Protective Equipment

Employers must make provision for employees to be provided with the relevant PPE for their role at no cost to the employee and ensure that there is sufficient supply thereof. The Regulations provide that an employer must provide employees who may come into contact with the public as part of their duties with a cloth face mask. Every employer must provide each of its employees, free of charge, with a minimum of two cloth masks to wear while at work and while travelling to work, including those employees who may come into contact with the public as part of their duties. Employers are required to regularly check the websites of the National Department of Health, National Institute of Communicable Diseases and the National Institute for Occupational Health to see if additional PPE is required or recommended given the nature of the workplace and the employees' duties.

6. Social distancing

Employers must ensure, where possible, that the workplace is re-organised in order to comply with social distancing rules. Employees must be advised as to social distancing rules and measures must be put in place to enforce social distancing. The Directive provides that an employer must, as far as is reasonably practicable, minimise the number of employees at the workplace at any given time through rotation, staggered working hours, shift systems, remote working arrangements or similar measures. The employer must also take measures to limit contact between employees as well as between employees and the public and must as far as is reasonably practicable ensure that there is a minimum of 1.5 m between employees when working. If this is not possible then physical barriers must be arranged or appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be provided to employees free of charge. Employers need to adhere to the Directive pertaining to social distancing in conjunction with the Industry specific sectoral-guidelines.

7. Hygiene and Safety

Employers must maintain certain hygiene standards which include disinfecting their workplace prior to the commencement of operations. Employers must provide hand sanitiser for use by the public and employees at the entrance to the premises. This is confirmed by the Directive which provides that every employer must ensure that there are sufficient hand sanitisers available free of charge at the workplace, including at the entrance to the business.

Every employee who works away from the workplace, other than from home, must be provided with hand sanitiser free of charge. The employer must also take steps to ensure that all work surfaces and equipment are disinfected before work begins, regularly during the working period and after work ends. There must also be adequate facilities and soap for washing of hands and paper towels must be provided as the use of fabric toweling has been prohibited. All biometric systems must be disabled unless they are COVID-19 proof.

The Directive provides that every employer must keep the workplace well ventilated preferably by natural air or otherwise by air conditioner, with no inward air feed-back or shared circulation into other areas and ensure that filters are cleaned and replaced regularly. The measures set out in the Directive and the Regulations are consistent with employers' obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to provide and maintain as far as reasonably practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of workers and with national strategies and policies that have been put in place to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and to facilitate a phased and cautious return to work.

8. Waste management

A workplace plan must include a waste management system for the disposal of all COVID-19 related waste in a manner that does not present a transmission risk.

9. Communication and Permits

The logo for EOHCB features a stylized graphic of three curved lines in shades of pink and purple on the left side. The letters E, O, H, C, and B are arranged horizontally in a bold, sans-serif font, with vertical bars separating each letter.

E | O | H | C | B

Employer's Organisation for
Hairdressing • Cosmetology • Beauty

**ADDING VALUE TO
YOUR BUSINESS**

THE JOURNAL

COVID-19 Direction on Health & Safety
in the Workplace

Employers must ensure that they have a communication plan in place to inform employees of any updates regarding protocols in the workplace as well as any other information as required by government. The Directive provides that in order to ensure employee awareness, all employers must:

- Create awareness of the virus and inform employees of the manner of transmission and measures to prevent transmission.
- Notify their employees of the contents of the Directive and the manner in which the employer intends to implement the Directive and industry specific sectoral-guidelines.
- Notify employees that if they are sick or have COVID-19 symptoms they must stay home and take paid sick leave as per the rules of the Industry Sick Pay Fund and if the sick leave entitlement is exhausted, apply for an illness benefit through the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

Every employee who is permitted to return to work to perform an essential or permitted service must be issued with a permit by the head of the institution which is in the form of Form 2 in the Regulations. An employee must be in possession of the permit in order to perform an essential or permitted service and when travelling to and from work. The holder of the permit must present their identification document together with the permit when requested to do so.

10. Appoint a compliance manager

All employers must appoint a compliance manager at each of their workplaces who will be responsible for supervising and enforcing the compliance with the workplace plan, and all directives and regulations issued by government and to address employee or workplace representative concerns.