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Government

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COVID-19: Addressing the risk

A BESPOKE APPROACH FOR THE PERSONAL
CARE INDUSTRY

A bespoke approach for the Personal Care industry

INTRODUCTION



To ensure the future sustainability and profitability of businesses in the Personal Care industry, it is important that

business owners implement effective COVID-19 risk management measures - to ensure that they can successfully manage the impact on their businesses.

- Due to the relatively low requirements and costs of setting up a business, the Personal Care industry is an attractive business sector for South African entrepreneurs to enter.
- Start-up companies or small businesses can often operate from small, rented workspaces, or even out of rooms in their homes.
- The initial restrictive lockdown regulations led to enforced closure of these businesses for a period, and the sector suffered significant economic setbacks.

The nature of the Personal Care industry presents business owners and employees with specific risks:

- Those operating in small spaces often face the challenge of poor ventilation

- thereby increasing the risk of COVID-19 virus transmission.

- Due to the nature of services rendered, effective social distancing between owner/ employee and customer is often not possible.
- Clients and customers are often in close contact for long time periods (> 15 mins).
- While receiving personal services, the customer may be required to frequently remove his/her mask.
- Clients may view personal care visits as opportunities to socialise with friends or other clients - again potentially increasing the risk of viral transmission.

Measures to successfully mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission in this sector must address issues related to the following aspects of the businesses:

- Managing the workspaces
- Managing the operations
- Managing employees
- Managing clients

MANAGING AND SETTING UP WORKSPACES

The following needs to be addressed:

- Ventilation must be maximised in workspaces. Doors and windows need to remain open, and the use of oscillating fans can assist with increasing the rate of circulation of fresh air.
- Only the minimum number of people, including both employees and clients, should be allowed in the workspaces. As a rule of thumb, 6 sq. meter of floorspace should be allowed for each individual worker and customer, and this should be used to determine the maximum number of people who may be allowed in the space at any time. Thus, for example, in a workspace with 20 sq. meter floor space, a maximum

of 3 people could be allowed at a time, including employees and clients.

- Waiting spaces for prospective clients should be designed with 1,5 meters spacing between chairs, and, if the maximum number of people are already inside the workspace, then they would need to be relocated outside the workspace and regular sanitising of this area must also take place.
- A booking system is an effective way to manage the number of clients on the premises.
- Hand sanitizers or hand washing facilities should be freely available and accessible.
- Workspaces and equipment should be sanitized between customer contact.

MANAGING THE OPERATIONS

Social distancing between employee and client may be difficult to maintain- clients may need to remove their masks to allow for hair styling, haircuts, and make-up application.

The following measures should be adhered to:

- Workstations should be setup in demarcated areas to allow for social distancing between clients.
- Employees should always wear masks

correctly, and masks should not be removed under any circumstances.

- Clients should always wear masks correctly, where possible (e.g., nail care or foot care).
- When masks need to be removed, the employee should endeavour to work on clients, as far as practicably possible, from the side - rather than face-to-face.
- When employees are not actively working on clients (e.g., while hair is drying), they should move > 1,5 meters away from the clients.



MANAGING EMPLOYEES

Employees should adhere to the following measures:

- They should not attend work if they experience symptoms that may be due to COVID-19 infection, and only return once they have completed their quarantine or isolation periods, or have been cleared for return to work by healthcare professionals.
- All employees should be screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms – prior to access into the workspace. If they screen positive for any symptoms, they should not access the workspace, but be referred to go for a medical assessment, and not allowed back at work until medically cleared.
- Employees should always adhere to the correct wearing of masks.
- Employees should be acutely aware of the need to sanitize and should sanitize their hands between clients. Work areas and equipment must also be sanitized between clients.
- If employees fail to adhere to these protective measures, they should be corrected and, if necessary, retrained.
- Continual failure to adhere to safety protocols should be managed through the disciplinary process.

MANAGING CLIENTS

Clients should always adhere to the following measures:

- Only clients with booked appointments should be accepted, and clients should not arrive in the waiting area more than 5 minutes before their appointed time.

All clients should be screened prior to entering the premises and should not be allowed to enter if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or are awaiting or are awaiting COVID-19 test results.

- Clients should hand sanitize prior to entering the premises, and after every interaction with an employee.

- Clients should always wear their masks correctly and should only remove them for reasons of service provision, and on instruction from an employee.
- Masks should be worn correctly again as soon as the intervention requiring removal of the mask is completed.
- Clients should not socialise with other clients or employees while on the premises and should depart from the work area as soon as the services have been completed.