



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Guideline on the submission of COVID-19 related health data from workplaces to the National Department of Health**

**(Guideline document prepared by the OHS workstream on Surveillance of Workers – Covid-19 response. Version 4: 27 November 2020)**

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### WHAT IS NEW IN THIS GUIDELINE

- Clarification in the Introduction of the Guideline alignment with the Disaster Management Regulations, as amended.
- Correction of the definition of a high-risk contact.
- Differentiates between compulsory and voluntary sets of data to be submitted.

## PREAMBLE

Various interventions, aimed at a national and local level, at workplaces and work activities can contribute significantly to the reduction of transmission of Covid-19 infections. These interventions can be appropriately directed and further refined by routine data submitted by workplaces about the unfolding pandemic. Data from workplaces can therefore play an important role in assisting with the prevention of an escalation of the national state of disaster and containment of Covid-19 infections in the country.

In terms of Regulation 4(10) of the Regulations made by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in terms of section 27 (2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) on 29 April 2020 and amended on 28 May 2020 and 17 September 2020 requires employers to follow the directives from the Department of Health and the Department of Employment and Labour. Furthermore, the Department of Employment and Labour's Direction, as amended on 28 September 2020, further requires employers to submit relevant information of all workers who test positive to the National Institute for Occupational Health. In addition, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy: Mine Health and Safety Act (29/1996) Guidelines for a Mandatory Code of Practice on the Mitigation and Management of Covid-19 Outbreak of 18 May 2020 requires employers to maintain, and provide as requested, monitoring and investigation data to the Department of Health.

The objectives of this Guideline of the National Department of Health is to effectively collect, collate and analyse workplace data on clinical (symptom) screening, vulnerable status of employees, Covid-19 infections and contacts to identify hotspots at an early stage so as to prevent further escalation of the pandemic. This guideline has been developed to provide clarity to the relevant stakeholders about the data and data reporting process as required by the above legislation, and to streamline the reporting tasks of employers.

## PURPOSE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

- Develop a framework for a COVID-19 surveillance model for monitoring workers in various economic sectors, both in the public and private sectors.
- Provide in depth understanding and strategic insight of the COVID-19 infection spectrum in the South African workforce through dynamic data analytics and visualization into all phases (i.e. symptom screening, testing, vulnerable employees, contact tracing within the workplace, return to work and health outcomes) of the epidemic.
- Early identification of sectors/companies and occupational groups at high risk of infection so as to inform appropriate interventions (e.g. policy, programs, resources).
- Evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 interventions in the workplace.
- Determine the human resource and economic impact of COVID-19 on the various sectors.
- To provide regular updates on the trajectory of the pandemic in various economic sectors nationally.
- Identification of key scientific questions requiring further investigation.

## SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Guideline details the requirements of existing legislation stated above, and applies to workplaces as stipulated in these.

1. All workplaces are required to submit information on those employees who test positive as per the guidelines detailed below;
2. All employers in the sectors with the threshold number of employees referred to in the Regulations, are to submit the various categories of data detailed below.
3. All departments at local, provincial and national levels of government are to submit the various categories of data detailed below

Those employers submitting data via the Occupational Health Surveillance System will no longer be required to submit the same data to the National Institute of Communicable Diseases and Director General: Health as has been the practice to date.

## CATEGORIES OF DATA

Under this Guideline, the following categories of data are to be collected by employers and submitted to the Department as per the procedures described.

- 1. Vulnerable Worker Data:** All employers are legally required to identify those employees who are considered to be vulnerable for the more severe outcomes of the COVID-19 infection. Since this is a key component of the screening of workers, this data must be submitted by employers. The vulnerability status of each worker that is submitted is not dependent on the availability of detailed medical information being available to the employer. ***This once off submission is submitted when collected by the workplace, and any subsequent occasion when new appointments are made or an employee's status requires updating.*** The data required are listed in Table 1 in the Appendix Templates.
- 2. Daily Symptom Screening Data:** All employers are legally required to screen all employees entering their work premises on a daily basis. This screening must be based on the prescribed set of symptoms as has been defined by the National Institute of Communicable Diseases to determine those persons likely to be presenting with a COVID-19 infection, and therefore should be referred for further assessment. This daily collected data must be submitted by employers, for those employees that are symptomatic. ***The data must be submitted on a weekly basis should there be symptomatic workers recorded during the calendar week. The submissions should occur before Tuesday for the previous calendar week commencing on Sunday.*** The data required are listed in Table 2 in the Appendix Templates.
- 3. COVID-19 Testing Data:** Based on their daily symptom screening, or on their employees' presentation to their health provider, employees are referred to health providers / health laboratories for testing for the presence of the COVID-19 virus. In terms of managing the

pandemic in the workplace, the employer is expected to be notified of the results of the tests. The results of the laboratory tests of all employees who test positive must be submitted by employers, upon receiving the results of such tests. In addition, employers need to submit details in Template 2 for such individuals. ***This submission occurs only when an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and should be submitted on a weekly basis should there be positive workers identified during the calendar week.*** The data required are listed in Table 3 in the Appendix Templates.

4. **High exposure risk Workplace Contact - tracing:** When an employee tests positive within the workplace, all those in contact must, as per the Department of Employment and Labour Direction, be assessed for a high risk or low risk of exposure. A high risk of exposure is defined as being in close proximity (<1 m) for a prolonged period of time (>15 minutes) without the use of personal protective equipment and/or a face mask. Those employees with such high risk of exposure are expected to be placed in quarantine. ***The total numbers of employees placed in quarantine as a result of the high risk exposure should be submitted on a weekly basis should there be positive worker/s identified during the calendar week.*** Individual details of the high exposure risk contact need be reported. The data required is included in Table 3 in the Appendix Templates.
5. **Post infection outcome and Return to Work Data:** Recovery from the infection will vary based on vulnerability and other risk factors. Understanding the outcomes of the infection among employees provides critical information. All employers who indicate employees have tested positive must submit information about the outcome of the infection, and the return-to-work decision. No confidential clinical information is required. ***This data must be submitted once only when the employee returns to work.*** The data required are listed in Table 4 in the Appendix Templates.

## SUBMISSION PROCESS

In collecting this information from their employees, employers are obliged to inform employees about the submission of this data to the Department.

All the above categories of data must be submitted to the OHSS portal (<https://www.nioh.ac.za/home/national-resources-directives-guidelines/>) at the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), the statutory entity designated by the Department of Health for the collection, analyses and reporting of the data from workplaces. This clause does not remove the legal obligations by employers to report COVID 19 related information to specific government Departments (Department of Employment and Labour, Department of Public Service and Administration and Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition etc.).

All data must be submitted via one of three online platforms. In instances where employers are already using electronic applications, they can submit data to the NIOH data lake either through CSV data files and/or secure API transfer.

Companies are also welcome to contact the NIOH at [OHSworkplace@nioh.ac.za](mailto:OHSworkplace@nioh.ac.za) to obtain further information about already developed software packages that could be used for this purpose. Employers may choose to use the Centre for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR) CMORE software, that has been developed with public funding and freely available to use. Organisations can use the CMORE mobile and/or web platform to submit data. The data collected via CMORE are transferred to the NIOH data lake. Employers may contact the NIOH at [OHSworkplace@nioh.ac.za](mailto:OHSworkplace@nioh.ac.za) if they are interested in this service. The templates referred to in this Guideline are already built into this application.

In the event that an employer does not currently use electronic systems, their data can be submitted by using a pre-packaged CSV data file. The excel spreadsheets for collection of screening data, vulnerability data, testing and return to work data can be obtained by contacting the NIOH at [OHSworkplace@nioh.ac.za](mailto:OHSworkplace@nioh.ac.za) or visiting <https://www.nioh.ac.za/covid-19/occupational-health-surveillance-system-ohss-business-portal/>.

The following steps are required for submission of data:

1. The business registers by accessing the portal link directly: <https://ohss.nioh.ac.za/>
2. The business registers electronically by supplying the following details:

<b>Business name</b>
<b>Business sector</b>
<b>Business address</b>
<b>Business province</b>
<b>Business district</b>
<b>Total number of employees</b>
<b>Total number of female employees</b>
<b>Total number of male employees</b>
<b>Total number of employees per job category*</b>
<b>Business contact name</b>
<b>Contact email</b>
<b>Contact number</b>
<b>Date of registration</b>

\* For additional information on job categories see <https://www.nioh.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Occupational-CATEGORIES-1.pdf>

3. The business details will be verified and registration will be confirmed.
4. The system administrator generates a unique ID for the business that the business will use to login to the system to submit data.

## PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

All data submitted under this Guideline strictly adheres to the Protection of Personal Information Act (4/2013) and follows the Guidance note on the processing of personal information in the management and containment of COVID-19 pandemic in terms of POPIA by the Information Regulator (South Africa, Department of Justice).

<https://www.justice.gov.za/inforeg/docs/InfoRegSA-GuidanceNote-PPI-Covid19-20200403.pdf>.

NIOH will be accountable for processing and storing personal information of subjects in a responsible, legal and appropriate manner.

All employees must be made aware by the employer that their information is being submitted to NIOH.

Although NIOH will receive identifiable data, once received each employee will immediately be assigned a unique identifier, which will permit linkages across the different data categories. Once this is done, all identification data is immediately delinked from submitted data.

**The data will be kept as per the following guidelines:**

- Personal data: for six weeks as described in the COGTA regulation 8(11)(c).
- Processed data and reports to be kept as long as required by legislation governing the collection of this data.

The Department will observe the highest standards of data storage, management and security, as stipulated in the Regulations of the Disaster Management Act, the Protection of Personal Information Act and other international standards. Technical and organisational measures will be in place to prevent the loss or damage to or unauthorized access of personal information. All personal information will be confidential and will only be disclosed if required to do so by law.

## APPENDIX: TEMPLATES

Workplaces will have a choice of the methods of submitting the data. Excel spreadsheet templates can be found at <https://www.nioh.ac.za/covid-19/occupational-health-surveillance-system-ohss-business-portal/>.

**Table 1. Vulnerability assessment Data template (Once off submission. Updated when new appointments are made or an employee's vulnerability status changes).**

Vulnerability		
Title	Field status	Definitions
Business ID	Compulsory	System Generated- Provided to business by NIOH
Employee ID	Compulsory	Employer Generated unique employee number
Date	Compulsory	
Province	Compulsory	
District	Compulsory	
Age	Compulsory	Years
Sex	Compulsory	Female/ Male/ Other
Job category	Compulsory	Managers Professionals Technicians and Associate Professionals Clerical Support Workers Services and Sales Workers Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers Elementary Occupations
Vulnerability present	Compulsory	Yes/No
Age ≥60 years	Optional	Yes/ No
Pregnancy ≥28 weeks	Optional	Yes/No
Smoking current	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Asthma	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Chronic Lung Disease	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Diabetes	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Hypertension	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Serious heart conditions	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Chronic Kidney Disease	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Chronic Liver Disease	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Immunocompromised	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Tuberculosis previous	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Tuberculosis current	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
HIV	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Obesity (measured by obtaining Height and Weight of employee) or BMI >30	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Received flu vaccine	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown

**Table 2. Daily Symptom screening data template (Submitted weekly for employees who are symptomatic)**

<b>Symptom Screening</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Field status</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
Business ID	Compulsory	System Generated- Provided to business by NIOH
Consent obtained	Compulsory	Has the business informed employees that the information collected is being sent to the NIOH/NDOH
Employee ID	Compulsory	Employer Generated unique employee number or SA National ID
Screening date	Compulsory	Date when screened
Employee Age	Compulsory	Years
Employee sex	Compulsory	Male/ Female / Other
Job Category*	Compulsory	Managers Professionals Technicians and Associate Professionals Clerical Support Workers Services and Sales Workers Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers Elementary Occupations
Province	Compulsory	
District	Compulsory	
Symptoms Present (yes/ no)	Compulsory	Yes/No
Fever >38 <sup>o</sup> c	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Chills	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Dry cough	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Sore throat	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Shortness of breath	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Tiredness	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Lack of smell or taste	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Conjunctivitis	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Diarrhoea	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Muscle pains	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Nausea or vomiting	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Dizziness	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Headache	Optional	Yes/No/ Unknown
Screening Outcome No action required Referred for self-isolation Referred for testing Referred to the doctor	Optional	Yes/No

**Table 3. Employee COVID-19 Positive test data template (Submitted as necessary on a weekly basis)**

<b>Positive test</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Field status</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
<b>Business ID</b>	Compulsory	System Generated- Provided to business by NIOH
<b>Employee Business Generated ID</b>	Compulsory	Employer Generated unique employee number if used in the other templates
<b>Employee SA National ID</b>	Compulsory	SA National ID
<b>Province</b>	Compulsory	
<b>District</b>	Compulsory	
<b>Sex</b>	Compulsory	Female/ Male/ Other
<b>Age</b>	Compulsory	Years
<b>Job category</b>	Compulsory	Managers Professionals Technicians and Associate Professionals Clerical Support Workers Services and Sales Workers Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers Elementary Occupations
<b>Test Date</b>	Compulsory	Date
<b>Test type</b>	Compulsory	Unknown/PCR/Antigen/Antibody
<b>Symptoms Present</b>	Compulsory	Yes/ No
<b>Number of high-risk workplace contacts</b>	Compulsory	Number
<b>Vulnerability Present</b>	Compulsory	Yes/ No
<b>Post-test result action</b>	Compulsory	Sick Leave Self-Isolation at home Self-Isolation at quarantine site Hospitalization
<b>Exposure Contact type</b>	Compulsory	Work contacts Community contacts Family contacts Large events contacts Travel history from a designated hotspot Public transport Unknown
<b>Reporting Action</b>	Optional	Reported to Department of Employment and Labour Reported to COIDA Reported to DMRE

**Table 4. Return to work template (Submitted when the COVID 19 positive employee returns to work)**

<b>Return to work: Clinical Management and Outcomes</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Field status</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
EmployeeID	Compulsory	System Generated- Provided to business by NIOH
BusinessID	Compulsory	Employer Generated unique employee number
Date	Compulsory	Date
Province	Compulsory	
District	Compulsory	
Job category	Compulsory	Managers Professionals Technicians and Associate Professionals Clerical Support Workers Services and Sales Workers Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers Elementary Occupations
Hospitalized	Compulsory	Yes/ No/ Unknown
Hospital Type (Private/Public)	Compulsory	Private/ Public/ Unknown
If Hospitalised: Date of admission	Compulsory	Date
Outcome (Discharge or Death)	Compulsory	Discharged or death
Outcome date	Compulsory	Date
Return to work date	Compulsory	Date
Return to work fitness level	Compulsory	Fit for Job Description Fit with Accommodation Fit with restrictions Temporarily unfit for Job Description Unfit for review Permanently Unfit
Compensation claim	Compulsory	Yes/ No
Percentage disablement	Optional	0000000(IF UNKNOWN)
COID Claim reference number	Optional	0000000 (IF UNKNOWN)