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## INDUSTRY CIRCULAR

**To** : All MEIBC Users and Stakeholders  
**From** : Office of the Chief Executive Officer (Council Secretary)  
**Date** : Friday, 29 May 2020  
**Subject** : Resumption to full operations of the MEIBC to serve the industry subsequent to the lowering of the lockdown alert from level 4 to level 3  
**Circular No** : 2020/05

Dear Stakeholders,

1. Kindly take note that during level 4 restrictions as announced by the State President a third of MEIBC staff were allowed to return back to the office while other staff members continued to function remotely.
2. On Sunday, 24 May 2020 once again the President addressed the country and informed the nation that Covid-19 level 4 was going to be eased to level 3 with effect from 1 June 2020. In short, this means that the greater part of the country's economy will be in operation.
3. This circular serves to inform stakeholders and members of the Metal and Engineering Industry that all MEIBC offices will be open and accessible to the members of the industry with effect from 1 June 2020.
4. As much as the MEIBC is getting back into full operation, there are important aspects that need to be observed in order to avoid the spread of the Covid-19 virus at our centres of operation. The number of people who will enter our buildings at any given time will be strictly monitored, and the stakeholders are requested to exercise patience in this regard. Therefore, social distancing remains a key element for reducing the spread of the virus from one person to another.
5. The Council has a number of functions but for the purpose of this communication we will only highlight two critical areas that involve stakeholders and members of the industry, i.e. Centre for Dispute Resolution (CDR) and Operations.
6. **THE CENTRE FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION (CDR)**
  - 6.1. In relation to the pre-cons, conciliations, arbitrations, point in limine and part heard matters; the CDR's first approach would be to have these functions performed

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virtually, where parties in dispute are in agreement. This method will enable the CDR to continue with the scheduling of processes whilst still maintaining social distancing.

6.2. Where parties do not agree to have their cases heard virtually, the MEIBC CDR centres will be the next obvious option to accommodate the hearings. In this instance all social distancing protocols will be observed at all times with no exceptions.

6.3. Should 6.1 and 6.2 above not be feasible, the MEIBC would endeavour to facilitate the hearing of such matters at the employer's premises if such premises meet all the Department of Health Covid-19 regulations and social distancing protocols.

6.4. It is the undertaking of the CDR to prioritise cases and/or referrals in the following manner:

6.4.1. Cases already scheduled and cancelled due to the lockdown;

6.4.2. Cases that date back 2019;

6.4.3. Cases referred before the lockdown (between January and March 2020);

6.4.4. Cases referred during the lockdown and lastly

6.4.5. Cases referred after the reopening.

7. Very importantly, as much as the MEIBC would accommodate walk-ins for new referrals, members are encouraged to refer new cases via other means such as email or fax wherever possible.

8. The aforementioned must be read together with the Rules that govern the Conduct before the CDR and all Directives issues thereof.

## 9. **COMPLIANCE PROCESSES**

9.1. The compliance processes will continue as normal, and also in this instance, the MEIBC would leverage on technology as much as possible and would employ other proactive strategies to monitor compliance with the agreements.

9.2. Designated Agents will prioritise cases that were reported and were partly dealt with before the lockdown, followed by those that were received during and after the lockdown, respectively.

9.3. The walk-ins for new complaints would be allowed, however members are encouraged to rather use the telephone/emails and fax when lodging new complaints whenever possible. This would avoid having people waiting in long queues outside buildings where there are space challenges.

## 10. **MEIBC COVID-19 PROTOCOL**

10.1. The number of people entering the buildings at any given time will be monitored and restricted to ensure social distancing and stakeholders are requested to exercise patience in this regard as outlined above.

## 11. SAFEGUARDING OF MEIBC VISITORS

- 11.1. It is a priority of the MEIBC to provide a safe environment for all stakeholders who visit its offices. Stakeholders should take note of the following MEIBC safety protocols:
  - 11.1.1. All MEIBC offices have been deep cleaned and sanitized to ensure the safety of staff and visitors.
  - 11.1.2. MEIBC staff have been provided with the required PPE and have been informed of the necessity to regularly sanitize and wash their hands. Vulnerable staff members have been asked to work from home.
  - 11.1.3. All visitors will be required to sign an attendance register. Temperatures of all visitors will be taken and recorded. Should a visitor's temperature be above the acceptable number, she/he will be denied access to the MEIBC offices and will be directed to the nearest testing centre. At some MEIBC offices there will be screening when entering the building and again when entering the MEIBC office.
  - 11.1.4. Visitors are encouraged to exercise patience under such circumstances as that would mainly be influenced by the layout of the buildings where the MEIBC leases office space.
  - 11.1.5. Visitors will be required to report if they suffer any symptoms such as body aches, loss of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness. This requirement is in line with the guidelines issued by the Department of Health regarding symptom screening.
- 11.2. All visitors will be required to be sanitized before entering any MEIBC Office. Sanitizers will be available throughout the office and in hearing rooms.
- 11.3. No visitor will be allowed to enter MEIBC offices without a facial mask. Masks are to be worn in all processes within the MEIBC offices.
- 11.4. The MEIBC will take the necessary steps to ensure that all work surfaces and equipment are disinfected throughout the day.
- 11.5. The MEIBC will keep the offices and hearing rooms well ventilated as far as possible.
- 11.6. No physical contact such as the shaking of hands is allowed in the MEIBC offices and hearing rooms.

## 12. MEIBC STAFFING PLANS

- 12.1. The MEIBC will as far as reasonably practicable, minimize the number of employees at the workplace without compromising service delivery to

stakeholders. Staff members who are able to work from home will continue to do so.

### 13. **SOCIAL DISTANCING AND WORKING ARRANGEMENT**

- 13.1. The MEIBC is committed to keep visitors' safety as a priority by ensuring that the required one and a half meter social distancing protocol will always be observed.
- 13.2. Hearing rooms and waiting areas will be set up in a way which will allow for social distancing protocols.
- 13.3. Chairs and tables within the waiting area and hearing rooms will be sanitized after every process.
- 13.4. It is advised that water coolers are not used in the waiting areas and visitors are encouraged to bring their own supplies.
- 13.5. Parties are advised to bring their own pens and the sharing of stationary should be eliminated.

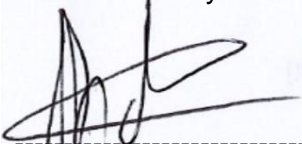
### 14. **TRACKING AND TRACING**

- 14.1. Should a visitor be diagnosed with COVID-19, the MEIBC will provide administrative support to any contact-tracing measures implemented by the Department of Health.

### 15. **CONCLUSION**

- 15.1. The measures set out in this document are consistent with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and provide as far as reasonably practicable a working environment that is safe and with minimal risk to the health of staff members and visitors.
- 15.2. The health of our stakeholders and staff members is a top priority.
- 15.3. Now, more than ever, we are committed to maintaining a safe environment for everyone who walks through our doors, and as far as we can, minimize the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Yours Sincerely



Sicelo Nduna  
**Chief Executive Officer (Council Secretary)**