

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **MINERALS COUNCIL URGES CAUTION AHEAD OF LIKELY COVID-19 THIRD WAVE** *Industry encouraging employees not to travel, and to take extra precautions if they do*

**Johannesburg, 30 March 2021:** The Minerals Council South Africa's CEO Zero Harm Forum last week held an urgent, special meeting about COVID-19 third wave risk management around Easter. It is clear from expert inputs that the approaching Easter long weekend and other public holidays, as well as school holidays could lead to a major surge in infections, hospitalisations and deaths. As the country experienced a second wave in December/January, so the mining industry saw a rise in infection levels when employees were away from work.

The mining industry is conscious of the impact that such a surge will have on lives and livelihoods across South Africa, and is focussed on reducing its impact on members, employees and communities.

A guidance note from the CEO Zero Harm Forum <https://bit.ly/3uc9ta9> makes the following recommendations to Minerals Council member companies:

- That communication with employees (including contractors) and communities about measures to avoid or mitigate a third wave should be intensified with immediate effect;
- That employees should be discouraged wherever possible from travelling over Easter, with CEOs, management and union leadership seen to be leading by example;
- Public holiday work incentives should be used to strongly encourage employees not to take leave over the long weekend and, where possible, the offer of four days leave later in the year should also be considered; and
- Existing measures related to high-risk travel and high-risk activities should be maintained, such as negative PCR or Antigen test and additional workplace exclusion following international travel, or if an employee attends a funeral.

Minerals Council members will also step up return-to-work screening and testing processes during this period to reduce the risk that those employees who have been travelling might spark workplace transmissions.



The Minerals Council is conscious that a significant post-Easter spike in infections, with subsequent increases in hospitalisations and deaths would have serious negative consequences for the industry, for the economy, and for all South Africans. With that in mind, we call on employees and communities to exercise extreme caution over the long weekend, to avoid travel wherever possible, and to behave responsibly if travel is unavoidable.

For further queries:

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