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Pretoria

Enquiries  
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Date  
2020/03/25

## EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

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Dear Customs and Excise client

### IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON TRADE

In his address to the nation on 23 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a 21-day national lockdown in order to contain the ravaging effects of COVID-19, starting at midnight on 26 March until 16 April 2020. This announcement has far-reaching implications for the economy, including the work SARS does to administer and facilitate trade.

Accordingly, during this period SARS wishes to advise you of the following:

- As an essential service, SARS will continue to administer cross-border movement of goods at all land, sea, airports, and permissible travel in line with applicable restrictions.
- SARS is putting in place measures to ensure uninterrupted rendering of Customs services, and the protection of our officers and clients.

SARS will ensure that the following capabilities remain available throughout the lockdown period:

- Licencing and Registration for the manufacturing of essential products such as sanitisers. A central capacity will be created to process these applications;
- A minimum service capability will be available when required at all Customs offices;
- The processing of declarations will proceed as normal;
- Physical inspections of goods will continue as normal and priority will be given to essential goods. Other inspections will continue on an appointment basis;
- Border operations will proceed as normal with limited staff.

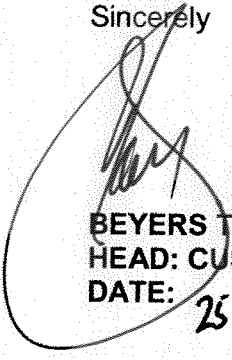
In these trying times, our partnership with trade is most important to ensure an effective response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. Accordingly, your cooperation with the following will be appreciated:

- Make use of the available digital channels for interacting with Customs;
- Limit face-to-face interaction with Customs officials and rather make use of email or telephone contacts;
- Visits to Customs offices will strictly require prior arrangements and appointments;
- If visits to Customs offices are necessary, adhere to hygiene and social distancing requirements as per Department of Health guidelines.

We will endeavour to provide as much information as often as possible to ensure that you are kept updated of the latest developments. A dedicated central email address will be created to handle escalations and any interventions that may be necessary. However, we request that you please reach out to the relevant branch managers to address any queries before escalating to the central email address. We will be posting details relating to all of the above on the SARS website asap. Please keep checking on [www.sars.gov.za](http://www.sars.gov.za) > Customs and Excise.

As always, thank you for your support and be safe.

Sincerely



**BEYERS THERON**  
**HEAD: CUSTOMS BORDER OPERATIONS**  
DATE: 25/3/2020