



human settlements

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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CONTRACTORS RETURN TO SITE UNDER STRICT SAFETY MEASURES

Consequent to the easing of the national lockdown from alert level 4 to 3, nearly 80 contractors have resumed work at their respective sites throughout Mpumalanga. The Provincial Department of Human settlements has allowed 76 of its contractors to resume work under stringent health and safety conditions owing to the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. Earlier this week a team of project monitors visited running projects with the aim of assessing work and adherence to safety measures as advocated by the government's regulations on the opening of the construction sector.

One of the visited projects is in Siyanqoba Integrated Project at eMalahleni Local Municipality where contractor T&Z Construction appointed to deliver about 250 housing units has started work in earnest. Company Safety Officer, Ms Purity Xaba told inspectors that she had been conducting daily screenings as well as ensuring that all their employees had protective clothing and face masks before commencing onsite. "We had to begin by giving them inductions about Covid-19 and how it can spread from one to another so that they understand what we are talking about."

The company has made it clear that they will only allow three persons on a slab in order to adhere to the social distancing guidelines as they try to help flatten the spread of the virus. However, Xaba highlighted that they still face a serious issue of community members who would always barge in looking for temporary work without wearing any face masks to the site. All affected contractors required to conduct daily screening at workplace, provide personal protective equipment and ensure that the return to work must be staggered/phased in in order to minimize the number of workers in a confined space at any given period.

At the finalisation of the resumption plan, Head of Human Settlements Mr Kebone Masange made an emphasis that safety measures to return to work ought to be complied with. "All the affected contractors are required to appoint Safety Officer / Representative, satisfy Health and Safety Plan measures which include, amongst others keeping safe and hygiene workspace, provision of sufficient quantities of hand sanitizer or washing soap and clean water," said Masange adding that a daily screening process must also be conducted.

All projects identified for immediate recommencement were selected based on the criteria that houses must be at advanced stages of completion; informal settlements upgrading; emergency housing projects; sewer spillage intervention; and other housing related support development projects. The move is also aimed at derailing the spread of Covid-19 infections and intervening in bringing the economy back to life. These developments will be reviewed on a continual basis.

**ISSUED BY THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE
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