

Welcome to the first issue of the PSCBC Easter Newsletter for 2020. This publication highlights important information relevant to the PSCBC.

In this edition we have included the following articles; PSCBC Resolution Workshop, Memorial Service of Cde Crosby, GEFP Workshop & Judgements. We have included some handy tips to consider when working from home and information on Zoom, the buzz app that is being used to connect teams during lockdown.

The PSCBC urges South Africans to adhere to the rules and regulations announced by the President during this lockdown period as we fight the Novel COVID-19 pandemic. By staying at home you will save lives and prevent the spread of the virus, don't forget to wash your hands regularly.

Please feel free to share this newsletter within your organisations. We hope that you enjoy reading each issue of our newsletter. Editor

PSCBC RESOLUTION 01 of 2019 WORKSHOPS

The PSCBC, in striving to inform, educate and maintain good relations with our stakeholders, embarked on an initiative to conduct a series of workshops Countrywide. The aim of these workshops was to discuss the implementation of Resolution 01 of 2019 (Agreement on the 2019 Re-configuration of Government Departments) with the affected departments.

Mr Frikkie De Bruin, General Secretary of the PSCBC, conducted the presentations at the workshops, he strategically unpacked the contents of the Resolution. Both the Employer and Labour attended these workshops. There was a general consensus from Labour Parties that there workshops assisted widely in information sharing. The employer indicated that they are committed to the agreement that requires purposeful and sufficient consultation with labour.

Members attending the workshops engaged in vigorous debate, this assisted widely in addressing issues of clarity regarding the Resolution. Parties were appreciative that these informative workshops were conducted.



PICTURES TAKEN AT THE WORKSHOPS

Be **READY** for #coronavirus

WHO is giving advice on how to protect ourselves & others:

Be **SAFE** from coronavirus infection

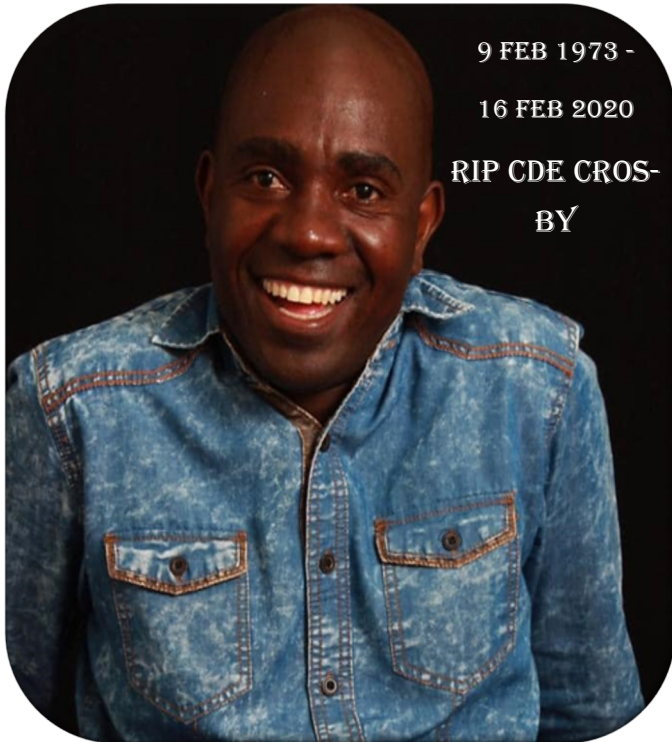
Be **SMART** & inform yourself about it

Be **KIND** & support one another

Learn more about #COVID19 & share with your loved ones: www.who.int/COVID-19



MEMORIAL SERVICE: CDE. CROSBY MASANA MALULEKE



On the 16th of February 2020, the PSCBC was shaken by the news of the passing Cde. Crosby Masana Maluleke. Cde. Crosby was a member of the Council and served POPCRU as a full time shop steward.

The PSCBC together with the Sector Bargaining Councils held a heartfelt memorial service at the PSCBC Offices in honour of Cde. Crosby. The PSCBC Chairperson, Mrs Ingrid Dimo delivered the opening message at this solemn ceremony. The PSCBC General Secretary who was a dear friend of Cde Crosby delivered a sorrowful tribute to the fallen comrade. Tributes were also rendered by the GPSSBC, DPSA and POPCRU representatives.

Cde Crosby will be remembered as a dedicated and committed stalwart of POPCRU and as a sincere friend to many. To his family, friends and colleagues, please accept herewith the PSCBC's deepest condolences, this is indeed a loss of a splendid person. He is certainly going to be missed by all of us.

We would like to leave you with a quote from an author, Ralph Emerson which summarises the legacy of Cde Crosby, who wrote, "It is not length of life, but depth of life."

Cde Crosby was laid to rest on the 22nd of February 2020 in Atteridgeville, Pretoria.



PICTURES TAKEN AT THE CEREMONEY



GEPF WORKSHOP



PEO: Mr Abel Sithole

The PSCBC as a stakeholder driven organisation, attended a Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) workshop at the Capital Hotel in Pretoria, on the 7th of February 2020. The purpose of the workshop was for the GEPF to report to stakeholders on their progress and achievements for the previous financial year.

This workshop was attended by the parties to the PSCBC which is representatives from labour and employer. The GEPF Principal Executive officer, Mr Abel Sithole in his presentation indicated that despite the ailing economy the GEPF investment portfolio was able to yield a positive growth of 2.6%.

The GEPF assured the members of the workshop that is assured that the public servants pensions are well managed and fully support the GEPF.



PICTURES TAKEN AT THE WORKSHOP



JUDGEMENTS

ASSOCIATION OF MINE WORKERS AND CONSTRUCTION UNION AND OTHERS V ROYAL BAFOKENG PLATINUM MINE LIMITED AND OTHERS

On Thursday, 23 January 2020 at 10h00 the Constitutional Court handed down judgment in an application for leave to appeal against the judgment and order of the Labour Appeal Court (LAC). The application concerned the constitutionality of sections 23(1)(d) and 189(1) of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA). The applicants, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) together with some of its members, sought the reinstatement of 103 of its members who were retrenched by the respondent mining company, Royal Bafokeng Platinum Limited (Royal Bafokeng), on 18 September 2015.

The AMCU members were retrenched following a retrenchment agreement that was concluded by Royal Bafokeng and two other unions at the mine, the National Union of Mines (NUM) and United Association of South Africa (UASA). The retrenchment agreement was itself the result of a collective agreement entered into between NUM, UASA and Royal Bafokeng on 9 March 2015. This came about through Royal Bafokeng recognising NUM as the majority union within the company. Both AMCU and UASA were minority unions. The result was that NUM, along with UASA, were granted organisational and bargaining rights by Royal Bafokeng. However AMCU, unlike UASA, was not recognised for bargaining purposes.

The retrenchment agreement was decided to the exclusion of AMCU. The agreement was then, in accordance with section 23(1)(d) of the LRA, extended to the retrenched employees who were AMCU members. The agreement contained a full and final settlement clause which provided that all those who were bound by it, including the AMCU members, had agreed to waive all claims and rights against Royal Bafokeng. The AMCU members maintained that they knew nothing of the agreement until 30 September 2015, when they were issued with a notice of retrenchment dated 18 September 2015 and barred from entering the workplace.

Subsequently, AMCU challenged its members' dismissals in the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), the Labour Court (LC) and the LAC. The CCMA refused to conciliate the matter for lack of jurisdiction. AMCU subsequently argued in the LC and LAC that the collective agreement was constitutionally objectionable, as it allowed for a majority union to conclude a collective agreement concerning a retrenchment process to the exclusion of minority unions in the workplace. It also argued that the extension of such an agreement, as was the case in this matter, was equally constitutionally objectionable.



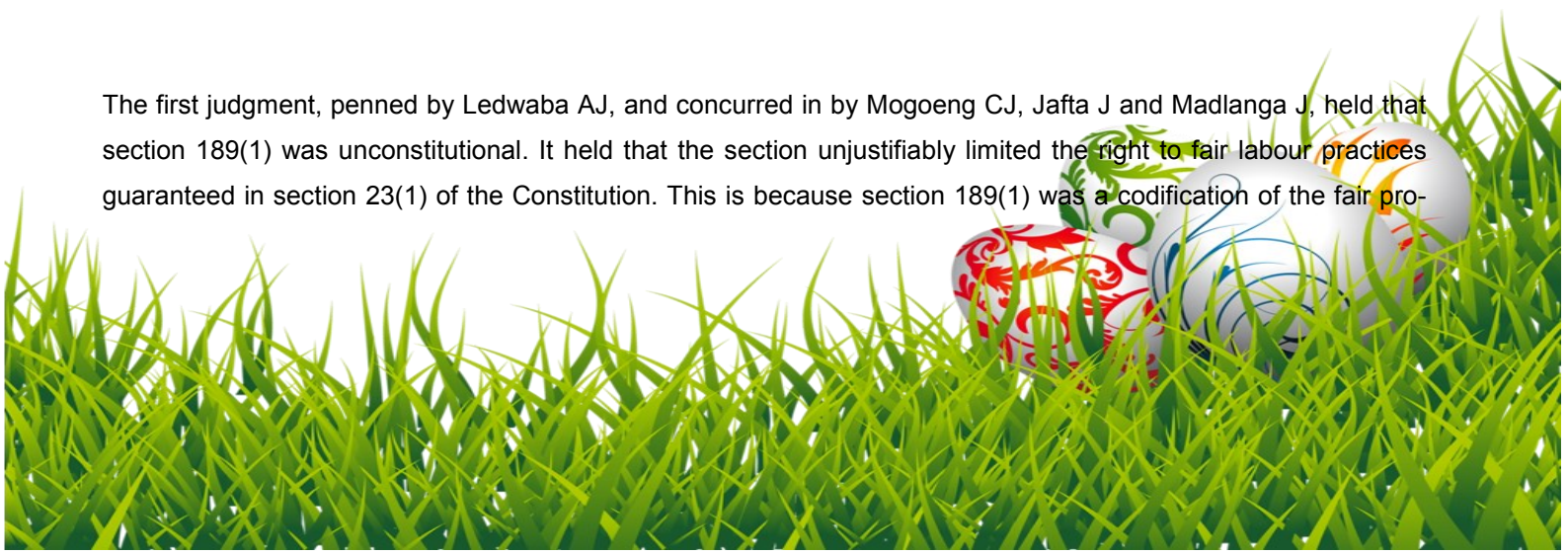
JUDGEMENT CONTINUES....

The LC and LAC rejected these arguments. The LAC held that the principle of majoritarianism, is not without purpose. It was a deliberate policy choice taken by the Legislature in order to facilitate orderly collective bargaining, minimise the proliferation of unions and democratise the workplace. A clear policy decision had been made by the Legislature, that the will of the minority cannot trump that of the majority. The alternative would require that an employer negotiate with each and every union in the work place, no matter how small, and result in intolerable disruption and economic harm. The LAC found no merit in the applicants' contention that majoritarianism found no place in the retrenchment process. It further found that procedural fairness was not a requirement of a rational decision per se and that "there was no general duty on a decision-maker to consult interested parties in order for a decision to be rational under the rule of law".

In the Constitutional Court the applicants argued that, by allowing for the exclusion of minority unions and non-unionised employees in the consultation process, section 189(1) limits their right to fair labour practices. As dismissal affects an employee individually, so too are the benefits of majoritarianism realised in the retrenchment process. They further argued that there could therefore be no justifiable reason for excluding non-majority represented employees from consultation. The applicants submitted that the section should be interpreted to allow for inclusive consultation or be struck down accordingly. As for section 23(1)(d), it was argued that a constitutionally compliant interpretation would not allow for a retrenchment agreement to be extended to parties who were not party to its conclusion.

Royal Bafokeng, joined by the Minister of Labour, argued that section 189(1) was constitutionally compliant. They argued that it creates a cascading hierarchy of consulting parties that duly expresses the Legislature's policy choice in favour of majoritarianism. It was submitted that the interpretation called for by the applicants is unsustainable, and even if it were not, it would be unworkable. They argued that there can be no rights limitation because, as retrenchment is a collective process, the rights are collectively held. It was further argued that the minority benefits from the majority negotiating the terms of the retrenchment agreement, to strike a deal that would otherwise escape them.

The first judgment, penned by Ledwaba AJ, and concurred in by Mogoeng CJ, Jafta J and Madlanga J, held that section 189(1) was unconstitutional. It held that the section unjustifiably limited the right to fair labour practices guaranteed in section 23(1) of the Constitution. This is because section 189(1) was a codification of the fair pro-



JUDGEMENT CONTINUES....

Such a policy failed to meet the statutory purpose of consultation, being, amongst others, to avoid dismissal, minimise dismissals or lessen the negative effects of dismissals. Majoritarianism was also not implicated, but rather preserved, on the basis of the Court's previous finding that section 23(1)(d) was a constitutionally compliant limitation of the right to strike. This judgment held that the same reasoning must apply to any limitation in this case.

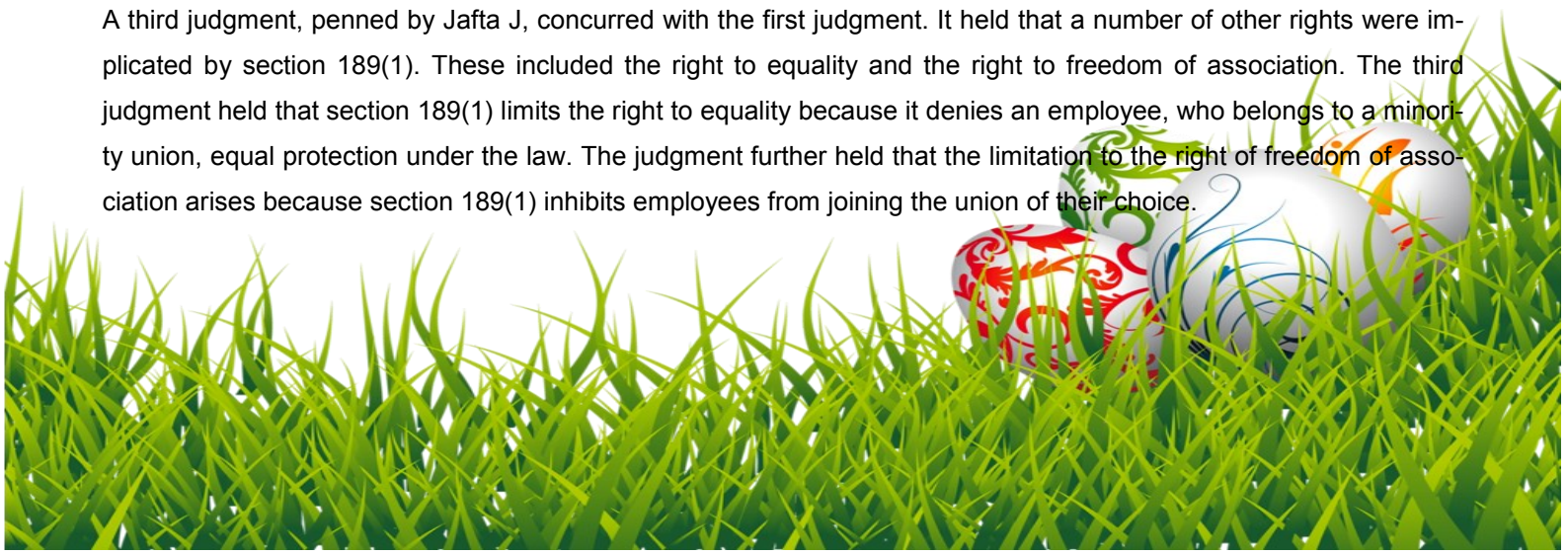
The judgment further held that whilst an employer is bound to consult inclusively, they can still lawfully conclude and extend a retrenchment agreement with the majority union, binding all employees in the workplace. This appropriately balances the rights of individual employees and those of the employer. A second judgment (majority), penned by Froneman J and concurred in by Cameron J, Khampepe J, Mhlantla J and Theron J, agreed with the first judgment, in so far as the conclusion that the constitutional challenge to section 23(1)(d) should be dismissed, but disagreed that section 189(1) is constitutionally invalid.

The judgment held that section 189(1) did not limit the right to fair labour practices. This is because the right to fair labour practices does not expressly, or by implication, guarantee a right to individual consultation in retrenchment processes. It further held that the right not to be unfairly dismissed is sourced in the LRA and not the Constitution.

The second judgment held that the LRA itself distinguishes between what is fair for dismissals based on misconduct and incapacity, with what is fair for "no-fault" dismissals relating to operational requirements. The second judgment held that a further distinction is made, where the former class of dismissals require individual enquiry, whilst the latter is suited to objective factors. It held that because the decision to retrench is not based on individual conduct, there can be no need for individual consultation.

The judgment found that this has been consistently affirmed by the Labour Courts for the past 20 years. The judgment further held that even if section 189(1) did limit the right to fair labour practices, such limitation would be justifiable. Accordingly, the majority granted leave to appeal but dismissed the appeal.

A third judgment, penned by Jafta J, concurred with the first judgment. It held that a number of other rights were implicated by section 189(1). These included the right to equality and the right to freedom of association. The third judgment held that section 189(1) limits the right to equality because it denies an employee, who belongs to a minority union, equal protection under the law. The judgment further held that the limitation to the right of freedom of association arises because section 189(1) inhibits employees from joining the union of their choice.



JUDGEMENT CONTINUES

That is for the reason that such a union might be incapable of advocating for their interests during retrenchment. The third judgment held that the principle of majoritarianism found no application in the operation of section 189(1). That is because the section does not prescribe that a collective agreement can only be concluded by a majority union, but with any union. It found that this, notionally, allows for the extension of exclusive consultation rights to a minority union. The third judgment held that whilst a number of rights are implicated, no purpose is served for their limitation.

A fourth judgment, penned by Theron J, agreed with the second judgment's reasoning and order. From a separation of powers perspective, the fourth judgment held that it would be appropriate to test section 189(1) of the LRA against a standard of rationality rather than one of reasonableness, and emphasised the importance of the proper interpretation of the Bill of Rights in this regard. It concluded that, on a proper interpretation, section 23(1) does not include a right for an employee to be individually consulted in the context of a retrenchment dismissal.

The fourth judgment supplemented the explanation given in the second judgment as to why the Court should refrain from adjudicating the alleged limitations of the rights in sections 9(1) and 18 of the Constitution and held that it would be inappropriate for the Court to adjudicate on these issues as the applicants did not put up any facts or make any submissions in this regard.

In the result, leave to appeal was granted but the appeal was dismissed.



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA,
MPUMALANGA DIVISION (MAIN SEAT)**

Case Number: 1079/2020

In the Ex Parte Application of:

KAREL WILLEM VAN HEERDEN

Applicant

JUDGMENT

Roelofse AJ:

[1] Coronavirus disease (“COVID-19”) has taken a terrible grip of the World - it is

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).[6] The disease was first identified in 2019 in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei, China, and has since spread globally, resulting in the 2019–2020 coronavirus pandemic - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019



described as an invisible enemy. COVID-19 typically spreads during close contact and via respiratory droplets produced when people cough or sneeze. The media keeps live count the numbers of those who have perished. On 27 March 2020, the global tally of persons who were known to be infected with COVID-19 was 558 317. Of those known to be infected, 25 347 have perished as a result of COVID-19. States have restricted its citizens' movements in a despite effort to stop the spread of the virus because it is spread through human contact.

[2] The drive to curb the COVID-19 menace, its global health and economic effects is unprecedented.

[3] South Africa is not spared. South Africa's confirmed cases presently stands at 1160. Two people have died in South Africa as a result of the virus. Here, the death toll is expected to rise dramatically as elsewhere in the world.

[4] On 15 March 2020, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs ("*the Minister*"), designated under Section 3 of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) ("*the Act*") and in terms of sub-section 27(2) of the Act

Section 27 of the Act provides as follows:

Declaration of national state of disaster.—(1) *In the event of a national disaster, the Minister may, by notice in the Gazette, declare a national state of disaster if—*

(a) *existing legislation and contingency arrangements do not adequately provide for the national executive to deal effectively with the disaster; or*

(b) *other special circumstances warrant the declaration of a national state of disaster.*

(2) *If a national state of disaster has been declared in terms of subsection (1), the Minister may, subject to subsection (3), and after consulting the responsible Cabinet member, make regulations or issue directions or authorise the issue of directions concerning—*

(a) *the release of any available resources of the national government, including stores, equipment, vehicles and facilities;*



declared a national state of disaster. On 17 March 2020, the Minister, after consulting the relevant Cabinet members, made Regulations regarding the steps necessary to prevent an escalation of the disaster or to alleviate, contain and minimise the effects of the disaster (the COVID-19 Regulations).

GN 313 of 15 March 2020: Declaration of a National State of Disaster, published in Government Gazette No. 43096.

GN 318 of 18 March 2020: Regulations issued in terms of section 27 (2) of the Act, Government Gazette No. 43107.

- (b) the release of personnel of a national organ of state for the rendering of emergency services;*
- (c) the implementation of all or any of the provisions of a national disaster management plan that are applicable in the circumstances;*
- (d) the evacuation to temporary shelters of all or part of the population from the disaster-stricken or threatened area if such action is necessary for the preservation of life;*
- (e) the regulation of traffic to, from or within the disaster-stricken or threatened area;*
- (f) the regulation of the movement of persons and goods to, from or within the disaster-stricken or threatened area;*
- (g) the control and occupancy of premises in the disaster-stricken or threatened area;*
- (h) the provision, control or use of temporary emergency accommodation;*
 - (i) the suspension or limiting of the sale, dispensing or transportation of alcoholic beverages in the disaster-stricken or threatened area;*
- (j) the maintenance or installation of temporary lines of communication to, from or within the disaster area;*
- (k) the dissemination of information required for dealing with the disaster;*
- (l) emergency procurement procedures;*
- (m) the facilitation of response and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation;*
- (n) other steps that may be necessary to prevent an escalation of the disaster, or to alleviate, contain and minimise the effects of the disaster; or*
- (o) steps to facilitate international assistance.*

(3) The powers referred to in subsection (2) may be exercised only to the extent that this is necessary for the purpose of—(a) assisting and protecting the public;

- (b) providing relief to the public;*
- (c) protecting property;*
- (d) preventing or combating disruption; or*
- (e) dealing with the destructive and other effects of the disaster.*

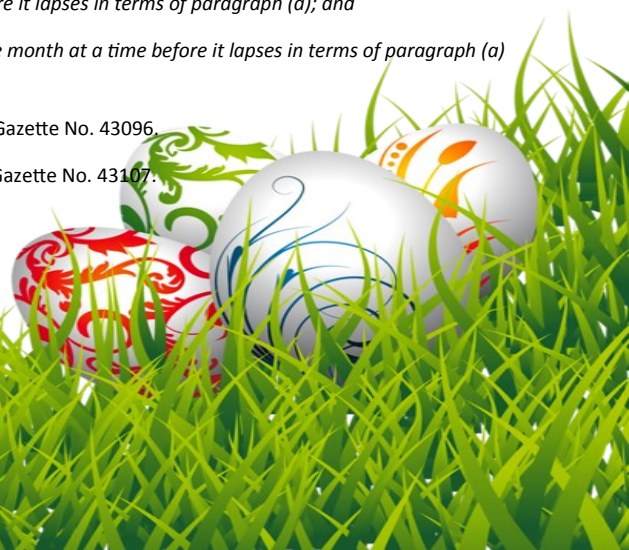
(4) Regulations made in terms of subsection (2) may include regulations prescribing penalties for any contravention of the regulations.

(5) A national state of disaster that has been declared in terms of subsection (1)—

- (a) lapses three months after it has been declared;*
- (b) may be terminated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette before it lapses in terms of paragraph (a); and*
- (c) may be extended by the Minister by notice in the Gazette for one month at a time before it lapses in terms of paragraph (a) or the existing extension is due to expire.*

GN 313 of 15 March 2020: Declaration of a National State of Disaster, published in Government Gazette No. 43096.

GN 318 of 18 March 2020: Regulations issued in terms of section 27 (2) of the Act, Government Gazette No. 43107.



[5] Sub-section 27(2)(f) of the Act expressly provides for the regulation of the movement of persons and goods to, from or within the disaster-stricken or threatened area.

[6] On 25 March 2020, the Minister, after consultation with the Minister of Health, published an amendment to the COVID-19 Regulations (*“the final lock down Regulations”*). The final lock down Regulations provides for the restriction of movement of persons during the period the final lock down Regulations is in force and effect, namely from Thursday 23:59 on 26 March 2020 to Thursday 23:59 on 16 April 2020. Thus, at the time this application was brought to my attention on Friday, 27 March 2020 at 16:02, the final lock down Regulations were in full force and effect.

[7] In terms of Regulation 11B(1)(a) of the final lock down Regulations, the movement of persons and goods are restricted. Every person is confined to his or her place of residence, unless strictly for the purposes of performing an essential service, obtaining an essential good or service, collecting a social ground, or seeking emergency, lifesaving or chronic medical attention. Every gathering, is prohibited except for funerals as provided for in sub-regulation (8). The movement of persons between provinces and

Regulation 11B.

The definition of *“lock down”* under Regulation 11A.

Regulation 11B(1)(a)(i).

Sub-regulation (8) limits the attendance of funerals to 50 people, no night vigil shall be held and all safety measures

Regulation 11B(1)(a)(ii).



between metropolitan and district areas is prohibited.

[8] Regulation 11G provides that any person who contravenes the restriction of movement of persons and goods shall be guilty of a criminal offence and, on conviction, be liable to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or both such fine or imprisonment.

[9] The circumstances of this application are extremely upsetting. It shows in the crudest manner the crude effects of the final lock down Regulations upon a family.

[10] The applicant resides in Mbombela in the Mpumalanga Province. Early in the morning of 27 March 2020, the applicant received a telephone call from his mother. She informed him that his grandfather tragically passed away in a fire at his home earlier that morning. The applicant's grandfather lived in Hofmeyr. Hofmeyr is situated in the Eastern Cape Province. The applicant desperately wants to travel to Hofmeyr in order to support his mother and to assist with his grandfather's funeral. The funeral is to take place sometime next week in Hofmeyr. In terms of the provisions of Regulation 11B(1)(a)(ii) of the final lock down Regulations, the applicant is prohibited to travel from Mpumalanga to the Eastern Cape.

[11] The applicant says that he approached this court on an urgent basis because he does not want to contravene the final lockdown Regulation. The applicant approaches this court for an order that he be: temporarily exempted from the traveling restrictions contemplated in Regulation 11B(1)(a)(ii); allowed to leave Mbombela on 28 March 2020 for Hofmeyr; allowed to remain in Hofmeyr until 6 April 2020 and that he be allowed to

Regulation 11B(1)(a)(iii).



leave Hofmeyr for Mbombela on 7 April 2020.

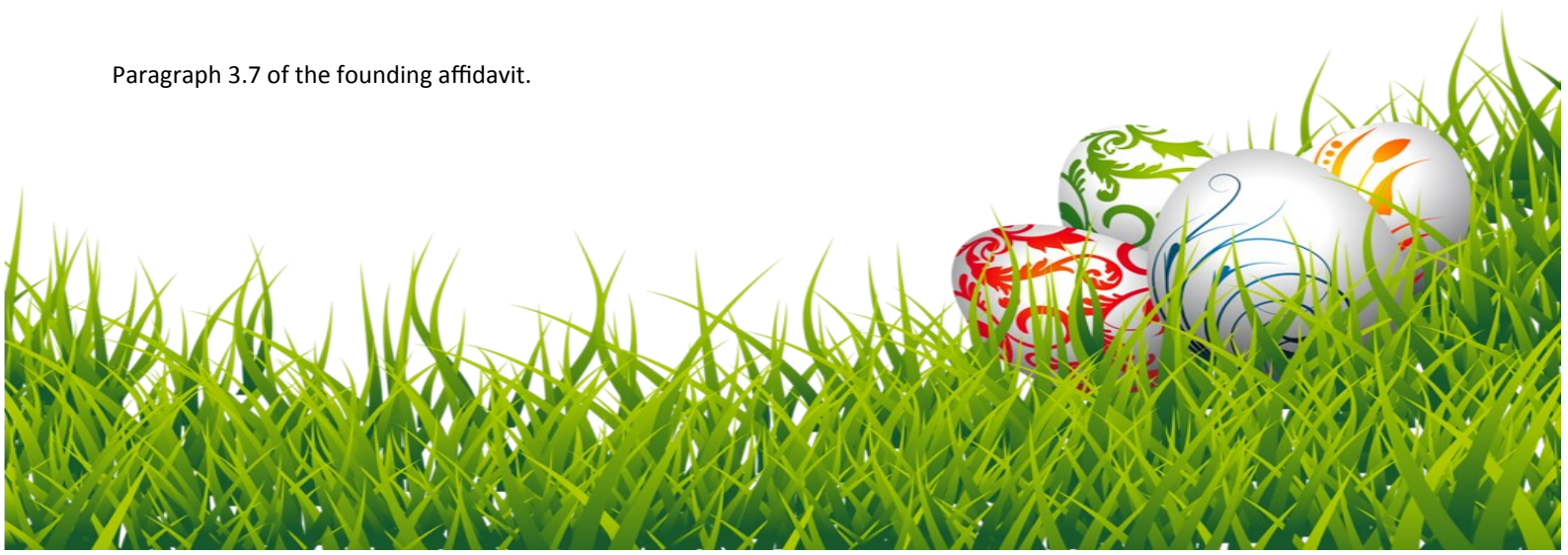
[12] In his affidavit, the applicant alleges that there would be no risk of him contaminating anyone with the virus during his trip to Hofmeyr and he sets out the reasons for him saying so. The applicant also alleges that he has not been in contact with any person from abroad or a person which has contracted the virus and that he does not display any of the known symptoms of the virus. The applicant says that he intends to comply with all the remaining provisions of the Regulations and that he will apply all the necessary precautions to prevent contamination and/or the spread of the virus.

[13] The applicant argues in his founding affidavit that funerals are allowed in terms of the final lock-down Regulation and that he *“.....accepts that the regulations were drawn in an urgent manner and that the authors were not afforded ample opportunity to consider all aspects which could relate thereto, including without limitation that persons’ family members do not necessarily reside in one province and that, in attending a funeral of a family member, a person may be obliged to move between provinces and/or municipalities.”*

[14] The applicant further alleges that *“.....the regulations that fails to curtail the issue revolving imposed traveling restrictions when attending a funeral in another province which is unfair in the unique circumstances as the current matter....”*

[15] The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 is the supreme law of our Country. Section 165 of the Constitution vests this court with authority and the bounds

Paragraph 3.7 of the founding affidavit.



within which that authority must be exercised. Section 165(2) of the Constitution provides as follows:

“The courts are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law, which they must apply impartially and without fear, favour or prejudice.”

[16] I have extreme sympathy for the applicant but I must uphold the law. Unfortunately, presently, the law prohibits that which the applicant wants to do however urgent and deserving. The Executive, under enabling legislation, invoked the provisions of the Act by declaring the state of disaster in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. The Act and the final lock down Regulation applies to everyone within the borders of the Republic. I cannot accede to the relief the applicant seeks because in doing so, I will be authorizing the applicant to break the law under judicial decree – that no court can do. In addition, no matter how careful and diligent the applicant will conduct himself, not only the applicant but many others may be exposed to unnecessary risk, even death if I grant the applicant the relief he seeks.

[17] In the premises, the application is dismissed.



Roelofse AJ

Acting Judge of the High Court

DATE OF JUDGMENT: 27 March 2020

THERE WAS NO APPEARANCE IN COURT BY VIRTUE OF THE DECLARATION OF THE STATE OF DISASTER.



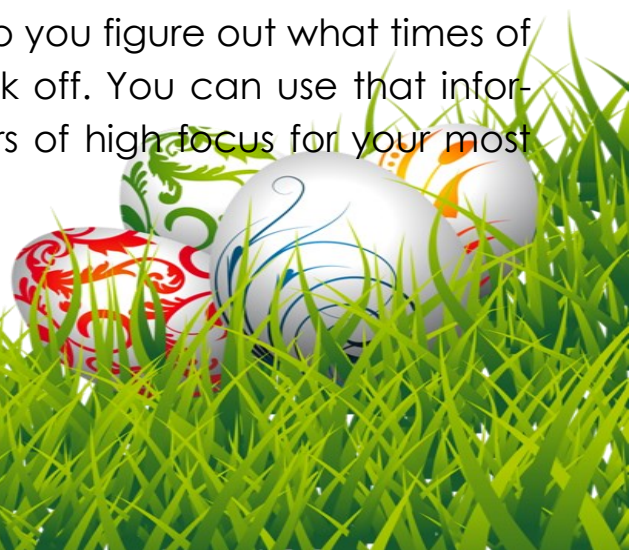
TO 20 TIPS FOR WORKING FROM HOME

The global spread of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, is keeping people at home. Much of the world is on lockdown, and, even in places that aren't, people are encouraged to stay at home. Where it's possible, employers are encouraging or requiring people to work from home for an indeterminate amount of time. If you're new to the work-from-home lifestyle, whether due to coronavirus or because you've managed to find a remote-based job, you'll need to change some of your habits and routines to make working from home a success.

I've worked 100 percent remotely for more than five years, and I have some friends and colleagues who've done it, too. We all face unique challenges, not only because we have different personalities, but also due to our various lifestyles and the type of work we do. Still, many of the core issues we face as remote employees are the same.

Everyone who works remotely has to figure out when to work, where to work, and how to create boundaries between work and personal life. What about office equipment, career development, training opportunities, and building relationships with colleagues? Working remotely, especially when working from home most of the time, means figuring out these issues and others. Here are 20 tips for leading a better and more productive remote-working life, based on my experience and what I've learned from others.

you're sticking to your schedule. They can also help you figure out what times of day you're most productive versus when you slack off. You can use that information to your advantage by reserving your hours of high focus for your most important tasks.



1. Maintain Regular Hours

Set a schedule, and stick to it...most of the time. Having clear guidelines for when to work and when to call it a day helps many remote workers maintain work-life balance. That said, one of the benefits of remote work is flexibility, and sometimes you need to extend your day or start early to accommodate someone else's time zone. When you do, be sure to wrap up earlier than usual or sleep in a bit the next morning to make up for it.

Automatic time-tracking apps, such as RescueTime, let you check in on whether you're sticking to your schedule. They can also help you figure out what times of day you're most productive versus when you slack off. You can use that information to your advantage by reserving your hours of high focus for your most important tasks.

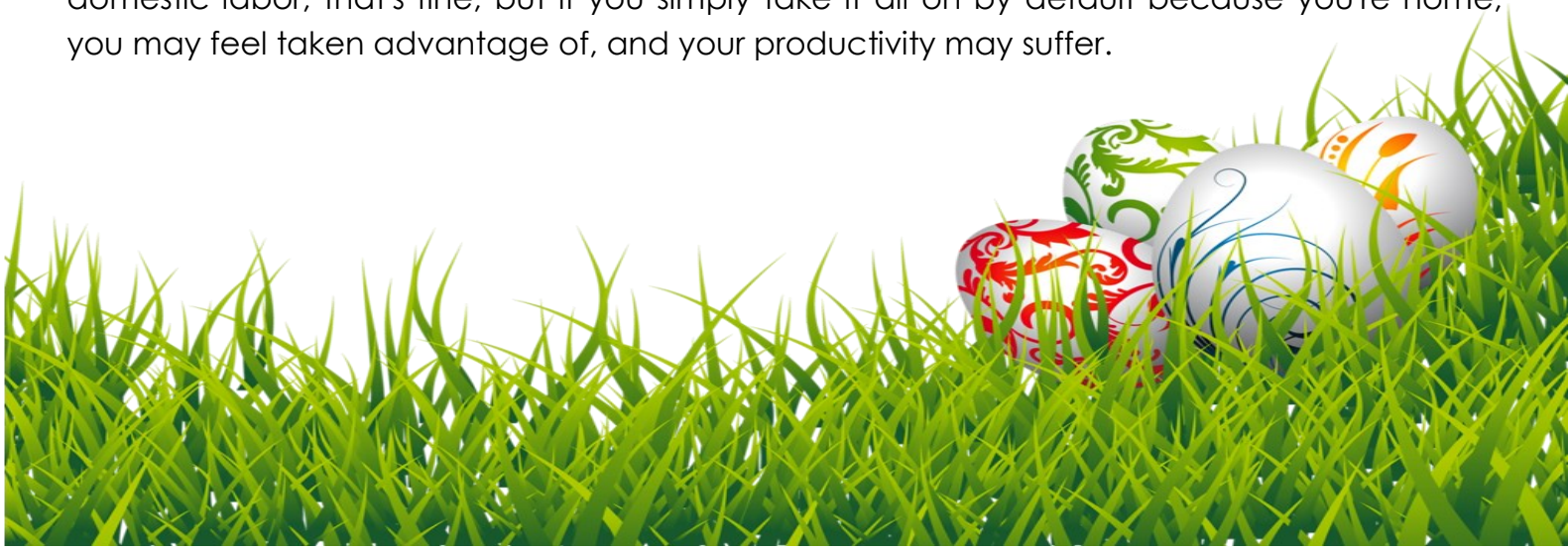
2. Create a Morning Routine

Deciding you'll sit down at your desk and start work at a certain time is one thing. Creating a routine that guides you into the chair is another. What in your morning routine indicates you're about to start work? It might be making a cup of coffee. It might be returning home after a jog. It might be getting dressed (wearing pajama pants to work is a perk for some, but a bad strategy for others). A routine can be more powerful than a clock at helping you get started each day.

I say "morning," but not everyone who works from home follows a nine-to-five schedule. Yours might be a "getting started" routine at another time of day.

3. Set Ground Rules With the People in Your Space

Set ground rules with other people in your home or who share your space for when you work. If you have children who come home from school while you're still working, they need clear rules about what they can and cannot do during that time. Additionally, just because you're home and can let service people into the house or take care of pets doesn't mean other family members should assume you will always do it. If that's how you choose to divide up the domestic labor, that's fine, but if you simply take it all on by default because you're home, you may feel taken advantage of, and your productivity may suffer.



4. Schedule Breaks

Know your company's policy on break times and take them. If you're self-employed, give yourself adequate time during the day to walk away from the computer screen and phone. A lunch hour and two 15-minute breaks seems to be the standard for full-time US employees.

5. Take Breaks in Their Entirety

Don't short-change yourself during breaks, especially your lunch hour. You can use an app, such as [TimeOut for Mac](#) and [Smart Break for Windows](#), to lock yourself out of your computer for 60 minutes. Or you can just launch a simple clock or timer on the screen when you take a break. If you return to your desk after only 40 minutes, walk away for another 20.

For more on breaks, see [How to Take Better Breaks to Boost Your Productivity](#).

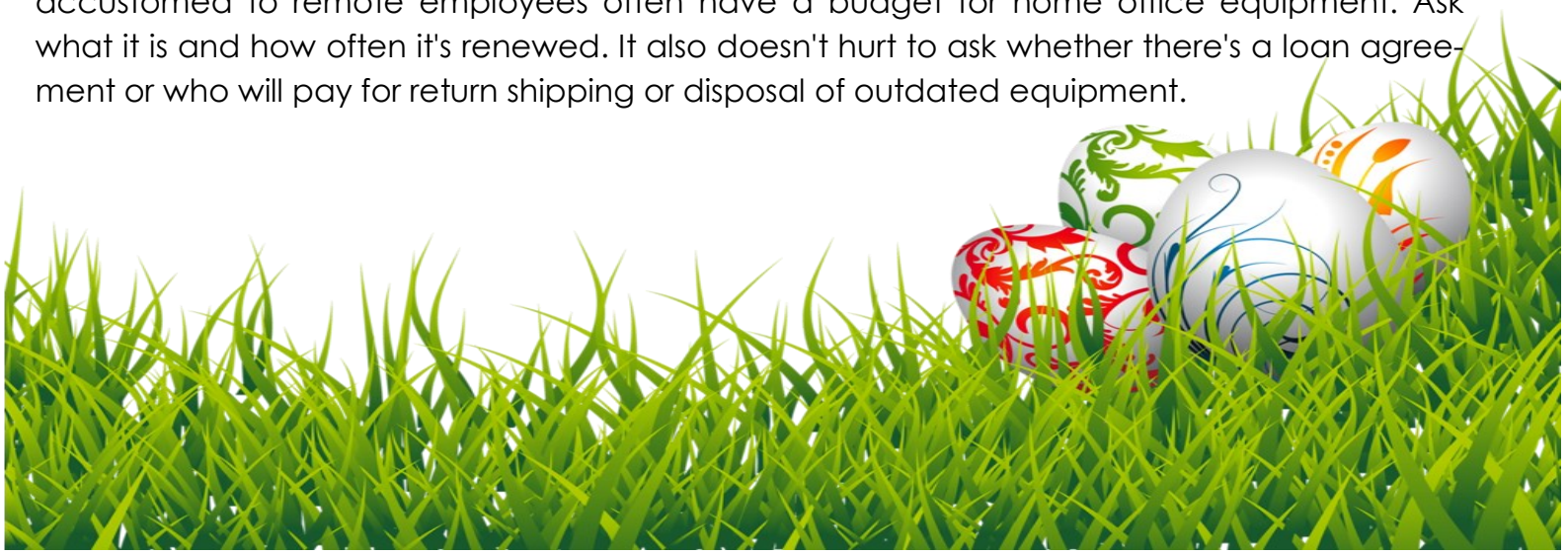
6. Leave Home

To the extent that it's allowed and safe where you are during the COVID-19 outbreak, get out of the house, provided you can maintain social distancing of course. The same advice applies to people who work in traditional office settings, too. Leave the building at least once a day. Your body needs to move. Plus, the fresh air and natural light will do you good.

You don't have to go to crowded public spaces to get away from your solo workspace (and you probably shouldn't right now, either). Take a walk. Weed the garden. You get the picture.

7. Don't Hesitate to Ask for What You Need

If you're employed by a company or organization that supports your work-from-home setup, request the equipment you need as soon as you start working from home, or within a day or two when you realize you need something new. It's extremely important to set precedents early that you will ask for what you need to get your job done comfortably, including the right [monitor](#), [keyboard](#), [mouse](#), chair, [printer](#), [software](#), and so forth. Organizations that are accustomed to remote employees often have a budget for home office equipment. Ask what it is and how often it's renewed. It also doesn't hurt to ask whether there's a loan agreement or who will pay for return shipping or disposal of outdated equipment.



If you're working from home unexpectedly due to coronavirus, ask for what you need within reason. You could be working from home for weeks on end and you should be comfortable, but ordering a new office chair and desk might be asking too much. Consider a mouse and keyboard, plus a back-supporting cushion instead. For more tips on getting your new space in shape, you can read our story on [everything you need to set up an ergonomic office](#).

8. Keep a Dedicated Office Space

In an ideal world, remote employees would have not only a dedicated office, but also two computers, one for work and one for personal use. It's more secure for the employer, and it lets you do all your NSFW activities in private. But not everyone has a separate office in their home, and keeping two machines isn't always realistic. Instead, dedicate a desk and some peripherals only for work use. For example, when your laptop is hooked up to the monitor and external keyboard, it's work time. When it's on your lap, that's personal time. You may want to go as far as partitioning your hard drive and creating a separate user account for work.

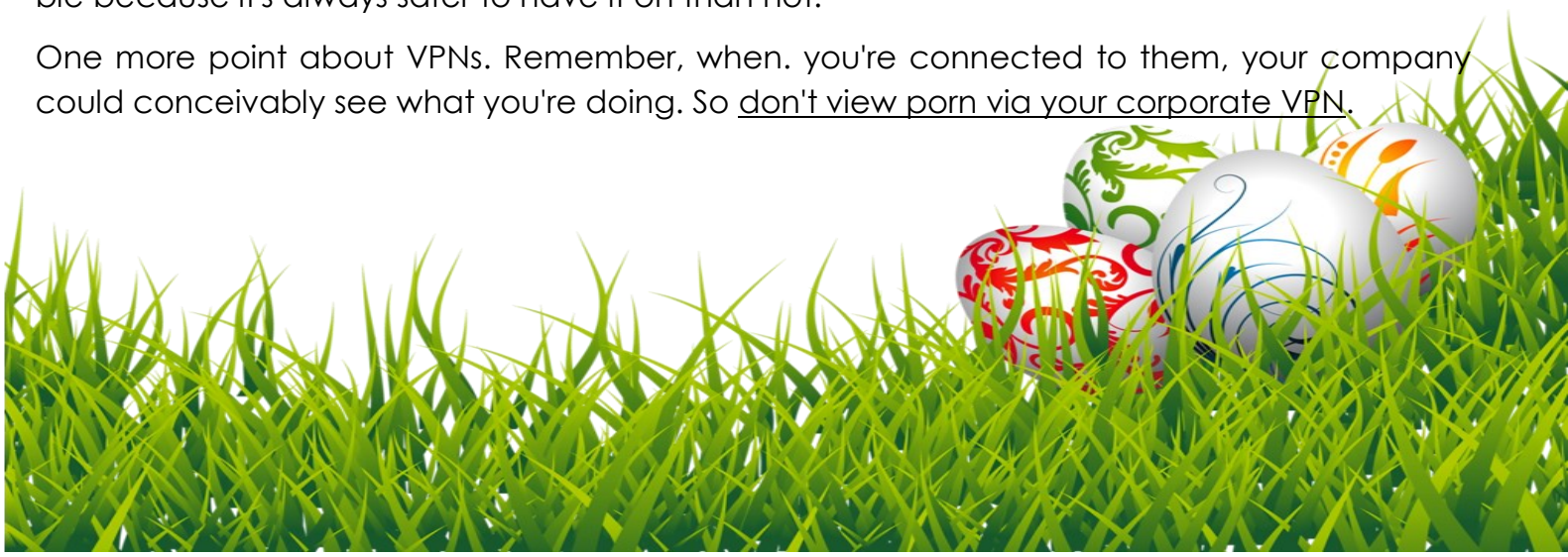
9. Maintain a Separate Phone Number

Set up a phone number that you only use for calls with colleagues and clients. It doesn't have to be a landline, second [mobile phone](#), or even a SIM card. It can be a free VoIP service, such as Google Voice or a Skype number. Similar to some of the other tips, having a separate phone number helps you manage your work-life balance.

10. Use a VPN

Use a [VPN](#) whenever you're connected to a network that you don't control. That includes Wi-Fi at co-working spaces, cafes, libraries, and airports. Some organizations have their own VPNs that off-site employees need to access certain servers or websites that store information meant only for internal use. In those cases, you'll also need to [use a VPN at home](#). In any case, it's a good idea to get into the habit of leaving your VPN connected as often as possible because it's always safer to have it on than not.

One more point about VPNs. Remember, when you're connected to them, your company could conceivably see what you're doing. So [don't view porn via your corporate VPN](#).



11. Socialize With Colleagues

Loneliness, disconnect, and isolation are common problems in remote work life, especially for extroverts. Companies with a remote work culture usually offer ways to socialize. For example, they might have chat channels where remote employees can talk about common interests, meetups for people in the same region, and (once the coronavirus ends) in-person retreats. It's important to figure out how much interaction you need to feel connected and included. Even if you're highly introverted and don't like socializing, give a few interactive experiences a try so that you're familiar with them if you ever decide you want them. If you're not at a company with a strong remote culture, you may need to be more proactive about nurturing relationships.

One of the main ways people socialize at work when they are working from home is via business messaging apps like Slack. The only problem is that they can provide too much opportunity for socializing. For tips on way to avoid getting sucked in when you're trying to be productive, you can read our story on how not to get overwhelmed by Slack.

12. "Show Up" to Meetings and Be Heard

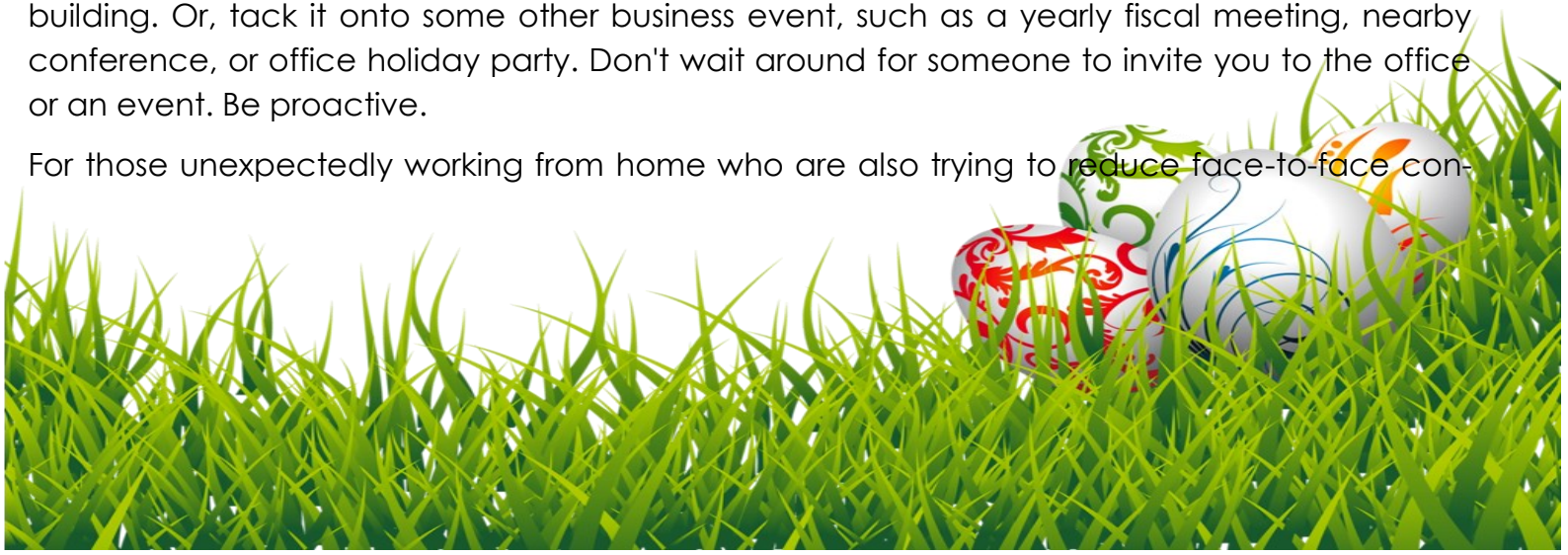
Certainly, you'll take part in video conferences and conference calls, but it's a good idea to attend optional meetings sometimes, too. Be sure to speak up during the meeting so everyone knows you're on the call. A simple, "Thanks, everyone. Bye!" at the close of a meeting will go a long way toward making your presence known.

If your company uses Zoom Meetings for its video conferencing you can quickly master its ins and outs with our story

13. Get Face Time

If your employer is lax about getting you in a room with other employees, ask to have an annual or semi-annual trip in your contract. It could be for annual planning, training, or team building. Or, tack it onto some other business event, such as a yearly fiscal meeting, nearby conference, or office holiday party. Don't wait around for someone to invite you to the office or an event. Be proactive.

For those unexpectedly working from home who are also trying to reduce face-to-face con-



14. Take Sick Days

When you're not well, take the sick time you need. If sick days are part of your compensation package, take the time off that you need. Not taking it is like throwing away money. If you're a freelancer who doesn't have paid sick days, it can be very easy to fall into the opposite time-is-money trap and try to power through illnesses. Keep in mind that sometimes it's best to rest and get better so that you can be your most productive self in the long term.

15. Look for Training Opportunities

When you're not in an office with your fellow employees, you might miss out on training and skills development courses that are taught in person. Your company might even forget to add you to its online training courses. It can be tempting to regard this as a dodged bullet, but you might be missing out on an opportunity to learn something useful. Speak up and make sure you're included.

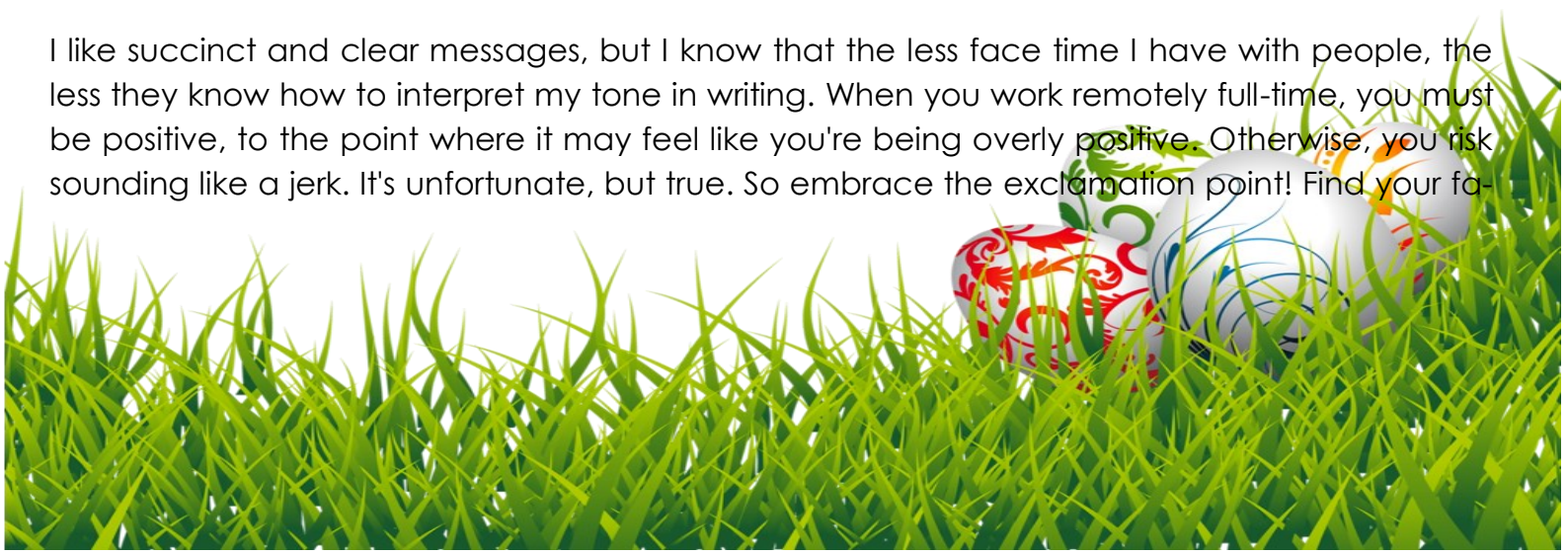
In addition to top-down training, you can request online or in-person courses, training, and coaching if you need it. For people who work remotely 100 percent of the time, look for learning opportunities that are taught at the company's headquarters or your closest office. That way, you get training and face time with colleagues.

16. Overcommunicate

Working remotely requires you to overcommunicate. Tell everyone who needs to know about your schedule and availability often. When you finish a project or important task, say so. Overcommunicating doesn't necessarily mean you have to write a five-paragraph essay to explain your every move, but it does mean repeating yourself. Joke about how you must have mentioned your upcoming vacation six times already, then mention it again.

17. Be Positive

I like succinct and clear messages, but I know that the less face time I have with people, the less they know how to interpret my tone in writing. When you work remotely full-time, you must be positive, to the point where it may feel like you're being overly positive. Otherwise, you risk sounding like a jerk. It's unfortunate, but true. So embrace the exclamation point! Find your fa-



18. Take Advantage of Your Perks

Every week, I bake a loaf of bread. Why? Because I work from home and I can. Plus, I enjoy it. When I worked in an office full-time, I struggled to find the time to pop something into the oven that often. Working remotely comes with unique perks. Take advantage of them. You deserve it.

19. Don't Be Too Hard on Yourself

The most successful remote employees have a reputation for being extremely disciplined. After all, it takes serious focus to do any full-time office job from an unconventional space. That said, everyone lets their attention drift sometimes. If you find yourself working one minute and booking flights for your upcoming vacation the next, don't reprimand yourself too harshly. Instead, ask yourself whether people in an office setting do the same thing. If the answer is yes, cut yourself some slack, then get back to work.

20. End Your Day With a Routine

Just as you should start your day with a routine, create a habit that signals the close of the workday. It might be a sign off on a business messaging app, an evening dog walk, or a 6 p.m. yoga class. Something as simple as shutting down your computer and turning on a favourite podcast will do. Whatever you choose, do it consistently to mark the end of working hours.

Make It Personal

Above all else, figure out what works best for you. Sometimes the answer is apparent, but other times you might need some inspiration from other people who are in the same boat. A supportive community of remote employees does exist, whether you find them in your organization's Slack channel or online through blogs or Twitter.

Source: [pcmag.com](https://www.pcmag.com)



WHAT IS ZOOM AND HOW DOES IT WORK



What is Zoom ?

Zoom is a cloud-based video conferencing service you can use to virtually meet with others - either by video or audio-only or both, all while conducting live chats - and it lets you record those sessions to view later. Over half of Fortune 500 companies reportedly used Zoom in 2019.

When people are talking about Zoom, you'll usually hear the following phrases: Zoom Meeting and Zoom Room. A Zoom Meeting refers to a video conferencing meeting that's hosted using Zoom. You can join these meetings via a webcam or phone. Meanwhile, a Zoom Room is the physical hardware setup that lets companies schedule and launch Zoom Meetings from their conference rooms.

Zoom Rooms require an additional subscription on top of a Zoom subscription and are an ideal solution for larger companies.



Zooms main features:

Here are Zoom's core features:

1. **One-on-one meetings:** Host unlimited one-on-one meetings even with the free plan.
 2. **Group video conferences:** Host up to 500 participants (if you purchase the "large meeting" add-on). The free plan, however, allows you to host video conferences of up to 40 minutes and up to 100 participants.
- Screen sharing:** Meet one-on-one or with large groups and share your screen with them so they can see what you see.

How does zoom work?

Choose your plan

- 1 Zoom allows one-to-one chat sessions that can grow into group calls, training sessions and webinars for internal and external audiences, and global video meetings with up to 1,000 participants and as many as 49 on-screen videos. The free tier allows unlimited one-on-one meetings but limits group sessions to 40 minutes and 100 participants. Paid plans start at \$15 per month per host.
- 2 Zoom offers four pricing tiers (not including a Zoom Room subscription):
 1. **Zoom Free:** This tier is free. You can hold an unlimited number of meetings. Group meetings with multiple participants are capped at 40 minutes in length, and meetings can't be recorded.
 2. **Zoom Pro:** This tier costs \$14.99/£11.99 per month and meeting host. It allows hosts to create personal meeting IDs for repetitive Zoom Meetings, and it allows meeting recording in the cloud or your device, but it caps group meeting durations at 24 hours.
 3. **Zoom Business:** This tier costs \$19.99/£15.99 per month and meeting host (10 minimum). It lets you brand Zoom meetings with vanity URLs and company branding, and it offers transcripts of Zoom meetings recorded in the cloud, as well as dedicated customer support.
 4. **Zoom Enterprise:** This tier costs \$19.99/£15.99 per month and per meeting host (100 minimum) and is meant for businesses with 1,000+ employees. It offers unlimited cloud storage for recordings, a customer success manager, and discounts on webinars and Zoom Rooms.
 5. **Optional - Zoom Rooms:** If you want to set up Zoom Rooms, you can sign up for a free 30-day trial, after which Zoom Rooms require an additional \$49/£39 per month and room subscription, while webinars using Zoom cost \$40/£32 per month and host.



Zoom app downloads:

The desktop app is available for Windows and macOS, while the mobile app is available for Android and iOS.

All the apps let you join a meeting without signing in, but also let you sign in using a Zoom account, Google, Facebook, or SSO. From there, you can start a meeting, join a meeting, share your screen in a Zoom Room by entering the meeting ID, start Zoom Meetings, mute/unmute your mic, start/stop the video, invite others to the meeting, change your screen name, do in-meeting chat, and start a cloud recording.

If you're a desktop user, you can also start a local recording, create polls, broadcast your Facebook live on Facebook, and more. In other words, the desktop app is more fully featured, although, if you're a free user, you can still get a lot of mileage from the mobile app.

Zoom outlook plugins:

As well as the various other Zoom app downloads, it is also possible to use Zoom in other ways. For example, there's a Zoom Outlook plugin that's designed to work directly in your Microsoft Outlook client or as an Add-in for Outlook on the web. This Outlook plug drops a Zoom button right into the standard Outlook toolbar and lets you start or schedule a Zoom meeting with a simple click.

Zoom browser extensions:

Another tool for quickly starting or scheduling a Zoom meeting comes in the form of an extension for your favourite browser. There is a Zoom Chrome extension and Zoom Firefox add-on that let you schedule a Zoom meeting via Google Calendar. A simple click on the Zoom button and you can start a meeting or schedule one for later with all the information on the meeting being sent via Google Calendar to make it easy for participants to join.

Using Zoom in your browser:

It's fairly tricky to join a Zoom meeting in your browser without using the app. It is possible however. For example, you can join a meeting directly by using a Zoom web client link that looks something like this— [zoom.us/jc/join/your-meeting-id](https://zoom.us/join/your-meeting-id).

Some clever bods have also worked out a browser extension that let's you join a Zoom meeting straight from your browser without the hassle of the app. This is ideal if you're on a secure work laptop that doesn't let you install any apps for example.

Source:

<https://www.pocket-lint.com>

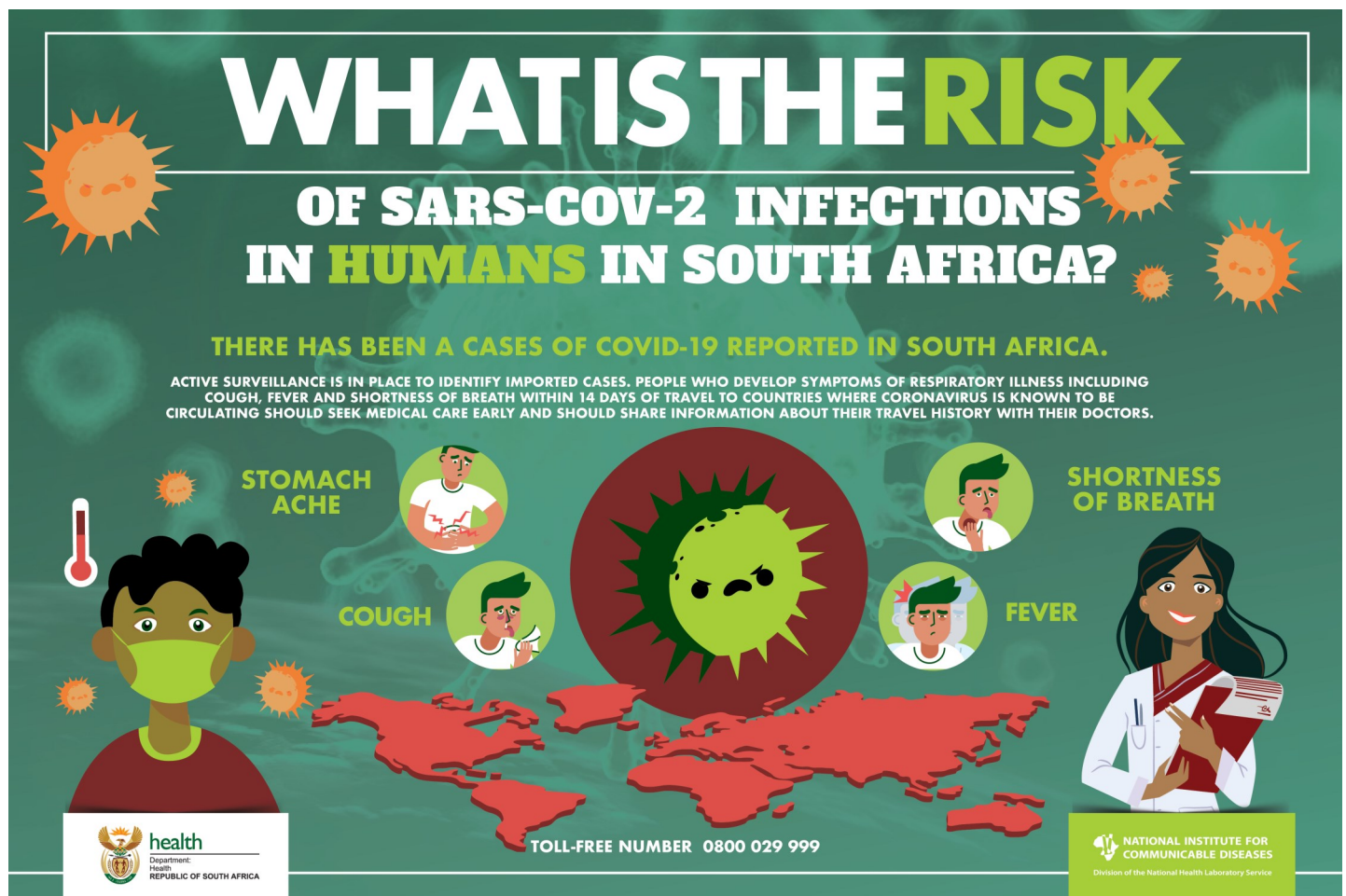


WHAT IS THE RISK

OF SARS-COV-2 INFECTIONS IN HUMANS IN SOUTH AFRICA?

THERE HAS BEEN A CASES OF COVID-19 REPORTED IN SOUTH AFRICA.

ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE IS IN PLACE TO IDENTIFY IMPORTED CASES. PEOPLE WHO DEVELOP SYMPTOMS OF RESPIRATORY ILLNESS INCLUDING COUGH, FEVER AND SHORTNESS OF BREATH WITHIN 14 DAYS OF TRAVEL TO COUNTRIES WHERE CORONAVIRUS IS KNOWN TO BE CIRCULATING SHOULD SEEK MEDICAL CARE EARLY AND SHOULD SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TRAVEL HISTORY WITH THEIR DOCTORS.



STOMACH ACHES

COUGH

FEVER

SHORTNESS OF BREATH

TOLL-FREE NUMBER 0800 029 999

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

 **NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**
Division of the National Health Laboratory Service



NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

BASIC PRINCIPLES TO REDUCE THE GENERAL RISK OF TRANSMISSION OF ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. AVOIDING CLOSE CONTACT**
WITH PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS.

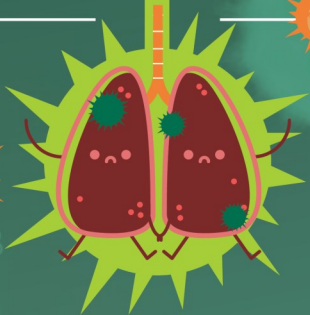

- 2. FREQUENT HANDWASHING,**
ESPECIALLY AFTER DIRECT CONTACT WITH ILL PEOPLE OR THEIR ENVIRONMENT, OR IF YOU ARE ILL.


- 3. AVOIDING UNPROTECTED CONTACT**
WITH FARM OR WILD ANIMALS IF TRAVELLING IN CHINA.


- 4. WHEN SNEEZING OR COUGHING**
YOU SHOULD COVER YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH WITH A TISSUE OR ARM AND NOT YOUR HANDS.



SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION
IN CASE OF SYMPTOMS SUGGESTIVE OF RESPIRATORY ILLNESS BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER TRAVEL, THE TRAVELLER MUST SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION AND SHARE THEIR TRAVEL HISTORY WITH THEIR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER.

TOLL-FREE NUMBER 0800 029 999

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Good Governance

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