

SASSA Statement in Response to Corona Virus Outbreak

TO: All Media

For immediate release
19 March 2020

President Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act when made an announcement on the 15th of March 2020.

Following the above declaration, the government has prohibited large gatherings of no more than 100 people, and as SASSA we work with people and communities, our offices are often jam-packed on a daily basis because of the services we provide to the country at large.

The President's call to action has made us take our own precautionary measures. This situation calls for urgent action to be taken looking at our daily and monthly business as SASSA and SAPO. Beneficiaries are requested to avoid collecting their grants on the first day of payment due to the high pedestrian traffic at shopping malls and other outlets.

The following measures have been put in place with immediate effect in all SASSA offices to ensure the safety of our clients and staff and, most importantly, that no services are interrupted:

DRAWING MONEY ON FIRST PAYMENT DAY

Beneficiaries are advised to avoid collecting their grants on the first day of payment due to the high pedestrian traffic at shopping malls and other outlets, which is a health risk during this period. Once SASSA has paid money into a beneficiary's account the money will stay there and can be accessed at any day of the month instead of taking a health risk of visiting an outlet on the first day of the month.

ICROP- INTEGRATED COMMUNITY REGISTRATION OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

All ICROP programmes are suspended with **immediate effect** as most of our outreach programme are attended by more than 100 people (including children and the elderly).

HOME VISITS

Home, clinic and hospital visits by SASSA officials are suspended with immediate effect. Where a client is above 75 years of age and is bedridden and unable to report to a SASSA office, an application process can be completed under section 15 and Regulation 10 (1) of Social Assistant Act, 2004 to have a procurator or proxy apply on behalf of the affected client.

The chosen procurator must be appointed in writing and produce that letter together with all their documents including identity card so that the application can be processed. The application will follow normal process.

MANAGING NUMBERS AT LOCAL OFFICES.

Local Office Managers will ensure that the allowed number per day rule is adhered to so that no more than 100 people are served at a time. The number will depend on the size of the waiting area. The number allowed in must make provision for a space between clients and adequate ventilation.

In addition, both SASSA and SAPO have put up notices at entrances of their offices advising the public that access to the premises will be limited to less than 100 persons at any given point.

Clients are advised not to report to local offices for simple enquiries but to rather call SASSA and SAPO on their toll-free customer care numbers. We also encourage them to utilise our social media platforms. All the above mentioned channels will be monitored closely so as to give our clients the best service they require.

MANAGING NUMBERS AT CASH PAY POINTS.

In terms of managing numbers at cash pay points, the organisation together with SAPO will ensure that the number of clients being serviced at a time does not exceed the national set number of 100 people.

This will also give SASSA the opportunity to interact with their clients and encourage them to consider other alternatives to access their money. Alternatives such as banks which is convenient.

The same space at local offices will be given at cash pay points. Priority will be given to elderly, frail, people with disabilities, mothers with children as well as pregnant women.

SASSA and SAPO staff at pay points will constantly keep clients informed of the process and emphasize that what is being done is to ensure their safety is given preference. Hand sanitizers will also be provided especially to areas where water is limited.

PROTECTION FOR STAFF

All staff dealing directly with clients will be supplied with all the necessary protective kits to ensure that their health is safeguarded.

MANAGING NUMBERS AT POST OFFICE OUTLETS

SASSA together with SAPO will work closely to implement measures to limit the number of public at post office outlets especially on the first few days of grant payments. The same requirements at local offices will apply to post office outlets. Hand sanitizers are available at all post office doors for clients to use before entering the premises.

Additional cash dispensers will be used to ensure that there is no overcrowding around one or two dispensers at cash paypoints and post offices. This will increase the speed of serving clients to ensure that they do not spend a long time at payment facilities.

As government we are calling for a change of behaviour amongst all South Africans and urge everyone to practice personal hygiene.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizers for at least 20 seconds
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow;
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has cold or flu-like symptoms.

We urge all South Africans to work together in helping government to contain this pandemic; United we stand, but divided we fall!

SASSA is committed to paying the right social grants, to the right person at the right time and place. NJALO!

SASSA OFFICES WILL REMAIN OPEN ON WORKING HOURS

All offices that were not operational while awaiting protection kits are and will remain opened. Protective kits are being delivered in batches to all SASSA offices.

For more information call 0800 60 10 11