



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 MARCH 2020

TEAM SA UPDATE: CORONA VIRUS DECLARED NATIONAL DISASTER – IMPLICATIONS FOR ATHLETES AND FEDERATIONS

In a media briefing on 15 March 2020, His Excellency, the President of South Africa declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic a national disaster in terms of section 23(1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act 2002. In his address, President Cyril Ramaphosa listed a number of restrictions to curb the spread of the virus.

The purpose of this update is to detail how these latest developments will influence athletes and federations. *Please note that recommendations may change as further updates or instructions are released by Government, and National Sports and Health Authorities.*

On 16 March 2020, implications of the declaration of a national disaster are as follows:

TRAVEL

- South Africans are advised to avoid travelling to or through Europe, the US, the UK, Iran, South Korea and China
- South Africans who are returning from high-risk countries will be required to undergo testing and self-isolation
- Non-essential local travel must be curtailed
- Travel bans on individuals from high-risk countries, including Italy, Iran, South Korea, China, Spain, Germany, the UK, and the US*
- Foreign nationals from high-risk countries will be denied an entry visa to South Africa*
- South Africa will stop issuing visas to visitors from certain high-risk countries, and revoke visas which have already been issued*

**The last 3 points may influence federations who have plans to host international athletes for training camps /competitions.*

SASCOC advises that athletes should limit all non-essential travel, including travel for competitions or personal travel, until further notice.

COMPETITIONS



- Gatherings of more than 100 people will be prohibited
- **It is recommended that all sports competitions/tournaments be cancelled or postponed until further notice**
- Should your event consist of fewer than 100 people (athletes, officials and spectators), and you are considering continuing with the event, special permission must be granted first by the provincial department of health and then by the deputy director general of national department of health Dr Yogan Pillay: Ygpillay@gmail.com
- In the case of National Competitions that would otherwise have been used as Olympic Qualifiers, the following is suggested as a way forward:

TRAINING

- Athletes who are healthy are advised to continue training but to modify their approach in order to limit exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19). This may mean:
 - Smaller training groups
 - Adapting training times to go to training venue when less busy
 - Discussing home based programmes with your coach where plausible
 - Extra vigilance with precautionary measures such as hand washing and sanitising, cough etiquette, avoiding handshakes/hugs/physical contact
- Athletes who have any symptoms of respiratory or other illness are advised to refrain from training until symptoms resolve or medical advice is obtained
- If an athlete has recently travelled to an area with coronavirus (COVID-19) and displays any signs and symptoms of respiratory illness (sore throat, cough, fever, shortness of breath), please contact the **South Africa COVID-19 HOTLINE: 0800 029 999 (Mon-Fri 8am – 4pm)** for advice on testing and/or self-isolation.

Situation Update: Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games

According to the latest update provided by the IOC and IPC on 12 March 2020, preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games continues as scheduled. On 15 March 2020, however, it was announced that the IOC President, Thomas Bach, has planned emergency discussions with member organisations to “take stock” and respond to coronavirus (COVID-19). The IOC continues to follow recommendations from the World Health Organisation. The IOC will keep supporting the athletes by providing the latest information and developments, which are accessible for athletes worldwide on the [Athlete365 website](https://www.athlete365.com).



Prevention of Illness

In terms of managing the spread of the virus, the following principles apply:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 25 seconds duration. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser (at least 60% alcohol based).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home when you are sick and try and keep distance from others at home.
- People with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practise cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash their hands) and if this occurs after travel, report as soon as possible to health care practitioners.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid contact with farm or wild animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Masks: People with no respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, do not need to wear a mask. The use of masks should be reserved for people who have symptoms of the virus, and for those caring for individuals who have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19 infection. A mask does, however, prevent you from touching your own face, and hence reducing the risk of self-inoculation.

Useful Resources:

1. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
2. <https://www.olympic.org/athlete365/coronavirus/>
3. <http://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/>
4. <https://youtu.be/mOV1aBVYKGA>
5. South Africa COVID-19 HOTLINE: 0800 029 999 (Mon-Fri 8am – 4pm)