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Covid-19 – lockdown eased to allow for some economic activity from the 1 May.

MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION S. AFRICANS CAN NOW RETURN TO WORK – MINISTER PATEL

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EWN 25 April 2020 - Kevin Brandt & Nthakoana Ngatane | about 3 hours ago

JOHANNESBURG – Trade and Industry Minister Ebrahim Patel said more than 1.5 million South Africans will be able to go back to work under level 4 lockdown regulations.

Government has on Saturday afternoon clarified some of the measures announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier this week to ease the lockdown to allow for some economic activity from the 1 May.

Patel said South Africans will be able to buy food from restaurants but under very strict conditions.

Minister Ebrahim Patel says four key points were taken into account to determine if some businesses can be allowed to reopen.

These include the risk posed by the transmission of the coronavirus, the expected impact on the sector of a continued full lockdown, the contribution of the sector to the broader economy and the promotion of community wellbeing.

Patel said a careful balance between getting business up and running and containing the spread of the coronavirus is vital.

“The return to work of increasing numbers of sectors will bring greater levels of workplace testing; in large companies, it will now be possible to test workers and so we will get more reliable, more comprehensive information to feed into our national system.”

Patel has highlighted that people returning to work will take place in a phased in manner.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors will begin to reopen this includes horticulture and the transporting of livestock.

Restaurants and take-away shops will be allowed to operate for deliveries only.

Government has reminded South Africans that the adjustments do not mean completely lifting of the lockdown but merely easing some of the restrictions.

Meanwhile, Cooperative Governance Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said level four also comes with a curfew.

She said inter-provincial travel and visiting each other are still not allowed under level 4 lockdown.

But work and exercise will be allowed under strict conditions.

The minister said level 4 means the lockdown is still in place but there will be more people and companies working.

“Inter-provincial travel will still not be allowed except under exceptional circumstances like people returning to work if their sector or company is open.”

The minister said Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula will provide more details on times and the modes of transport that will be allowed.

“Visiting is still now allowed. You cannot visit your friends, your neighbours and relatives. That is still not allowed. Exercise will be allowed but under very strict conditions - things like gyms will remain closed.”

She said if people don't adhere to the lockdown regulations infections will rise again and the country will go back to level 5 but if infections go down the country will go to level 3.

With over 4,200 infections and almost 80 deaths, Dlamini-Zuma said everyone will be expected to wear masks to guard against the disease.'