



WAPA COVID-19 sustaining network operations.

Paul Colmer 26th March 2020

Following the presidential address last night and the upcoming lockdown on Thursday WAPA intends to support all members in maintaining their business and clients during this time.

This document is advised policy and will be amended daily to keep in line with governmental policy as it rolls out.

Scope

To advise on best practice to minimise person to person contact and safety and hygiene procedures while carrying out essential services to keep clients connected during the lockdown period.

Pre Thursday tasks.

As all staff will be stationed and working from home we advise that that immediate action is taken prior to Thursday lockdown on the matters listed below.

Security

Globally and within South Africa we have a high cyber crime rate and sadly the criminal element will take advantage of the crisis. It is advised that a member of staff is appointed to update all laptops and BYOD devices to be used at home on company network and servers with the latest version of antivirus / malware software. Once completed a deep scan must be executed. Make use of VPN and cloud firewalls with strict policies. Employees often work in teams,

and that can mean using collaboration tools like messaging platforms and video-meeting rooms. Make sure all platforms are management approved and policy set to only use these platforms. If a tool isn't working right, staff might be tempted to download a substitute. Don't let them do it. You could inadvertently introduce a software program with a security flaw — and that means someone unauthorized may be able to access company data, or any personal data you have on that device. Cybercriminals are exploiting the coronavirus outbreak to send fake emails with dangerous links to employees. Here's how it works. The email messages may appear to come from company officials and might ask you to open a link to a new company policy related to the coronavirus. If you click on the attachment or imbedded link, you're likely to download malware onto your device. Advise staff to don't click. Instead, immediately report the phishing attempt to their employer.

In light of the above, sales staff working at home should be contacting existing clients and advising on security VPN and firewalling during the crisis. As this can be deployed as a 'no human contact service sale' it represents an opportunity in boost cash flow in troubled times.

LOCK-DOWN REGULATIONS AND TELECOMS By *Ellipsis* *Regulatory Solutions*

Government has published regulations applying to the COVID-19 lockdown. This note sets out how these impact on the telecommunications industry.

Is telecommunications an essential service? Does this include support industries?

Yes.

The Regulations define “essential services” and “essential goods” and list these in an Annexure. Annexure B sets out categories of essential services, which include:

“13. Newspaper, broadcasting and telecommunication infrastructure and services.”

as well
as

“24. Production, manufacturing, supply logistics, transport, delivery, critical maintenance and repair in relation to the rendering of essential services including components and equipment.”

It is also worth remembering that telecommunications services are an essential input into most of the other listed essential services.

Can my staff continue with service provision under the lockdown?

Yes.

Under the
lockdown:

- Each person is confined to their place of residence “unless strictly for the purpose of performing an essential service”.
- Movement between provinces and between metropolitan and other municipalities is prohibited.
- Any place not involved in the provision of an essential service or good must be closed for the lockdown.

How must they be identified?

An “institution” providing an essential service must do the following:

- The “head of the institution” (CEO or equivalent level) must determine essential services to be performed by his or her institution and must determine the essential staff who will perform these services.
- These essential staff must be issued with a permit by the head of the institution in a form similar to the one provided in the Regulations (This may be delegated if required by the size and complexity of a business).

Note that essential staff may be tested for COVID-19 at any time by enforcement officers.

The Minister of COGTA may issue further directions and vary the existing ones as circumstances dictate. These are extraordinary and dynamic times and we will keep this advice updated....

COVID-19 HR in the workplace guidelines

We have today completed The HR document for this period with an outsourced labour lawyer .

This document is available at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SKl73RMtO-Z6QswfvrWjOvppqg23M4hl/view?usp=sharing>

Travel plans

The current situation will require some of your staff to travel to clients, data centres and high sites for fault resolution on critical services. There will be some sort of pass required for these staff and WAPA has already submitted member names but we are not sure as to whether the passes will be under WAPA or individual company names. A template has already been submitted for a WAPA COVID-19 work access permit. We also do not have information on how the policing of these passes will be carried out by SADF and SAP. We will keep you updated as it unfolds. Irrespective of the process of these

passes, field staff will require company ID cards with photo and hotline number. These need to be created now!

Note; Please make use of the Teraco ' Remote hands service '

The great progress Tim has made with the COVID-19 work permit will be discussed today at our meet at 3pm 25th March. All members have been invited.

Big news on travel , our friends at Herotel have designed a selection of Vehicle sticker for you to download, all that is required is to add your company logo and we hope that the WAPA logo will give some form of herd recognition to both SAP and SADF.

Available at

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10LesS0Rr4CdF2yw1mFSIztulS3x7OFOU?usp=sharing>

The new updated WAPA COVID-19 work permit is available here;

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a_F5phwxxx1S5r7L708n2hv1PDwQMNCI/view?usp=sharing

VERY IMPORTANT

You need to register your company online to gain an essential service certificate, it is available at www.bizportal.gov.za click under services then select COVID-19 essential services register , your company number is required and will start with a M or K , auditors or CIPC doc will have it.

Supply chain

This is a critical part of maintaining your networks and we are working with vendors to keep a stores desk open for the collection of critical network components. We are also investigating whether or not courier companies will be able to get passes to facilitate delivery of such components. Another facet of the supply chain risk is the

packaging used on equipment and should be sanitized when collected from the vendor or your own stores or office. Tim shared this earlier today on how Amazon see the issue of handling stock.

<https://www.inc.com/jason-aten/heres-how-amazon-says-you-should-handle-packages-to-prevent-spread-of-coronavirus.html>

Miro Distribution has sent out to all member its opening time and policies for equipment purchasing, other WAPA member vendors will follow shortly.

We have had feedback from both Miro distribution and Switchcom Distribution, their correspondence is available in Drive links with opening times.

Miro https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xN1wTLO-obD8wKHknjGXyER_NQ4l7aTk/view?usp=sharing

Duxbury

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LczrwbtRh2zFul8DkAOWzFz_jiXfaS6S/view?usp=sharing

High site faults

If the necessity arises to visit a high site, best practices are to be adhered to, under no circumstances should a technician climb a high site alone as risk far exceeds the risk of infection of COVID -19 from a technician partner.

Critical

If a visit to a client is deemed necessary then the following precautions should be adhered to protect both the client and your staff. Maintain a good physical distance from the client and request the client does not breach this. Technician to use disposable gloves and mask during the visit. If equipment or CPE is required to be installed has been unboxed for pre installation programming , the device must be sanitized before install. On completion of install and prior to entering the vehicle to leave the technician must sanitize all tools used in the installation including laptop and cell phone if they

formed part of the process . Normal hand sanitation to be carried out after removal of gloves. We have all in the past been inundated with requests from clients while carrying out new installs to connect Smart TV's, Apple TV's, WiFi printers, range extenders, PC's, Laptops and gaming consoles, alarms and CCTV camera systems. My personal ISP policy in this regard was to help the client with basic connections but advise that setting up dozens of devices in the home was not part of the installation service and should be carried out by your own local IT support guy. I know that some members do offer and charge for general IT services but what we are trying to achieve in the COVID-19 crisis is minimal contact with surfaces during an install. If you have to touch multiple devices in clients home its critical that the techies use the ' mask, glove and scrub' policy.

New clients

I have spoken to many WAPA members and the general consensus is that most are cancelling new installs that are deemed non critical and this applies to faults and maintenance. Having run a large ISP I know that there are many service calls relating to WiFi coverage within the home and suspect this will increase with the lockdown. We will see the call that says ' I've set up my home office in my spare bedroom and the WiFi don't work' I see this to be none critical and would tell them to move to a better part of the house or get a long Ethernet cable. If a client requests a new service then I believe it should be accompanied by a letter of motivation as to why the install is critical. One WAPA member is requesting that the letter of motivation for new connection to work from home should be from the employer of that person and this seems like a sensible idea. Lets keep our techies as safe from non critical installs. Below is a clip latest from minister Patel (Minister of Trade and Industry). Yesterday in the definition of critical.

"...on the digital infrastructure, we regard that as an absolutely critical service, so we will make sure that both the fixed lines and mobile telephony systems are maintained, that workers and professionals connected with any of those would be exempted from

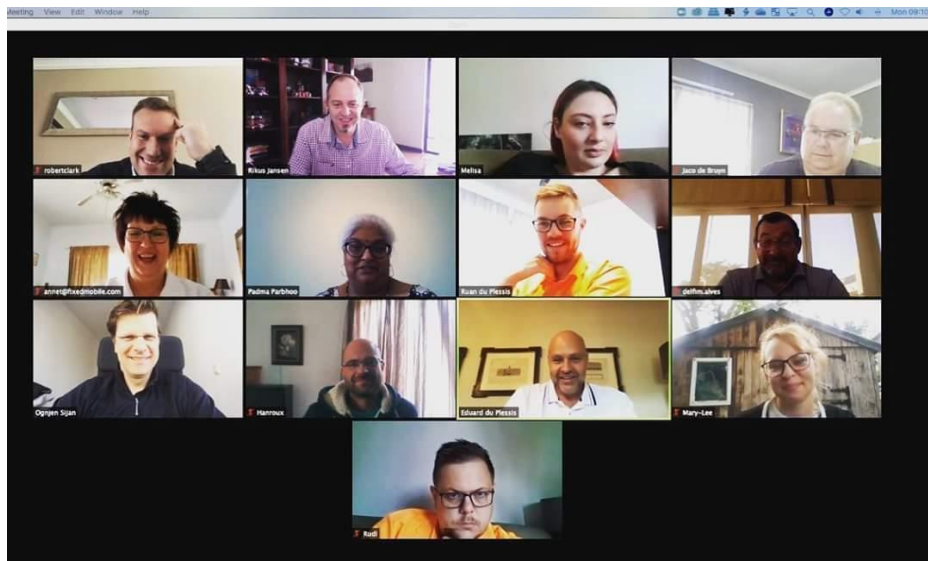
the lockdown because those are critical means of communication, but also of economic activity that can be done from home.”

This clearly explains two things that our industry is deemed critical and that we not only in a health crisis but an economic one too and the need for home connectivity if the request genuinely for working.

Network congestion

We have seen from overseas and the WISP groups that I am a member of there that there has been a surge in network traffic after lockdown. Measures being implemented include media streaming companies to restrict 4k and HD programming and WISP's can take the appropriate action of throttling bit torrents and shaping their networks accordingly. As in my previous correspondence to members cheap IP transit is available if your pipes start to fill. After some research it looks like the Netflix traffic will increase around 60% based on other countries and previous analysis of lockdowns during hurricanes in the US. In hard hit Italy Pornhub viewing peaked at a 57% increase after March 12th when Pornhub Premium package was released for free, yesterday Pornhub Premium was released for free globally. The new de-centralisation of SME and enterprise office staff into private homes will see huge spikes in video conferencing traffic together with uploading and downloading of files that would normally be transported over corporate LAN. A report from Cool Ideas on Mybroadband states daytime traffic is up 100% already.

<https://mybroadband.co.za/news/adsl/343261-massive-boost-in-south-african-netflix-traffic-due-to-coronavirus.html>



The new office of one of our WAPA members 'business as usual'

So as we say here on the beach 'surf is up' so monitor and manage your networks carefully.

We have arranged another special deal during the COVID-19 crisis exclusive for WAPA members with our freinds from Fixed Mobile Telecoms.

The 200 Mg transit and routing table will be made available in all Teracos , with no contract, free of charge to assist you in the crisis. There is no SLA on this free service but it is redundant on 4 cables. The only requirement is that you order your own xconnect in Teraco to Fixed Mobile Telecom racks.

Please contact Rikus Jansen at rikus@fixedmobile.com .

Very special thanks to the team at Fixed Mobile for offering bandwidth relief to our members during the crisis.

Bad debt

In my conversations with overseas WISP's we are also seeing an increase in bad debt from clients, one provider indicated 35% increase. At a time where all WISPs are going feel the pinch this is not good news so the question really is "should I suspend clients for none payment during this period"? My advice here to you and only

my personal opinion is that you should not suspend but throttle down their service still allowing basic access. We don't want to be in a situation where clients use the excuse that we have all heard many times 'how can I pay you when you cut me off from my bank '.

Conclusion

As said before this document will be updated daily as things unfold and any legislation changes are implemented. It is indeed a time for us to drop our badges and unite just as WISP's to service our communities.

WAPA has your back and we are doing our utmost to assist you and most of all please be safe in these troubled times.

Paul Colmer

WAPA executive committee

Update as we enter Level 4

1/ The temperatures of staff must be taken on arrival at the work place and requires consent from the employee. Written or verbal.

Normal human body temperature is between 36.5 and 37 degrees, any temperature exceeding 37.8 would be considered elevated.

Staff showing elevated temperature should be instructed to return home and not enter the workplace.

A record of this testing should be kept but kept in such a manner to respect employees privacy rights.

The device of choice for this testing is a zero touch infrared thermometer.

2/ Employers must provide staff with minimum 2 face masks and mask to be worn in the workplace at all times.

Any member of the public visiting the workplace for essential reasons shall be refused entry if not wearing a mask.

3/ Hand sanitizer to be provided by employer and work stations to be sanitized regularly.

Although not a regulation it is a recommendation that the employer provides hand moisturizer as this prevents drying and cracking of the hands from alcohol based sanitizers.

4/ Employers must screen workers for symptoms of COVID-19 at the time that they report for work; namely fever cough, sore throat, redness of eyes or shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, body aches, loss of smell or loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue and weakness or tiredness. Workers must be advised of these and should immediately inform their employer if they experience any symptoms whilst at work."

5/ Work stations to be positioned 1.5m apart and if this is not possible physical partitions must be put in place.

6/ Any employee who is sent home for any symptom is entitled to sick pay.

7/ If it is subsequently found that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 the employer must inform the Department of Labour immediately.

Just remember “An employer who does not comply with the Direction may be ordered to close their business. In addition, as the failure to comply fully with the OHSA (Occupational Health and Safety Act) is a criminal offence, failure to take the necessary measures to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 may result in criminal prosecution,” quoted Nxsei .

Stay safe guys !

Regards

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