

38

Number of confirmed cases in Botswana

20,186

Number of tests carried out, **20,151** negative

20

Number of recoveries, **18** active cases

1

Number of lives lost to an infection of COVID-19

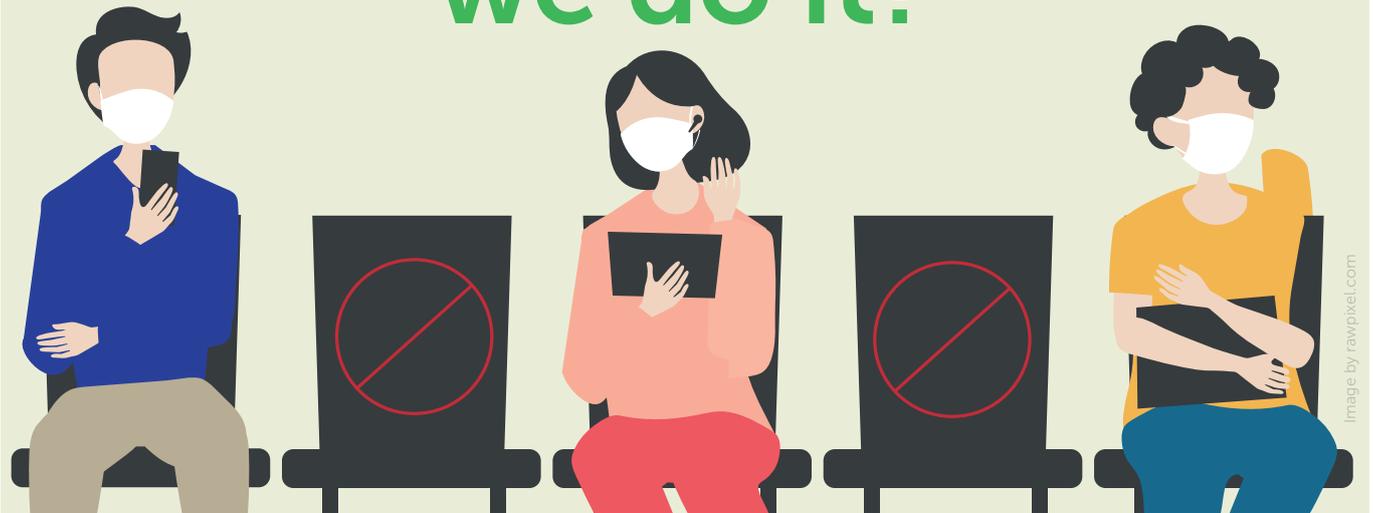
Above figures are as of 31 May.

Life after lockdown

A new context

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken the world into uncharted territory. Strategies to reduce the spread of the virus have been designed, implemented, reviewed and tested on daily basis. There is much trial and error, and many factors are in play. Following a seven-week lockdown, Botswana has lifted movement restrictions which were implemented to fight COVID-19 pandemic. This newsletter highlights some key considerations to keep in mind as we move on from the lockdown to keep ourselves safe.

Moving on from lockdown, how do we do it?



Evidence to date shows that lockdown measures do reduce transmission rates, but there are concerns about how quickly these gains will be reversed if social distancing is stopped or reduced.

For countries that have weathered the COVID-19 storm well so far, the pressure on governments to reopen their societies and economies is intense: from business groups seeing entire industries laid barren; from political commentators reading the economic data and observing a sea of red; from families anxious to see children back in school; from citizenry desperate to get back to work and re-establish some normality in their lives. It is essential that all of us know the best measures to take to stay safe when the lockdown is lifted, because the risk is still very real, potentially sparking a more deadly second wave and undermining the hard-won gains so far.

When the lockdown is lifted it may take a while before we roam the streets without face masks and without the constant need to wash hands or apply hand sanitizers. These measures will surely affect the way we as a people have been living and interacting with each other.

In addition to the measures by Government, we offer this guidance on what you can do as an individual and as a community to stay safe, stay positive and know that with the proper actions we can defeat the coronavirus.

Gradual return to work

As the pandemic continues, unnecessary contact within the workforce and with customers has to be avoided, according to authorities. At the same time, it would be possible for a return to workplaces in some cases when general hygiene measures are put in place. Contact between staff

would, however, have to be minimised. A phased return should be considered to help limit the number of employees on site. This will help with compliance of social distancing regulations. Employers can consider allowing employees to work on a shift system or staggered working. Where remote working is feasible, this should be encouraged.

Modify and disinfect the workplace - Deep cleanse of all areas and facilities, including heating, air conditioning, etc. should be undertaken.

Consider separating workstations or adjusting floor plans to keep employees distanced. Following the initial deep clean, a regular cleaning procedure will be required. At a minimum, cleaning of desks and equipment at the start and end of the day will be required. Consider if any further cleaning throughout the day is necessary, such as shift changes.



Will hot desking and sharing of equipment and stationery be appropriate? Consider regular breaks for handwashing and access to hand sanitisers.

Communal areas such as the kitchen, staff canteens, coffee machines – special consideration is required for the cleaning of these areas. Should they be shut down. Should staff be encouraged to bring all food and drinks from home? Among those most at risk of COVID-19 are the cleaning staff. It is critical to ensure that additional personal protective equipment is provided based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and the areas they work in.

When companies reopen their workspaces, managing movement in offices will be key. In open-plan spaces, workers will need to sit further apart at rows of desks.

Public transport

Public transport will possibly be one of the top concerns for those employees returning to work. Consider the advice on social distancing when using public transport or using shared transport and try to anticipate employee concerns. Many staff prefer to travel to work in their own car where possible.

Organizations may also consider flexible hours/staggered arrivals and departures to avoid rush-hours. In London, the Mayor of the city has

called for passengers on public transport to be compelled to wear face masks, as in other cities, including New York. This is also a requirement for public transport in Botswana, and most vehicles will not run at full capacity to protect passengers.

Going to school

Children in standard seven, form one and five who are due to start a phased return to school from 2 June, may be expected to get to school by foot, bike, public transport or private car, avoiding crowding as much as possible. Schools may consider a slightly earlier start to factor in a staggered drop-off time to avoid large numbers of parents and children gathering at the school gates.

The schools that pupils return to on 2 June and in the following days will look very different from those they left on in March. High levels of hygiene will be recommended where classrooms will have to be cleaned regularly, while students will be expected to observe a strict handwashing regime throughout the day.

Where schools remain open, and to make sure that children and their families remain protected and informed, the UN calls for:

- Providing children with information about how to protect themselves;
- Promoting best handwashing and hygiene practices and providing hygiene supplies;
- Cleaning and disinfecting school buildings, especially water and sanitation facilities; and
- Increasing airflow and ventilation;
- Monitoring children's health and keeping them home from school if they are ill;
- Encouraging children to ask questions and express their concerns; and
- Coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose.

In England, it is reported that some classrooms will be stripped of soft furnishings, and desks, normally in clusters, will be separated. Windows and doors will be kept open for better ventilation and the narrow corridors of Shaw's Victorian school building will be marked out with tape as a one-way system to keep children a safe distance apart. The sharing pots of coloured pencils will be gone, there will be no water play, no sand and no playdough. At Shaw's school, each child will be given a zipped plastic wallet, labelled with their name, which contains a pencil, rubber, four coloured pencils, a glue stick and scissors, which must not be shared.

In some schools, there will be spots on the floor to mark where children will sit when they are not at their desk. The government has advised schools to stagger lunch and play. The children at Tuel Lane will get a packed lunch at their desk to avoid large gatherings in the hall and then each group will be allowed to go and play in their designated part of the playground, marked off with sports cones.



Each group will be allowed one set of simple equipment – for example, balls or hoops – which can be easily cleaned.

The elderly

Senior citizens must continue to take precautions even after restrictions are lifted, doctors have advised. Lower immunity levels and comorbidities¹ put the geriatric population at a higher risk for COVID-19. This is why doctors have been stressing the need to protect the elderly from the infection from the start of the epidemic, and more importantly, say that precautions should continue once the lockdown is lifted.



Moreover, people above 60 years and those with special health conditions should continue to practise teleworking for a few weeks, as the country observes the incidence of the virus. If they are on regular medication for conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart, kidney or liver ailments, they should continue the medicines without fail to avoid complications.

Social distancing for a long time

So, the country's plans to ease the lockdown are highly welcome. Yet, they do not mean a return to pre-pandemic normality. Easing the lockdown will mean people gradually getting more freedom to engage in social and economic activities, but also that they must take good care to keep a safe distance from others. And with the extra freedom comes risk as people suddenly get more opportunities to get close to others.

Social distancing is the most important measure, especially in view of the further easing of other rules. Social distancing will need to remain in place "for a long time", in public places.

We must ensure that regulations on hygiene, access control and the avoidance of queues would have to be met.

New Zealand social bubble approach

New Zealand is emerging from one of the toughest and most successful lockdowns in the world with a national "social bubble" plan. Each household is a bubble. Citizens can now expand their bubble by inviting up to two specific additional people into it who, ideally, live close by. In other words, two bubbles bump together and become one. Social contact increases in a controlled way: grandparents see family, singletons can meet up instead of being home alone.

During the strictest phase of lockdown, most New Zealanders' bubbles were synonymous with their households. But those living alone could also visit and socialize with another person or couple isolating in the same neighborhood or retirement community as long as neither party interacted with anyone else. This was

considered a particularly valuable measure for older people, who are at risk of loneliness that affects mental and physical health.

What makes the bubble idea an effective communication tool is not just its simplicity but also its ability to morph along with changing regulations. As New Zealand now moves into a lighter stage of restrictions, the concept of the bubble is adjusting with it.

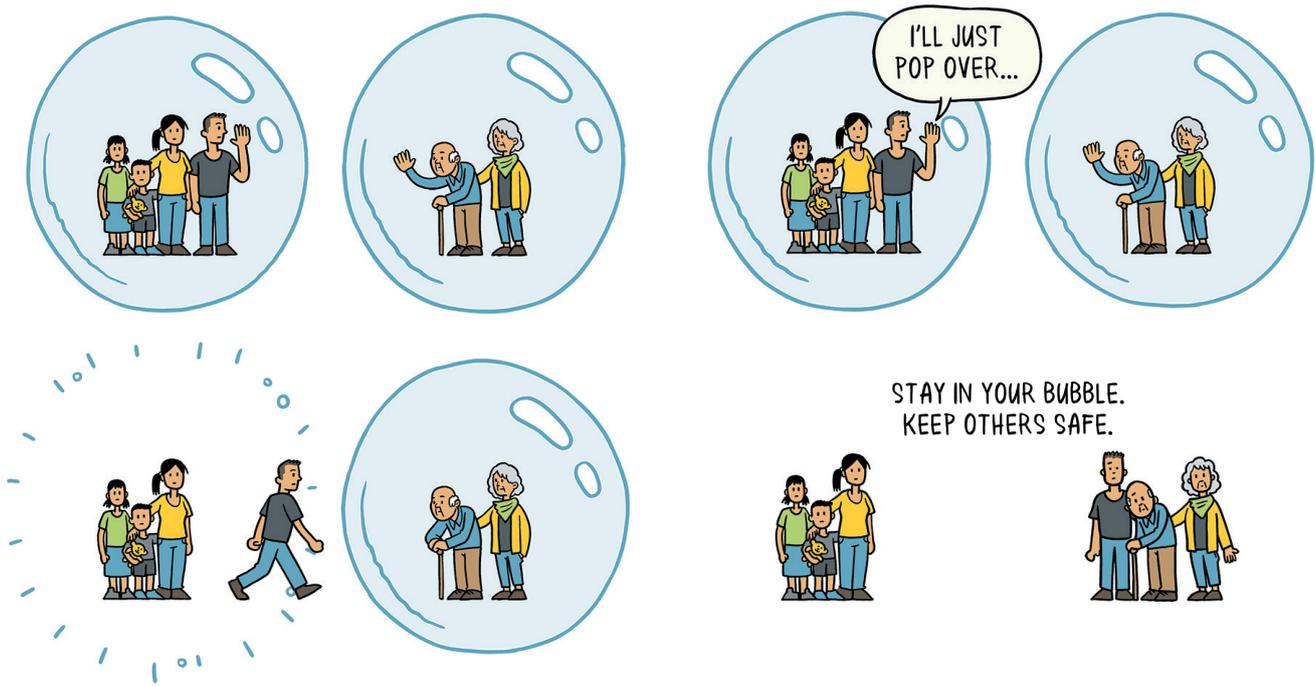
Provide safety resources and training for employees – Staff will require support and training on all the new policies and procedures that may be implemented on their return to work. Employers should provide safety materials to all employees on social distancing, hand washing, surface disinfecting and other related topics.

Mental health – you may already have put in place additional mental health support during lockdown. Many employees will have been affected in some way by the lockdown and you should have appropriate policies in place. Staff will also need to be reassured that measures have been implemented to protect them as they return to work.

Provide safety resources and training for employees – Staff will require support and training on all the new policies and procedures that may be implemented on their return to work. Employers should provide safety materials to all employees on social distancing, hand washing, surface disinfecting and other related topics.

Mental health – you may already have put in place additional mental health support during lockdown. Many employees will have been affected in some way by the lockdown and you should have appropriate policies in place. Staff will also need to be reassured that measures have been implemented to protect them as they return to work.

¹Comorbidity is the presence of more than 1 distinct condition in an individual.



@siouxiew @xtoti thespinoff.co.nz



At First National Bank Botswana, the health and safety of employees and customers is of paramount importance. Prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bank had already been piloting flexible working hours which included working from home. This was done through a project called Flexi-Work as part of the larger Group initiative, Productive Me. The pandemic only accelerated the roll it out faster to all our employees. As such, the majority of staff have

First National Bank Botswana introduces 'Productive Me'

been enabled to work from home and will continue to do so. This period has enabled employees to utilise communication platforms such as Skype and Microsoft Teams and they have successfully been able to continue operations. As a corporate citizen, FNBB is committed to adhering to the set regulations and requirements put in place by the Government. FNBB therefore continues to observe strict social distancing and hygiene protocols across all its branches and premises for the wellbeing of our staff and customers.

In addition, FNBB has provided all staff individual sanitisers for their desks, which they can take home and will continue to provide such as long as the health protocols stay in place.

"In adapting to this new normal, recently together with members of my executive committee, we hosted a series of digital roadshows to update staff on the various initiatives by the Bank and give them a platform to share their sentiments. I believe that there is a silver lining that came with this pandemic, and it was to drive us to digital forms of communication."

said FNBB CEO, Mr Steven Lefentse Bogatsu (pictured above).

List of things to not do immediately after the lockdown ends

Most of you might be vehemently waiting for the lockdown to come to an end. You might be planning to meet your friends, going out for shopping or just paying a visit to the nearby salon. Well, it is better to continue taking the necessary precautions as life won't suddenly return back to normal once the lockdown ends. You would still need to be careful and take care of your health, as the risk of contracting COVID-19 infection would be still there. Here are a few things you should not do immediately after the lockdown ends:

✘ Don't suddenly plan a vacation

It was only the movement of people from one country to another which led to such a worldwide spread of the disease. Even if the lockdown rules are relaxed, try not to plan a family vacation for a few months. It is better to stay at home and be safe, rather than vacationing and risking your health. Vacations may also lead to forced quarantine or being stuck somewhere else for months, if borders are suddenly closed.

✘ Don't stop washing hands

One good habit which the spread of COVID-19 inculcated in people is the punctual washing of hands. Practicing hand hygiene can not only prevent coronavirus but can also keep several other diseases at bay. Even if the spread of coronavirus comes to an end, don't stop this good habit of regularly washing your hands as it will keep you healthy and fit for long.

✘ Don't throw away face masks

As the saying goes 'Prevention is better than cure', it is the best option to still use your masks while in public. There is absolutely no harm in using your extra masks or homemade face masks while going to a crowded place or shopping. Continue using face masks, washing your hands and practicing social distancing at least for a while in order to prevent yourself from getting sick. Remember, masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.

- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks.
- To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

✘ Maintain respiratory hygiene in public places

It is always a bad habit to cough or sneeze openly in public. Droplets through coughing and sneezing is what had led to such a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases worldwide. Thus, it is recommended to maintain your respiratory hygiene while in public. Cover your mouth with a tissue or cough and sneeze in your folded arm.

✘ Don't throw a big home party

With large number of asymptomatic COVID-19 cases coming up, you might never know is infected and who is not. Even if the lockdown ends, it is better to continue practicing social distancing. Avoid throwing big parties, assembling for family functions or having big dinners together. Protect yourself and your family by avoiding social gatherings as much as possible.

