

Covid 19 Furniture Removal Sector Submission

To: **The Honorable Ebrahim Patel, MP**
Minister of Trade and Industry
Per email: KMotlhabi@economic.gov.za; mebrahim@thedti.gov.za

The Honourable Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, MP
Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

Per email: MandisaMB@cogta.gov.za; MathoM@cogta.gov.za;
legadimal@cogta.gov.za; CarolineM@cogta.gov.za

The Honourable Fikile Mbalula, MP
Minister of Transport
Per email: TransportMinistry@dot.gov.za

From: Dirk Smit – AMOSA Chairman
Date: 5th of May 2020

Re: Second Submission to South African National Government to request a controlled opening of The Furniture Removal Industry – Stage 4 Covid 19 Lockdown

Dear Honourable Ministers,

I represent the Accredited Movers of South Africa which operates in the Furniture Removal Sector.

I refer to the National Ministerial briefing that took place on 25th, 29th of April and 1st of May 2020.

I also refer to our written submission on the 26th of April 2020.

Reasonability of exclusion from operation

It was with dismay that we learned of parts of the road freight logistics chain not being allowed to operate – chiefly these are:

Our sector of road freight applies strict hygiene protocols for employees, premises and goods handled. These include (amongst others) individual cleaning and wrapping, bound items to secure against breakage, isolated and quarantine storage for exports, sanitary storage for long term items, pre and post venue cleaning and sanitizing services as well as employee protection against dust, chemical contamination and general injury. Our sector operates at high levels of professionalism and is as strict and professional about their commitment to safety and hygiene as are other fast market consumer goods transporters.

As an industry we are requesting direct consultation from the Ministry of DTI and the DOT for our industry. The recent media briefing and the message conveyed by the The Department of Transport's Director General, stated that Furniture Removal is not permitted.

The replying statement in our opinion was misunderstood due to media question asked. The reference was confused with the 7 day grace period for the once off movement of people as per applicable gazette.

Since the briefing no further clarity has been forthcoming in the form of published regulations which clarify the type of cargo movement in Stage 4

As formalized industry experts in Furniture Removals, our association can assist The Ministries to guide our industry to manage a proper controlled return to operations in Stage 4.

The transfer or moving of furniture move is traditionally a "closed environment" – the consignor and consignee being identical in most instances – the venue being the only change in the chain. In most cases the crew and vehicle(s) involved in the loading are used in the offloading (delivery). In acknowledging the low level of contamination risk, as well as the need for the sector to begin generating income to support its employees,

We would further wish to furnish the Ministerial Committee with our reasoning and commitment to participate in the gradual lockdown stages presented. Our association has strict guidelines for quality control of minimum audited standards throughout our membership and have a proven track record of discipline and adherence to policy.

I resubmit some of our previous submission below.

The following special circumstances & needs have been identified by us which is currently impacting financially on livelihood and well-being of customers and employees.

1. Prior to lockdown numerous clients were in transit to new homesteads. These families could not relocate into their new homes in time and were placed in storage. They are now without their furniture, clothing and personal belongings.
2. Various companies, like mining companies are transferring staff and expertise to where critical staff shortages occur. These transfers are essential to take place.
3. People retrenched or unemployed need to relocate to family or more affordable accommodation.
4. Families that have retired and need to relocate to their retirement homes or properties.
5. New home purchases or families having sold their properties prior to lockdown need to relocate and are paying rental and new bonds.
6. With the opening of the Deeds Office transfers of sold properties will commence with the buyer being able to move and occupy the property.
7. End of lease tenants with deposits paid for new rental are currently requiring relocation. Rental is being levied on both properties.
8. International shipments of household furniture are in receiving ports or nearby storage facilities. The non-delivery of these consignments is accruing demurrage costs which have a dire financial implication to the owner of the furniture.
9. The Furniture Removal Transport industry and associated services employs in excess of 8000 employees that desperately require an income.
10. Delivery of manufactured commercial furniture for household retailers need to start with delivery to clear warehouses.
11. Associated delivery of secondary essential commodities like mattresses, beds and institutional equipment & furniture are going to start manufacturing which is a large portion of the Furniture Removal Industry business.
12. Shipping warehouses are full and need to deliver shipments to ease congestion already taking place at SA Ports.

Our proposal to address the current situation and to restart our industry in a structured manner is proposed as follows:

1. That all members strictly adhere to a Covid 19 best practise safety requirement as per our drafted Workplace Control document.
2. That all operational members evaluate the urgency of the consignments and structure consignments accordingly.
3. That all members register with the CIPC registrar for essential services.
4. That all staff & crew are identifiable by official company documentation.

5. That all consignments are properly documented to show full details of consignment ownership and destination.
6. The business nature of furniture removal does not have a high social contact risk due to dedicated loading and drop off points.
7. A strict safety protocol with consignment management is achievable.
8. Social distancing is easily achieved due to the very nature of our operations. Staff screening and minimal contact with public is very manageable.
9. Consignee and consignor screening and safety management is achievable due to dedicated teams dedicated transporting of furniture and volume cargo.
10. Provincial border crossing would in many instances be required but once again dedicated staff, subject to safety protocol manages the drivers, crew from consignment from origin to destination.
11. All vehicles to carry the following:
 - a. Register of staff and identifiable documentation associated with every individual consignment for tracing purposes.
 - b. Applicable consignment notes or invoice stating details of origin, consignment description and destination.
 - c. Copy of CPIC registration document with company details
12. All staff to wear applicable PPE to combat any contamination as per protocol.
13. Social distancing to be part and parcel of the execution of all work done.
14. All Clients, consignees and consignors to be informed of all safety protocols whilst moving of goods is taking place to eliminate unnecessary contact.
15. All operational companies to ensure vehicles are sanitised regularly.
16. During the refuelling of vehicles staff will be instructed to adhere to Covid 19 best practice Health and Sanitising protocols.

We trust you will evaluate and respond favourably to our proposal of Stage 4 operations upliftment and proposed self-regulation.

We avail ourselves to actively engage, participate & supply any clarity sought. As a formalized industry with industry experts, we are willing to provide Government with full cooperation through consultation to gain information of how the industry functions and operates.

Yours sincerely

Dirk Smit – AMOSA Chairman