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Essential services to remain in place as South Africa enters lockdown

At midnight on Thursday, 26 March, South Africa will go on a nationwide lockdown with the exception of essential services.

This announcement was made by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday evening, following a meeting held on Sunday with the National Coronavirus Command Council in a bid to contain and slow down the spread of the Coronavirus in the country.

This announcement follows a week after the President declared the outbreak a national state of disaster.

Exempt from this lockdown includes those involved in the **production, distribution and supply of food and basic goods**, health workers in the public and private sector, emergency personnel, those in security services, essential banking services, the maintenance of power, water and telecommunications services, laboratory services, and those involved in the provision of medical and hygiene products.

Although exact details are not yet available, individuals will not be allowed to leave their homes except under strictly controlled circumstances, such as to seek medical care, buy food, medicine and other supplies or to collect social grants.

“Companies that are essential to the production and transportation of food, basic goods and medical supplies will remain open,” said the President.

“Agricultural operations will continue. It would be wrong to say it is ‘business as usual’ as we will need to change some of what we do – but operations must continue,” says Justin Chadwick, Chairman of Fruit South Africa. With the South African citrus, pome and avocado season now in full swing and the table grape season into its final two weeks, it is essential for the industry to remain calm and focus on the continuation of business.

The South African fruit industry is committed to adhere to government protocols and to do everything in their power to protect all industry role players. The education of workers at farm level is key in containing the spread of the virus among workers and the various local industry bodies are in daily contact with their growers facilitating the flow of information. Fruit South Africa has developed a set of guidelines to educate the industry on basic hygiene in the workplace, screening and social distancing. It is critical that those who are allowed to continue operating, do so responsibly.



The fruit value chain from packhouse to orchard already subscribes to the highest international food safety standards. All South African packhouses are accredited and follow strict guidelines.

South African ports will remain open for the import and export of essential goods. The South African fruit industry is committed to make the next 21 days count and be part of the solution by continuing to supply healthy fruit, high in vitamins and minerals, to consumers domestically and abroad while all measures are being taken to protect workers and their families.

On behalf of Fruit South Africa
24 March 2020
For immediate release

