

Transport revises taxi regulations during lockdown

Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has announced revised regulations that call on the taxi industry to among others, reduce the number of passengers ferried per ride during the 21-day nationwide lockdown, implemented to curb the spread of Covid-19.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

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He addressed the media at the Noord Taxi Rank on Wednesday, shortly after addressing traffic officers who have been deployed to ensure compliance with the published regulations during the lockdown.

Under the regulations, passenger numbers are determined according to the licensed capacity of the vehicle.

During the lockdown period, the following public transport vehicles must reduce the number of maximum passengers to 70% of the licensed capacity, with no masks as follows:

- A minibus licensed to carry 10 passengers is limited to carry a maximum of 7 passengers.

- A minibus licensed to carry 15 passengers is limited to carry a maximum of 10 passengers.
- A midi-bus permitted to carry a maximum of 22 passengers, is limited to carry a maximum of 15 passengers
- A vehicle licensed to carry a maximum of four passengers is limited to carrying 50% of its permissible passenger-carrying capacity.

Alternatively, all minibus and midi-bus taxi vehicles are permitted to load their maximum 100% passenger loading capacity as provided for in their operating licenses, provided that all passengers are wearing masks.

The masks must be either surgical masks or N95 respiratory masks.

Mbalula further reiterated the call for public transport operators to sanitise vehicles.

During the lockdown, taxis are only allowed to ferry a limited number of people as a measure to curb the spread of Covid-19.

Under the regulations announced by the Minister following the declaration of Covid-19 as a National State of Disaster, public modes of transport were allowed to operate from 5am-9am and again from 4pm-8pm. However, these times have now been revised to 5am-10am and again from 4pm to 8pm.

Following consultations with the taxi industry - in particular South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) and the National Taxi Alliance (NTA) on Wednesday - Mbalula said the revised regulations will contribute to the preservation of life.

"Despite the economic challenges faced in the industry we were able to reach an agreement that guarantees continuous availability of public transport during the lockdown period.

"We must all appreciate that the measures we have introduced to curb the spread of this virus are about preserving human life and not about our individual narrow self-serving interest. Everyone must appreciate this and play their part," he said.

Post the lockdown period, the Minister said government will prioritise the National Taxi Indaba, which will tackle pressing and strategic issues facing the taxi industry.

The taxi industry operates on the fringes of the formal economy despite having the largest market share of all public transport modes, in excess of 60%.

In light of the payment of social grants, which got underway on Monday, Mbalula amended the public transport directions under the National State of Disaster. Effective only between 30 March 2020 and Friday, 3 April 2020, buses and taxis are permitted to operate from 5am until 8pm.