

SAB defends transportation of booze following lockdown arrests

The South African Breweries (SAB) has responded to the arrests of seven of its employees and two third-party drivers, as well as the impounding of various loads on 8 April. The arrests occurred on Wednesday morning during a roadblock on the N1 in Silverton in Gauteng where the employees were in transit with several loads of alcohol.



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The sale and transportation of alcohol during the nationwide lockdown is prohibited, but the company said in a statement that the movement of the alcohol at its seven breweries is specifically provided for in the lockdown regulations, and in particular Regulation 11 B 4A of Chapter 2. "This pre-approved plan is aimed at ensuring the safety of our employees, the communities around our operations, the environment and our inventory," it said.

SAB explained that the alcohol in transit at the time of arrest and seizure was packaged inventory which had to be moved to an SAB-owned offsite storage facility as its warehouse storage capacity at the breweries had reached permissible limits.

"The alcohol seized was not for sale or distribution and was always in SAB's possession. Further to this, permission to transport a portion of our packed inventory had been obtained and SAB continues to operate within the confines of the law," SAB said.



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The company said it has since engaged both the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the police to clarify its "orderly wind-down measures" and has "subsequently shared all requisite approvals and permits".

"SAB wishes to assure government and the public that it is not in contravention of the law, and takes seriously the President's call to lockdown the country to safeguard our people's health and wellness. We are committed to complying with the Disaster Management Act and the lockdown regulations. As an organisation we are here to play our part not only in fighting the pandemic, but in protecting the wellbeing of our communities, our employees, and our contributions towards the economy."

All employees who have been confronted by the police are being assisted with the aid of SAB's legal representative Bowmans as well as SAB's internal legal counsel.

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