

Covid-19 - Essential services during nationwide lockdown

Lockdown | Step-by-step guide to registering your business as an essential service

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fin24

South Africans headed to liquor stores on Thursday morning to stock up on booze and other non-essential items ahead of the nationwide lockdown. This after Minister of Police, Bheki Cele announced that no alcohol would be sold for the next 21 days.

South African businesses are now able to apply online and automatically download a certificate to prove they are essential service providers, as the country gears up to implement a 21-day national lockdown.

During this period, only businesses deemed essential by government will be able to continue trading.

Minister of Trade and Industry Ebrahim Patel on Wednesday announced that businesses can apply for required certification via the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission's [Bizportal website](http://bizportal.gov.za/) (bizportal.gov.za/) from Thursday. The website was experiencing problems on Thursday morning. While these initially appeared to have been fixed by around noon, there were again reports of problems into the afternoon.

A list of businesses recognised as [essential services](#) has been gazetted by Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. The gazette (Regulation Gazette 43148) indicates that essential goods and services include grocery stores, pharmacies, spaza shops, and funeral services, [among others](#).

CIPC official Ofentse Shakung told Fin24 via text message on Thursday that the application and registration process would be "immediate". It is an automatic electronic process and certification will be made available instantly. "The process will be completely electronic, on the BizPortal website. A physical certificate will also be issued on the same website," Shakung said. Businesses will be able to apply throughout the duration of the lockdown period.

According to the DTI the process is as follows:

STEP 1:

Go to the Bizportal website at <https://bizportal.gov.za/>, which looks like this:

STEP 2

After clicking on the Services tab, on the top right of the page, you will be taken to a new page with icons. The icon you want to click on next is the Covid-19 essential services icon - which is bright red.

PLEASE NOTE: BizPortal services are currently offline, except for Essential Service application for businesses that provide essential services. The rest of the BizPortal services will be activated after the National Lockdown has been lifted. Attempting to use any of the services will keep redirecting you to the login page, which is not activated.

 Biz Profile	 Company Registration	 Tax Registration
 Domain Name Registration	 B-BBEE Certificates	 Compensation Fund
 UIF Registration	 Business Bank Accounts	 Company Name Changes
 COVID-19 Essential Services		

STEP 3:

Once you click on this Covid-19 essential services icon, you will be taken to another page where you will be able to make an application to the CIPC. The page includes a list of essential services. Scroll down to the bottom where you will find the application icon.

- Port, docking and airport services and undertaking
- Postal
- Production of fuel and lubricants
- Health and medical
- Solid waste management and public cleaning
- Radio communication including broadcasting and TV
- Telecommunication
- Transport by land, water or air
- E-Commerce
- Security
- Food supply
- Wildlife
- Hotels and accommodation

Please refer to this [document](#) for a comprehensive list of critical services required during the imposition of restricted movement.

 New Application	 Download Certificate	 View List
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STEP 4:

According to the DTI, the application will be a "simple declaration", requiring minimal registration details, including this such as the type of business/trade, trading name, whether it meets the requirements contained in the essential services list. The list of essential services is available on the website too.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE BUSINESSES » APPLY

Before you apply make sure that your business falls into the list of categories that are allowed to trade during the National Lockdown. Supplying incorrect information is a criminal offense and will lead to prosecution.

ENTITY SEARCH

Type in enterprise number

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SEARCH

The person applying must fill out their contact details, as well as the number of employees that will be working during the lockdown period.

The CIPC registry will then pre-populate the remaining company information.

A certificate stating that the business is allowed to remain trading will be emailed or can be downloaded from the site.

The certificate can then be used as evidence to authorities – to show the business has been given government permission to trade, according to the DTI. The business's employees will have unrestricted movement, only in the course of the trade.

"It should be stressed and noted that if you make a false application to the CIPC, and are indeed not an essential service as per the government regulations, such will be taken as a fraudulent application and will render yourself as applicant liable to criminal prosecution and sanction," the DTI warned.