

Master Builders KwaZulu-Natal
COVID-19 CHALLENGES



Opening remark

Historically, the South African construction industry has focused on the 'safety' component of health and safety (H&S) as opposed to the 'health' component, despite the 'health' issues being more pronounced and more serious in nature, depending on the occupational disease (OD).

CHALLENGES COVID-19

Challenges:

- Implementing the R2W protocols are challenging for contractors
- Cost of site closures due to positive cases to deep clean workplace
- Lack of understanding by SMME related to COVID-19
- Sectoral guidelines drafted and still not published (DEL)
- Medicals: spiro-testing and future issues around this
- Three historical challenges:
 - ❖ Transportation of workers remains a concern
 - ❖ Welfare facilities
 - ❖ Provision of personal protective equipment (PPE)



CHALLENGES COVID-19

Challenges:

- **Implementing the R2W protocols are challenging for contractors**
 - Getting employees to self assess before coming to work.
 - Getting sub-contractors to assess their employees before bringing them to the site and obtain R2W protocols
 - Reporting of Symptoms by the employee and employer
 - Reporting of Incidents
 - Is the Policy updated and make reference to COVID – 19
 - Is the route of exposure clearly defined (process chart)
 - Is there special measures to cater for vulnerable workers
 - Social distancing
- **Cost of site closures due to positive cases to deep clean workplace**
 - Deep cleaning of positive case
 - Contact tracing
 - Impact on staff involved

CHALLENGES COVID-19 cont

Lack of understanding by SMME related to COVID-19

- Don't have OHS staff employed
- Inconsistency among Main Contractors requirements

Sectoral guidelines drafted and still not published (DEL)

Medicals: spiro-testing and future issues around this

Three historical challenges:

- **Transportation:**

Transportation of workers which has not reflected compliance, which in turn, has resulted in a high level of motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) in the course of employment.

- **Welfare Facilities:**

Construction Regulations, are generally not ideal or compliant. Optimum washing of hands, within the context of COVID-19, requires adequate wash hand basins (WHBs), liquid soap, and paper towel for drying. Then providing and dispensing of hand sanitiser is an added issue, which may require the appointment of additional personnel, which has financial implications.



CHALLENGES COVID-19 cont

- **Provision of personal protective equipment (PPE)**

Which has raised a number of issues, among other, the financing thereof, entails new challenges due to COVID-19, and a related issue is that of disinfecting welfare facilities, change rooms, mess rooms, storage areas, other site establishment, and work areas

Optimum financial provision for transportation, welfare facilities, PPE, and COVID-19 related interventions should be facilitated in detailed H&S preliminaries in Bills of Quantities.



THE WAY FORWARD

A 'new' collective multi-stakeholder approach:

CLIENTS:

- In terms of future projects, client BRAs, and 'designer' and 'contractor' H&S Specifications should highlight the 'COVID-19' issues.
- Design HIRA should consider the 'COVID-19' issue, and designers should respond in the form of the designer report submitted to the client highlighting residual risk.
- Clients should then amend their H&S Specifications for inclusion in contractor documentation, and the 'COVID-19' issues should be itemised in the H&S Preliminaries.

CONTRACTORS:

- Contractors' H&S plans should highlight the response to the 'COVID-19' issues and elaborate on these and work organisation issues in method statements based upon construction HIRA, which in turn should refer to SWPs, and SOPs.

THE WAY FORWARD cont

- Clearly, managing COVID-19 on projects is not solely a site issue, but a project issue that requires a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach. Construction Project Managers (CPMs) have a critical role to play in that they should coordinate and manage design delivery, procurement, integrate design, and construction, and monitor construction.
- Therefore, it is important that Construction Health and Safety Agents (CHSAs) be appointed at Stage 1, and that CPMs and CHSAs review processes such as the design HIRA process including documentation, conduct constructability reviews, and review designs, details, and specifications.

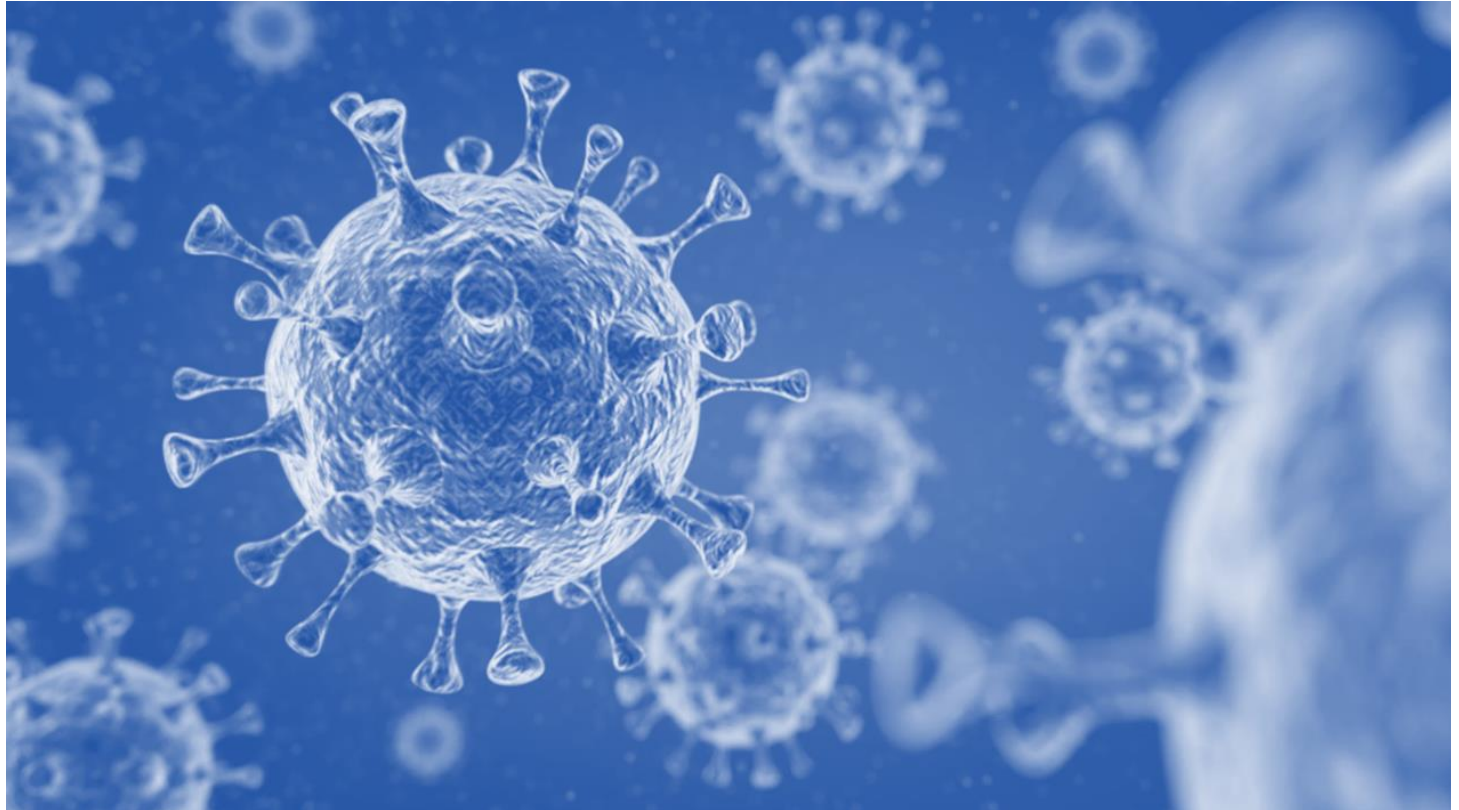


Conclusion

- **COVID-19 is a reality that will have to be managed by all built environment stakeholders upon re-commencement of construction. COVID-19 is unlikely to be the last virus that humans and the built environment will have to contend with, and therefore strategies, systems, procedures, processes, and protocols should be evolved to mitigate its spread.**
- **Legislation and regulations provide the framework, and schedule the minimum requirements. However, they do not necessarily reflect 'best practice'. As in the case of H&S, this is not solely the 'contractor's problem'!**



COVID-19 Induction video



Thank you

Neil Enslin

Occupational Health and Safety Manager

Professional Construction Health and Safety Agent

Email: neil@masterbuilders.co.za

Contact details: 082 38 16170

