

COVID-19 cases climbing in Knysna

The Garden Route is experiencing an unprecedented spike in COVID-19 cases and Knysna is no exception with an increase in positive cases and hospitalisations. “The municipality is also falling victim to the coronavirus,” said Executive Mayor Elrick van Aswegen. “It is affecting both councillors and administrative staff and we must make difficult decisions when considering how to deal with the internal and external implications of the current situation.”

On 2 December Knysna Municipality had a total of 34 active cases among its staff with 108 persons in isolation and 16 more awaiting their test results. 76 persons had already recovered with one person succumbing to the virus.

In August Council resolved that all municipal employees returned to their physical places of work. “We must, however, remain vigilant and responsible,” said van Aswegen. “We must all do everything in our power to prevent and mitigate the spread of this virus.”

To do so, the municipality have employed the following measures:

- All meetings will take place online.
- Employees with proper tools of trade will work from home.
- Employees with comorbidities and those older than 60 will work from home.
- Staff sharing offices will be rotated.
- Essential services will be placed on a shift system.
- Public participation meetings will be suspended.
- Essential hygiene products are provided to all staff.
- The wearing of masks at work will be strictly enforced.

“We will also be implementing measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus within our communities,” van Aswegen said. “Where appropriate we will be closing certain public facilities. Law enforcement efforts will be increased in hotspots and businesses will be inspected to ensure that they adhere to the relevant regulations. Our public participation unit will also be spreading communication on how to prevent the spread within our communities.”

“We have all been struggling for a long time, but now is the time to stay strong,” he concluded. “The season is the time to be jolly, but it is also the time to be vigilant. We cannot let all of our hard work go to waste. We must work together to contain this virus. Avoid confined spaces, close contact and crowded areas. Wash and sanitise your hands regularly. And wear your mask properly. If you are meeting with friends or family, do so in the festive fresh air.”

ENDS
