

Spirit of Africa COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocols

South Africa & neighbouring countries

20 January 2022



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1 Introduction

Spirit of Africa ("SOA") is a South African Destination Management Company that delivers physical travel programs to destinations in Southern Africa, mainly South Africa, but also Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho and Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland).

SOA is committed to the safety of our guests, employees and the broader community. We follow South African [government regulations](#) on COVID-19 and traveller advice from the [National Institute for Communicable Diseases](#) and the [World Health Organization](#).

The South African tourism industry has developed comprehensive COVID-19 Protocols which are adjusted continuously in line with the risk-adjusted economic activity allowed by the South African government, the pandemic status, new information and published government regulations.

Aligned to these, SOA have developed our own specific COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocols to be applied to all programmes and group travel. These protocols aim to standardise procedures in order to create a safety-net that reduces fear (and risk) and increases comfort, not just for our travellers, but also for our employees and communities. These protocols will be outlined and explained to all travellers at their arrival briefing.

Breach of behavioural protocols may lead to an individual's suspension from a programme, particularly should their actions be deemed to put the safety of fellow participants, staff or local communities at risk. Any consequential costs incurred will be for the account of the client, who may recover the costs from the participant.

SOA's protocols are not static and will continue to evolve in line with our 'best current view'.

2 Best current view

As travel experts who understand safety and security, we make it our business to stay informed so that we can demonstrate well-considered, realistic and responsible views on the immediate future of travel.

2.1 Africa

Outside of South Africa, a general lack of reliable data, under-reporting of cases, a failure to prioritise testing, and the slow procurement and roll-out of vaccines remain of general concern, and continue to raise fears of a silent epidemic.

2.2 South Africa

On 5 March 2021 South Africa marked one year since the first case of coronavirus was reported in the country.

South Africa has one of the most extensive testing regimes in Africa (only Botswana and Gabon in continental Africa, and the islands of Mauritius, Seychelles and Cabo Verde have conducted more tests per 1 million population to date) and as of 20 January 2022, it has the highest recorded number of COVID-19 cases in Africa and the 19th highest number of confirmed infections worldwide, although with a relatively low reported death rate.

Despite early, robust government intervention which managed to 'flatten the curve' and having a better public health system than any of its neighbours, South Africa has seen four distinct waves of infection: the first peaked in July 2020, the second in January 2021, the third in July 2021, and the fourth in December 2021. Amid vaccine hesitancy, only 27% of the population is fully vaccinated.

The country has been on adjusted alert level 1 from 30 December 2021. The current regulations can be found [here](#).

Adjusted regulations include:

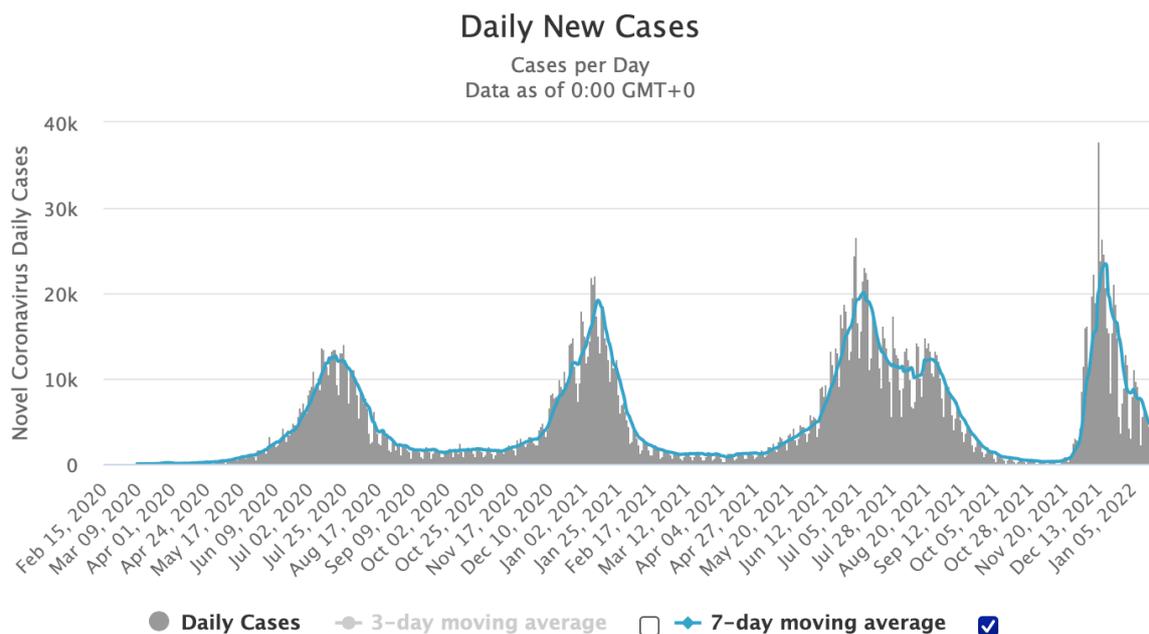
- The hours of the curfew has been lifted. There will therefore be no restrictions on the hours of movement of people.
- Gatherings are restricted to no more than 1 000 people indoors and no more than 2 000 people outdoors. Where the venue is too small to accommodate these numbers with appropriate social distancing, then no more than 50 per cent of the capacity of the venue may be used. All other restrictions remain in place.
- Alcohol establishments that have licenses to operate beyond 23h00 will revert back to full license conditions.
- The wearing of masks in public places is still mandatory, and failure to wear a mask when required remains a criminal offence.

Travellers intending to visit the country will have to produce a valid certificate of a negative COVID-19 test, recognised by the World Health Organization, that was obtained not more than 72 hours before the date of travel.

In the event of a traveller’s failure to submit a certificate as proof of a negative COVID-19 test, the traveller will be required to do an antigen test on arrival, at their own expense.

And in the event of the traveller testing positive for COVID-19, the traveller will be required to isolate themselves for a period of 10-days, at their own cost.

Daily new cases as at 20 January 2022:

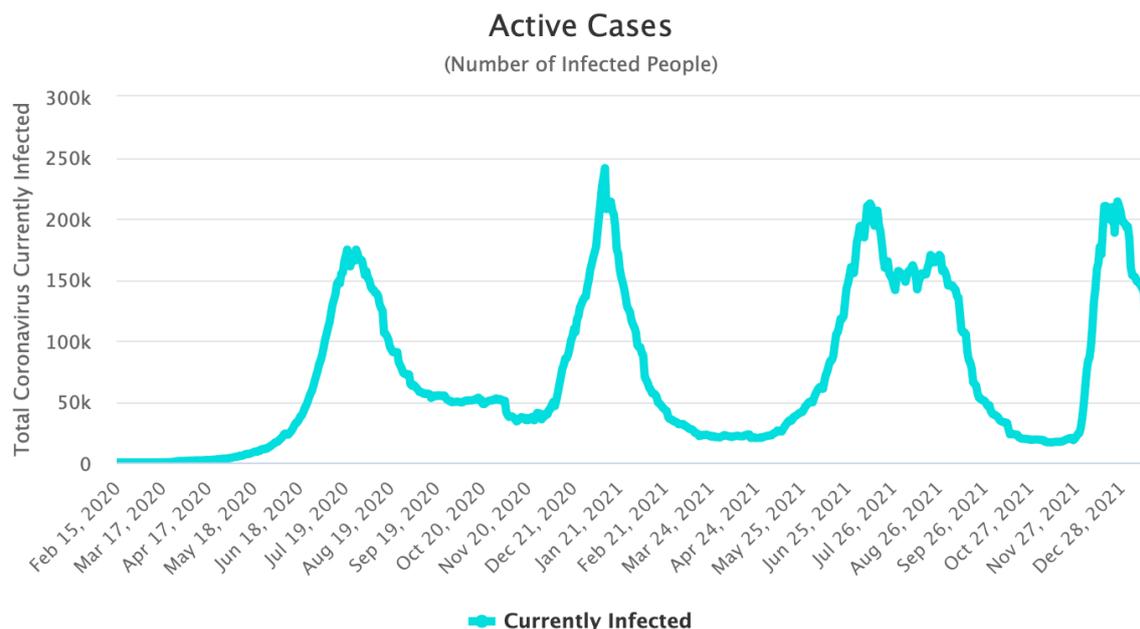


(Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/south-africa/>)

Comparison to key source markets as at 20 January 2022:

- SA: 7 day rolling average of 4,322 new cases per day or 71 per million
- UK: 7 day rolling average of 92,730 new cases per day or 1,355 per million
- US: 7 day rolling average of 741,287 new cases per day or 2,219 per million
- Germany: 7 day rolling average of 78,629 new cases per day or 934 per million

Active cases:



(Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/south-africa/>)

Comparison to key source markets as at 20 January 2022:

- SA: 85,166 active cases or 1,408 per million
- UK: 3,615,555 active cases or 52,829 per million
- US: 25,035,097 active cases or 74,953 per million
- Germany: 1,047,130 active cases or 12,436 per million

Health and hygiene protocols:

Strict health and hygiene protocols remain in place for the tourism industry, including the mandatory wearing of masks in public, and light capacity constraints.

Hotels, lodges, bed and breakfasts, timeshare facilities, resorts and guest houses are allowed full capacity of the available rooms for accommodation, with patrons observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other when in common spaces.

Restaurants, bars, shebeens and taverns are subject to a limitation of a maximum of 1000 persons or less for indoor venues and 2000 persons or less for outdoor venues and if the venue is too small to hold 1000 persons indoors or 2000 persons outdoors observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other, then not more than 50 percent of the capacity of the venue may be used.

PCR testing:

PCR testing is widely available in South Africa. Private laboratories, such as Ampath and Lancet offer PCR testing with or without appointment. There is also PCR testing at OR Tambo International, Cape Town International and King Shaka International. For travellers wanting concierge PCR testing, there are several private medical providers who provide testing facilities at any accommodation including lodges in the Kruger National Park. The cost of a PCR test is a R500 with results available between 24 and 48 hours. Rapid antigen and antibody testing are also widely available at R250.

Vaccine programme:

Details of South Africa's vaccine roll-out program can be found [here](#). To date 27% of the population has been fully vaccinated.

Traveller confidence:

South Africa has seen a phased reopening of international travel from 01 October 2020. As a country that has long battled against diseases like HIV and tuberculosis, South Africa already has robust systems in place to deal with COVID-19.

South Africa's COVID-19 response is being led by world-class scientists and epidemiologists, and has been praised by the WHO as a model for other countries to follow.

South Africa has seen a strong return of domestic leisure travel since the first hard lockdown. While international inbound traveller enquiries are strong, international traveller confidence levels remain low and travel is generally being pushed back into early 2022. The main concerns are about government restrictions, flight cancellations, vaccine hesitancy and Covid-19 testing capability.

SOA has already delivered a number of physical as well as virtual programs since the country went into lockdown.

Our best current view for international inbound travel is as follows: While we have demonstrated that in-country travel can currently be conducted with manageable and acceptable risk, especially for vaccinated travellers, we expect travel to remain constrained into 2022.

2.3 Neighbouring countries

We suspect that the reality of the state of the pandemic in the region is belied by a shortage of reliable data and perhaps even denial about the true extent of the pandemic.

The lack of capacity in neighbouring countries to test, track and trace, get patients to hospital, record causes of death and capture statistics regularly and reliably has made it difficult to make an accurate assessment. However, it appears their* trajectory typically mirrors South Africa's albeit off to a later start and with a delay (*specifically, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Namibia, Mozambique, Botswana and Lesotho).

Our best current view is that programs in our neighbouring countries should be planned as 'possible' from the first quarter of 2022.

3 Country specific guidelines

3.1 South Africa

- See the [South African Department of Health's website](#) for information on South Africa's COVID-19 Risk Adjusted Strategy
- Visit the websites of the [National Institute of Communicable Diseases](#) (NICD) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) for updates

3.2 Neighbouring countries

For more information on specific destination countries, visit the CDC's [Travel Health Notices](#) page and [destination page](#) for updates on specific destination countries.

3.3 US

- According to the CDC guidelines, vaccinated people in the US are allowed to travel. For domestic travel they do not need to have a Covid-19 test before and after their journey and do not need to self-quarantine after travelling. For international travel they still need to be tested if their destination requires it, but do not need to self-quarantine when they return to the US.
- Vaccinated individuals also don't have to undergo routine screening and testing, as well as testing and quarantine after a known exposure, on condition that they are asymptomatic.

3.4 General recommendations prior to travel

We recommend that prior to travel all passengers:

- Check with their airlines about their cancellation policies.
- Check the destination's COVID-19 regulation level and find out what type of travel or lifestyle restrictions/requirements may be in place.

4 Protocols

4.1 Core principles

4.1.1 The core principles which apply across the industry for guests and staff are:

- 4.1.1.1 *Requirement that travellers and staff are fully vaccinated;*
- 4.1.1.2 *Correct use of masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE);*
- 4.1.1.3 *Effective and regular hand washing AND sanitising;*
- 4.1.1.4 *Regular cleaning of all surfaces;*
- 4.1.1.5 *Physical distancing in all facilities and sites;*
- 4.1.1.6 *Obtain required COVID-19 guest information.*

4.2 Vaccination

SOA requires that all travellers, drivers, guides and support staff are fully vaccinated in order to participate in a program.

4.3 24/7 emergency phone number

A 24/7 emergency phone number will be made available to clients prior to arrival, which will typically be the cell phone number of the Tour Leader appointed by SOA.

4.4 Health & Safety Coordinator

A Health & Safety Coordinator, based at SOA's head office, has overall responsibility for the execution of SOA's protocols and standard operating procedures.

4.5 Health & Safety Officer

A Health & Safety Officer will be assigned to each program. The Health & Safety Officer will be responsible for ensuring best-practice is followed throughout the programme by monitoring behaviour, environment and adherence to agreed hygiene measures and protocols.

Depending on the group size, this may be the Program Leader and/or Guide, but SOA may also choose to provide an additional person for this function.

4.6 Social distancing

Specific social distancing measures will be agreed upon during the program development phase and will include the following:

- 4.6.1 Vehicle configuration and utilization limits will be applied as per industry protocols and per agreement with client.
- 4.6.2 Participants will be encouraged to occupy the same seat for the day, if not the whole program.
- 4.6.3 Accommodation: Single rooms will be reserved for all participants unless otherwise instructed. If rooms are to be shared, rooming lists are to be adhered to and not changed during the course of the program.

4.7 Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- 4.7.1 No PPE (including facemasks) or cleaning/sanitizing supplies will be provided for travellers unless specifically requested and travellers will be expected to bring their own.
- 4.7.2 Hand sanitizer will be available on embarkation and disembarkation of vehicles. As far as possible travellers should hand sanitize BEFORE they board, every time (as opposed to once they are on board - you want to keep touch surfaces as clean as possible).
- 4.7.3 SOA will have on hand a limited emergency supply of PPE should guests need to buy additional items for themselves.
- 4.7.4 SOA will supply PPE and sanitizer for all ground staff and drivers.

4.8 Temperature checks and symptoms scanning

- 4.8.1 Daily visual assessment of any COVID-19 related symptoms should be conducted. It will be agreed upfront, on a program-by-program basis, whether guests will be asked to self-monitor and report any symptoms or whether SOA staff/client program leaders will assess every participant daily.
- 4.8.2 Anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms will be required to self-isolate immediately while further protocols are activated.

4.9 Services not offered

It may be problematic to include visits to tourist sites that temporarily limit visitor numbers (such as Table Mountain, the Apartheid Museum and Robben Island). This will be assessed and clearly communicated on a case-by-case basis once these facilities are open again and have published their operating conditions.

No other services that typically feature in SOA programs are currently excluded in light of COVID-19. Within the dynamic nature of this document, any further exclusions will be noted here as they become known.

4.10 Traveller Behaviour Agreement

All travellers will be required to sign a Health & Safety Traveller Behaviour Agreement. Breach of behavioural protocols may lead to a participant's suspension from a program, should their actions be deemed to put the safety of fellow participants, staff or local communities at risk. Any consequential costs incurred will be for the account of the client, who may recover the costs from the participant.

4.11 Accommodation cleaning protocols

Accommodation cleaning protocols in each establishment will be assessed to conform to the most current industry protocols. Where it is deemed relevant, required and possible, the frequency of room cleaning and linen changing will be limited during stays.

4.12 Procedures, policies and protocols for any family stay (homestay) accommodations

Details of procedures, policies and protocols for any family stay (homestay) accommodations will be developed in conjunction with clients including, for example, what happens if someone in the homestay develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19.

4.13 Access to private or single-room housing

Access to private or single-room housing that may be used for self-isolation is not guaranteed unless specifically contracted. SOA recommends that an additional room (or rooms) for isolation are requested during the program development phase and subsequently contracted.

4.14 Access to Wi-Fi while self-isolating

Should any participants be required to self-isolate or quarantine, access to Wi-Fi for that time and in that place cannot be guaranteed.

4.15 Access to food during self-isolation or quarantine

Should participants be required to self-isolate or quarantine, SOA will ensure that they have access to food for that time and in that place. Any additional costs incurred will be for the account of the client, who may recover the costs from the participant.

4.16 Transport protocols

In line with the most recent amendments to the Risk Adjusted Strategy for Tourism Facilities, Services and Products published by the Minister of Tourism, to include the regulations for Guided Tour Operators which includes Overland Safari Vehicle (OSV) Operators, SOA will ensure that the following regulations concerning sanitisation, masks and social distancing will be enforced by transport operators (including OSVs), who must:

- a. not allow a person to the tour if that person is not wearing a cloth mask, or homemade item that covers the nose and mouth or another appropriate item to cover the nose and mouth;
- b. ensure that every person involved in the tour wears a mask at all times except when eating or drinking;
- c. sanitise persons involved in the tour before they enter a tour vehicle, rail or boat;
- d. frequently sanitise guests during their tour or provide guests or persons involved in the tour with sanitisers for frequent use;
- e. ensure that during guided activities that require walking, a social distance of one and a half metres is maintained at all times amongst persons involved in the tour;
- f. ensure that the loading capacity of guided tour vehicles and other modes of public transport complies with the Directions issued by the Minister of Transport in respect of the loading capacity of public transport vehicles;
- g. ensure that the door handles, window handles, arm rests and hand rails of all vehicles, rail or boat are sanitised after every load;
- h. ensure that windows on both sides of the tour vehicles, where applicable, are kept 5 cm open on both sides;
- i. ensure that all snacks and drinks provided during the tour are pre-packed and distributed following strict hygiene and sanitising measures. Disposable bottles, containers, cups and utensils should be utilised during tours;
- j. ensure the safe handling and disposal of waste.

4.17 Shared public transportation

Unless specifically contracted upfront, no shared public transportation will be used on any program. Private use of shared public transportation will be discouraged in terms of the COVID-19 Traveller Behaviour Agreement.

4.18 Other

4.18.1 Travelers are encouraged to carry their own mug/insulated mug in addition to their metal water bottles (preferred for sterile reasons and can be provided).

4.18.2 Where possible, various day tours will be scheduled on days of lowest expected foot traffic.

4.19 Contracting COVID-19 in country

Any travellers who contract COVID-19 while in the destination country will be required to self-isolate or quarantine in line with government regulations at that time. Their participation in their program will be suspended and any costs incurred are to be covered by their travel and medical insurance (compulsory).

5 SOA Insurance

5.1 General Public Liability Insurance

Spirit of Africa has daily General Public Liability insurance in place.

Cover in respect of the above is subject to the following:

- 1.1. Volunteers (participating in any volunteer tourism related activities) and students (participating in any activities and events associated with academic travel) must all have valid travel insurance which extends to include medical expenses and disability for the duration of their trip*.
- 1.2. All participants must sign an indemnity.

Cover in respect of the following is excluded:

- 1.3. HIV/ Aids.
- 1.4. Liability arising directly or indirectly out of any acts of physical assault, corporal punishment, physical or sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation.
- 1.5. Liability arising directly or indirectly out of the use of alcohol and any illegal substances.

* Note the requirement that all participants on our programs have valid travel insurance including medical insurance.

5.2 Passenger Liability Insurance

Passenger Liability Insurance covers incidents resulting from the transportation of passengers by land, sea or air, and is typically carried by transport operators in South Africa.

This covers businesses in instances where they may be held legally liable for the injury or death of passengers transported in their company vehicle, whether moving or stationary. That is, it provides insurance against any claims that may arise from a client who experienced qualifying damages while in their vehicle.

To obtain a transport permit for a passenger-carrying vehicle, the law in South Africa currently stipulates a minimum of ZAR 5 million per seven passengers on board and proof of such cover is required before such a permit may be issued.

SOA does not own its own vehicles and contracts in vehicles from transport operators.

In the event that a transport operator has inadequate insurance, or the transport operator is based outside of South Africa, SOA will take out daily Passenger Liability Insurance cover with their insurers, SATIB.

5.3 SATIB24 Emergency Operations Centre

SOA's public liability insurance automatically grants membership of SATIB24, which allows access to their 24/7 Operations Centre ensuring clients have a direct line to doctors, nurses and security professionals in a crisis. It further provides a trusted source of global support and advice during a crisis (as defined by the Policy). The Operations Centre provides the coordination of an integrated network of emergency medical, security and incident management specialists who cohesively and seamlessly manage multiple resources and responses to ensure the best potential outcome of any incident.

Core Services Include:

- A dedicated 24/7 helpline to their Operations Centre
- Clinically-led decision making
- Medical Monitoring of case management
- 24/7 access to doctors, nurses & security professionals
- Post Traumatic Assessments and Counselling
- Medical and Security Evacuations
- Repatriations (if required)
- Media Management
- Legal Representation
- Incident Action Plan creation
- Stakeholder communication
- Advisories / Active Monitoring

6 Travel & Medical Insurance for guests

6.1 Travel insurance

SOA does not provide any kind of cancellation insurance for guests. It is strongly recommended that all travellers take out travel insurance in their home country that includes cover for cancellation and isolation/quarantine costs should they be required to isolate/ quarantine in the destination country.

6.2 Medical insurance

It is strongly recommended that all travellers take out medical insurance that covers COVID-19 treatment while in a foreign country.

6.3 Insurance waiver

All travellers will be expected to sign a waiver and indemnity.

7 Cancellations due to COVID-19

7.1 Program Cancellation

At this early stage of the pandemic SOA has identified the following triggers for program cancellation or suspension of SOA local operations:

- a. Government-imposed travel bans prior to, or during the program;
- b. Government-imposed restrictions in the destination country affecting a material aspect of the travel program prior to, or during the program;
- c. COVID-19 positive case diagnosis among a material number of program participants during a program;
- d. Any other COVID-19 related development that might put the health of program participants, local staff or the local community materially at risk should the program continue; and
- e. Any breach of our COVID-19 Behaviour Agreement by a participant, which in SOA's opinion compromises the safety of other program participants, staff or the local community.

7.2 Individual Cancellation

SOA will allow individual cancellations up until the day of arrival based on force majeure as a result of COVID-19, specifically.

7.3 Cancellation policy

In principle, any cancellations for any of the above reasons will be refunded less the following:

- a. A reasonable cancellation fee for services delivered by SOA, which will be agreed at the time of contracting.
- b. Any unrecoverable supplier costs.

SOA is committed to full transparency and clear communication on cancellations at all times.

END