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'International Legal lookout: South Africa'

On 27 March South Africa's Covid-19 regulations were amended to introduce a national lockdown, fifteen days after the World Health Organisation declared the pandemic to be global. Businesses were obliged to shut down operations unless employees are unable to work from home and individuals could leave their homes only to buy food or seek medical attention. All entities involved in the provision of essential goods or the performance of essential services – medical care, food and fuel production and distribution, including the import and export of essential goods – were exempted. Cabinet ministers were permitted to issue delegated legislation known as "directions" that can add additional restrictions, allow exceptions and clarify conditions under which essential services may operate.

The government decided that, due to the volume of companies required to operate essential services and the speed with which verification was required, businesses would conduct self-evaluations. They would determine which employees were required for essential services and issue them with permits to allow free movement. The restrictions are strictly enforced by the country's police but no state of emergency has been declared as of yet. Non-compliance with restrictions was criminalised.

Restrictions were eased somewhat on 1 June.