

# SAFE PASSAGE TO WORK: KEY FINDINGS

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SDI Force  
Johannesburg, South Africa

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## Background

South Africa is currently working through challenges relating to the reopening of industry, schools and civil society, with COVID-19 as part of the new landscape. In addition to managing related hazards and risks during our day to day activities, of major concern is the safe use of public transport to move our workforces to and from places of employment.

The findings contained herein arise from observations, engagements and interactions over the period 14 May 2020 to the date of issuing (of this report).

## Safe passage to work introduction

Currently there are approximately 64 000 operating taxis in Johannesburg, across 560 taxi ranks. Our collective objective is to develop, implement and manage interventions that sustainably reduce COVID related risks posed to commuters and taxi industry.

An adaptive and scalable risk-management model that focuses on practical risk reductions and interventions, has been conceptualised and elements therein have been assessed. The aim is to deploy tried and tested processes in a managed manner, allowing for the effective and ongoing reduction of related risks.

## Scoping the Challenge

To manage risks relating to all role-players within the commuter loop, it is important to identify who the role-players are. Below is an overview of primary role-players.



## Primary observations noted

Excerpt(s) from primary observations (unplanned).

### Alexandra Taxi Rank

Commuter related observations:

- 1) Compliance in respect of mask wearing is observed in the majority of persons
- 2) Social distancing was observed to a limited extent, noting limited promotion thereof

Infrastructure related observations:

- 1) Access to the rank and the various areas and levels, is done via multiple entrances
- 2) Entrances referenced in point 1 above, are poorly or inadequately monitored in respect of compliance (masks, hand sanitation, thermal)
- 3) No promotion and/or awareness campaigns noted on the day(s) in question
- 4) Hand sanitation facilities were limited in numbers and distribution
- 5) Facilities and infrastructure require improvements and/or maintenance
- 6) Insufficient markings to promote social distancing noted
- 7) Informal trading occurring across the facility
- 8) Lighting requires improvement/upgrading/repair

Vehicle (and human resource) related observations:

- 1) Reduced capacity in vehicles noted – 70%
- 2) No consistent or standardised sanitation of vehicles upon entry, noted
- 3) No screening of driver upon arrival at rank
- 4) Inadequate enforcement of hand sanitising prior to vehicle entry, noted

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- 5) No standardised installation/availability of hand sanitizers in vehicles
  - 6) No driver/passenger separation in vehicles noted
  - 7) No mechanism to promote ventilation in vehicles, noted
  - 8) No promotion of awareness in vehicles, noted
  - 9) Handling of cash across all persons, noted
  - 10) Tendency to remove masks to talk and/or speak on phones, noted
  - 11) Passengers alighting at points other than at ranks, noted
  - 12) No record of awareness and risk mitigation training being provided to drivers and staff

## Sandton Taxi Rank

### Commuter related observations:

- 3) Compliance in respect of mask wearing is observed in the majority of persons
- 4) Social distancing was observed to a limited extent, noting limited promotion thereof

### Infrastructure related observations:

- 9) Access to the rank and the various areas and levels, is done via multiple entrances however the number is easily manageable
- 10) Entrances referenced in point 1 above, are poorly or inadequately monitored and/or sign-posted in respect of compliance (masks, hand sanitation, thermal)
- 11) No promotion and/or awareness campaigns noted on the day(s) in question
- 12) Hand sanitation facilities were limited in numbers and distribution
- 13) Improvement in waste management is required
- 14) Insufficient markings to promote social distancing noted (painting was occurring on day of visit)

### Vehicle (and human resource) related observations:

- 13) Reduced capacity in vehicles noted – 70%
- 14) No consistent or standardised sanitation of vehicles upon entry, noted
- 15) No screening of driver upon arrival at rank
- 16) Inadequate enforcement of hand sanitising prior to vehicle entry, noted
- 17) No standardised installation/availability of hand sanitizers in vehicles
- 18) No driver/passenger separation in vehicles noted
- 19) No mechanism to promote ventilation in vehicles, noted
- 20) No promotion of awareness in vehicles, noted
- 21) Handling of cash across all persons, noted
- 22) Tendency to remove masks to talk and/or speak on phones, noted
- 23) No record of awareness and risk mitigation training being provided to drivers and staff

## Taxi Commute – Alex Taxi Rank – Town (Jhb), return

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## Alexandra Rank

- Multiple entrances in use (pedestrian) which (currently) negates the ability to monitor (hand sanitizing, masks and temps) persons entering the building, as required iro regulations.
- Hand sanitizing upon entry – in place however dependent on human dispensing. Consider automated installations for dispensing so as to minimize system failure probability.
- General poor state of rank – poor waste management, lighting etc.
- No awareness or educational interventions noted.
- Persons not wearing masks noted.
- No demarcations or markings to promote social distancing.

## Taxi – originating Alexandra

- Upon entry to taxi – no sanitizing of hands promoted, enforced, required.
- Loading of taxi limited to 10 PAX and 1 Driver. Driver insisted that 1 PAX sit upfront.
- Handling of cash amongst all PAX, inside of vehicle whilst in motion.
- Observation – PAX will at times remove (partially or full) their face masks to talk on phone or to others. NB to focus on in-taxi awareness against such practices.
- No sanitizer available inside taxi.
- No awareness and/or educational content in taxi.
- Windows not open – PAX spoke of it being cold.
- Social distancing – applied as far as is possible under the circumstances.
- Driver states he currently does approx. 3 return trips per day. Previously it would be 6-8 loads.
- Passengers exited taxi prior to destination (along route). This can be managed accordingly in the future by focusing on allowing the practice but insisting on hand sanitizing upon exit. Push to do otherwise will become a point of non-compliance as people have to alight close to their destination.

## City Rank

- Open-air rank meaning no control at all of ingress and egress (pedestrians)
- No hand sanitizing, social distancing and/or mask enforcement, promotion or provisions.
- No awareness or educational interventions noted.
- No markings or demarcations for social distancing.
- General poor state iro waste management, facility state etc.
- No facilities for sanitizing – none noted.

## Taxi – originating City

- No promotion, instruction or enforcement of hand sanitizing, masks and/or social distancing.
- Upon entry to taxi – no sanitizing of hands promoted, enforced, required.
- Loading of taxi limited to 10 PAX and 1 Driver. Driver insisted that 1 PAX sit upfront.
- Handling of cash amongst all PAX, inside of vehicle whilst in motion.
- Observation – PAX will at times remove (partially or full) their face masks to talk on phone or to others. NB to focus on in-taxi awareness against such practices.
- No sanitizer available inside taxi.
- No awareness and/or educational content in taxi.

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- Windows not open – PAX spoke of it being cold.
  - Social distancing – applied as far as is possible under the circumstances.
  - Passengers exited taxi prior to destination (along route).

Points to consider in the immediate term:

- Overall assessment of rank systems and infrastructure required.
- Better controls and enforcement required in rank and throughout their infrastructure and/or resources.
- Sanitizing and sanitizing facilities need to be implemented ASAP.
- Promotion of compliance iro masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing is required as an urgent intervention.
- Public awareness and education needs to commence ASAP – ideally before or on 01 June to set the tone moving forward.
- Need to promote the NON removal of masks within the vehicle (mostly when talking on phones).
- Need to deploy physical interventions for vehicles – window spacers (ensure ventilation), dividing screens (driver and PAX), hand sanitizer units (suggest same make, design and mounting location across ALL taxis nationally = new informal standard (to adhere to) is created).
- Open-air ranks will require the deployment of temporary structures/resources (eg. Speed fencing to manage ingress and egress) to allow for management of exposures.
- Driver and commuter education and awareness severely lacking (absent) – need to address ASAP.
- Commuter confidence – general sentiment of: what happens next, what is the right thing to do in the future etc.





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## Factors for immediate consideration

When considering the elements and processes relevant to a commuter and taxi operators, in conjunction with the primary mechanisms of transmission for COVID-19 and indeed other similar viruses, it is anticipated that the following interventions be prioritized such that the risk of exposures can be limited and virus spread may be reduced and/or contained, in the context of the scope of this initiative.

Reduce risk exposures relevant to commuter by:

- Empowering and informing through educational and awareness campaigns – ongoing for foreseeable future, throughout infrastructure and vehicles, including transitional spaces
- Ensure communication of principle of: sick persons to stay home and not travel to work
- Avail interventions that promote personal hygiene and reduce likelihood of spread, by way of providing access to hand sanitation facilities prior to entry to ranks and prior to boarding vehicles
- Ensuring that vehicles and environments that a commuter must interact with, are managed and sanitized such that risk exposures and hazards are limited and reduced

Reduce risk exposures relevant to infrastructure by:

- Auditing and improving basic services to reduce the likelihood of environments conducive to viral incubation and spread (sewerage for example can be problematic at poorly managed ranks)
- Managing entrances to facilities to permit monitoring of access and compliance in respect of masks and sanitizing
- Ensure preventative maintenance schedules are in place in respect of cleaning and sanitation of high-risk areas of ranks
- Establish and manage high-volume, fast-turn around (<1 min) sanitation depots that enable standardised, efficient and documented sanitation of every vehicle, upon entry to rank, at no cost to operators (ie. reduce risk of non-compliance)
- Engineer traffic flow to ensure that the ONLY way to access commuter zones, is via sanitation depots
- Widespread educational and awareness campaigns throughout facilities, to promote all fundamentals: hand sanitizing, personal hygiene, social distancing, mask wearing etc.
- Ensure interventions (guidance and markings) to promote social distancing
- Deploy mechanisms and personnel to enable and uphold sustainable compliance with all elements

Reduce risk exposures relevant to vehicles by:

- Deploy physical separation barriers between the driver cab and the passenger areas (driver poses high-risk due to volumes of people they engage with daily)
- Provide separation barriers and installation at no cost, to ensure access for all
- Driver and personnel education, is very important to empower all role-players to understand and manage associated risks

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- Install hand sanitizers in all vehicles and implement mandatory sanitizing prior to entry
  - Deploy window ventilation spacers to every vehicle that negate the complete closing of windows and thus promote improved ventilation in vehicles
  - Awareness and educational interventions across and inside all vehicles reminding commuters to comply with fundamentals

Physical Barriers within vehicles



## Proof of concept

To date SDI Force have undertaken various on-site processes to challenge the principles and interventions as contained herein. The outcomes have been favourable, and we have been able to demonstrate the ability to successfully execute said interventions, exists.

Noting that challenges will arise when seeking to deploy all interventions at scale, SDI Force has developed a scalable, portable and adaptable model that can be deployed to any geographical area, at short notice. The success of such models is contingent on many factors, including the cooperation of all role-players and stakeholders, as well as ongoing collaboration with subject matter experts and authorities.

## Conclusion

The interventions and processes contained herein are tried and tested functions as used by various industries and sectors the world over. None of the elements and interventions are complex in nature. The key to success lies with managing the manner in which these interventions are deployed and managed.

The collective interventions aim to ultimately reduce the probable areas that allow probability of virus transmission and spread. No single intervention of action will allow us to combat transmission, thus the need for a multi-faceted and multi-layered response strategy.

