



COVID-19 Protocols Readiness Assessment Survey Results

The Manufacturing Circle administered a sector-wide COVID-19 Protocols Readiness Assessment between 23 April – 28 April 2020 to understand commitment by manufacturing companies to adopt appropriate measures ensuring access to operations will be safe for all.

It is important to note that this sample comprised Manufacturing Circle members in addition to a wider range of companies solicited by way of referrals. The total number of responses to the survey was 277, with a large proportion of SMEs employing between 50-500 employees. The total number of employees covered is just over 130 000. Table 1 categorises the sub-sector respondents, illustrating that 35% of the responses came from the basic iron and steel, non-ferrous metal products, metal products and machinery category.

Table 1: Respondent Sub-sector Categories

Manufacturing sub-sectors	
Textiles, clothing and leather goods	2%
Wood and wood products, paper, publishing and printing	8%
Petroleum, chemical products, rubber and plastic products	6%
Glass and non-metallic mineral products	0%
Basic iron and steel, non-ferrous metal products, metal products, and machinery	35%
Electrical machinery and electronics	10%
Motor vehicle, parts and accessories, and other transport equipment	6%
Furniture and other related manufacturing	13%
Packaging	4%
Other	16%



Productive Capacity Constraints

With regard to productive capacity, 96% of respondents reported reduced productive capacity as a result of the lockdown. Of these, the survey found that 26% reduced capacity up to 75%, while the remaining 74% of the respondents completely closed down operations. Only three of the respondents reported that the lockdown did not influence operations- this could be attributed the production of essential products and services.

When asked about the time required to get back to normal production, 51% of the respondents indicated that it would take less than a week while 31% estimated a resumption period between two to four weeks. Results also found that it would take one to three months for 10% of the companies surveyed, with the remaining 8% estimating up to three to twelve months to get operations running as normal. Furthermore, 8% of the respondents diversified production to meet the medical supply demand during the lockdown in contrast to the remaining 92%.

The major concern confronting the majority of respondents was the possibility of an extended lockdown beyond the expected period (30 April 2020- at the time of the survey). The most frequently cited concern from respondents included potential plant/factory closure, cashflow liquidity challenges, salary cuts, the retrenchment of staff and reduction in production capacity.

Employment Constraints

Looking at employee retention levels, 35% of respondents were compelled to reduce employment during the lockdown period; while the remaining 65% continued to retain pre-COVID-19 lockdown employment level.



COVID-19 Protocols Readiness Assessment Survey Results

The COVID-19 Protocols Readiness Assessment to solicit commitment and compliance by manufacturing companies in the following areas:

- Access to operations and testing
- Transportation of employees (without own transport) to operations and home
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- General workforce primary healthcare, factoring in workers' underlying health concerns among them HIV/AIDS and diabetes.

Regarding COVID19 protocol readiness, the findings are as follows:

- Access to operations
 - 66% of respondents reported pre-screening programmes based on NICD guidelines. The 34% who lacked the programmes indicated they would implement measures once operations resume by procuring the necessary equipment.
 - 70% reported that they would temperature screen every person before entering manufacturing sites. The other 30% sought to procure infra-red thermometers upon resumption of activities.
 - 40% of respondents have COVID-19 testing programmes. The remaining 60% were less likely to conduct COVID1-9 testing programmes due to capacity and resources constraints. This would require partnering with the local health authorities to ensure the safety of their workers.
 - 63% of respondents have re-inducted all employees returning to site on COVID-19 protocols, the remaining 37% would implement re-induction once operations resume.
 - Only 16% of the respondents reported that they would be in a position to supply employees with immune booster supplements as part of their wellness intervention.



- Transport
 - Results found 28% of respondents would arrange transport for their employees once the lockdown restrictions are phased-out, while the remaining 72% could not offer transport arrangement due to budgetary constraints.
- Personal Protective Equipment for COVID19
 - 89% of respondents would issue PPE to their employees and the remaining 11% would procure once operations resume.
 - 96% reported increased site cleaning and availability of sanitisers around operation facilities.
 - 94% introduced a social distancing plan for all employees in all areas of the business, including staggered tea and lunch breaks, demarcated working areas to ensure social distancing, and remote meetings.
 - 56% disabled biometric systems, while the remaining 44% intend to adopt sanitisation measures to ensure that biometric systems are continuously cleaned.
 - 87% of respondents plan to re-induct all contractors, external companies, and visitors coming onto site.
 - 74% of respondents will be pre-screening all contractors, external companies, and visitors coming to site.

A more detailed analysis revealed that predominately larger companies, are more ready to implement strategies that will likely mitigate the risk of contagion with particular reference to:

- 74% of the larger companies have indicated that they will be running COVID19 pre-screening Programs based on questionnaires identified by the NICD, this is 10% higher than that reported by SME respondents.
- Similarly, 95% of the larger companies indicated that they will be issuing PPE in contrast to the 88% of the respondents representing the SMEs.
- Additionally, 74% of the respondents represented by the large companies, indicated that they would be checking employee's temperature upon arrival, this is higher than the 68% reported by small enterprises.



With reference to work readiness re-induction, transport arrangements and site readiness, the findings between predominately larger companies and SMEs were similar.

Acknowledgement and thanks to TIPS for providing the analytical and research support to compile this report.