



NPO Number: 049066NPO
NPC Registration No. 2000/026390/08

Head Office or Zone
1 Constantia Boulevard
Constantia Kloof Ext 22, 1709

Postal Address: Private Bag X14, Weltevreden Park, 1715
Tel: 011 761 9000 **Email:** customerservice@sanbs.org.za
www.sanbs.org.za

SANBS STAFF WEARING VISORS

22 APRIL 2020

As the situation with the COVID-19 outbreak continues to develop, so are the responses of the South African National Blood Service (SANBS) to this novel virus. Our focus is to ensure staff and donor safety and protective measures introduced are based on expert advice at the time. However, we are also aware that this is a dynamic situation, we will constantly review personal protective equipment (PPE) options. We value feedback, as this enables us to optimise our safety measures.

As an organisation that is *trusted to save lives*, the SANBS stays committed to supporting all initiatives by the country's Ministry of Health in combatting and curbing the spread of COVID-19. The ministry made recommendations for public-facing, essential services workers wear PPE, which includes facemasks, visors and hand gloves as an added measure for protection against contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Precautionary measures in place

In keeping with these new recommendations from the Minister of Health, our staff at donor sites and blood banks have been issued with facemasks and/or visors as a form of personal protection. Only the person monitoring the donor centre door and entry points will be wearing both a mask and a visor, the rest will only be wearing visors. Admittedly, with the heightened demands for PPE across the country, it is not always readily available for distribution to all donor centres at all times. We are working with suppliers to get masks and visors to all our centres as a matter of urgency.

The PPE that is being issued has been deemed safe to wear by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD). We understand that, for both donors and staff, the blood collection experience has changed but we are positive that we will adapt. The valuable experience of donating blood safely will remain a primary focus. The concern about cross contaminations remains and to mitigate this risk, the SANBS has further taken the initiative to train staff on the safe and correct way of wearing, cleaning of all equipment as well as the safe disposal thereof.

sanbs.org.za
Toll free 0800 11 9031

Board of Directors: Executives: J Louw (CEO), J Thomson (Medical Director), Non Executives: G Simelane (Chairman), F Burn, W Gumede, P Knox, G Leong, V Moodley, P Mthethwa, A Ramalho, R Theunissen,
Company Secretary: M Luthuli

FRM-CEO-002
1001481 REV 24 (17/01/2020)
Page 1 of 3

Universal Blood Type



Donates to Everyone

Receives from 



NPO Number: 049066NPO
NPC Registration No. 2000/026390/08

The SANBS has taken precautionary measures to ensure that the people who utilise our facilities are protected. We are assessing donors at all entry point to our facilities and mobile sites. We have also equipped all sites with additional antiseptic sprays and alcohol-based wipes. Additionally, we observe strict social distancing at our collection points – donor beds are kept two metres apart to contact with nurses is kept to a minimum.

The health of our employees and loyal donors is of utmost importance to us. We are fully committed to implementing all measures as recommended by national experts to help us ensure the best protection for everyone in our areas of operation. Unfortunately, there is no one measure of self-protection that is guaranteed to carry zero risks of infection. We are, however, doing everything in our power to protect not only our donors but our employees too.

To align with new research findings in transfusion medicine, the SANBS has put in place enhanced precautionary deferral periods as they relate to COVID-19. The new deferral periods are as follows:

- Individuals who have travelled overseas will be **deferred for 28 days** from the date of return from these countries.
- Individuals with a confirmed diagnosis with COVID-19 infection will be **deferred for 28 days** from date of complete clearance of symptoms.
- Individuals who have had close contact with anyone with confirmed or probable COVID-19 infection will be **deferred for 28 days** from the last date of contact.
- Anyone exhibiting flu-symptoms on day of donation will be **deferred for 7 days**.

We continue to stress the importance of staying home and keeping safe unless essential travel is necessary. Importantly, as is normal practice when donating blood, we encourage donors to delay donation if they are exhibiting any flu-like symptoms or signs of infection until they are in good health. We continue to screen donors and staff at all entry point to our facilities and mobile sites. All donor centre staff are screened daily.

We urge everyone to take the necessary precautions to ensure their personal safety, as well as the safety of fellow citizens by continuing to washing and sanitise hands regularly, sneezing into tissues and elbows and discarding potentially contaminated waste appropriately.





NPO Number: 049066NPO
NPC Registration No. 2000/026390/08

– ENDS –

About the SANBS

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) is an independent non-profit organisation, and one of the leaders in the discipline of blood transfusion. SANBS operates in eight out of nine provinces in South Africa (with the exception of the Western Cape, which is serviced by the Western Province Blood Transfusion Service). It also provides crucial support to countries in the SADC region.

SANBS supplies over one million blood products annually and is rated among the top blood services in the world. This pedigree comes, as a result of world-class testing and collection protocols which ensure that the blood which is transfused is always of top quality.

The blood is processed into its constituent components; red blood cells, plasma and platelets therefore in principle a single blood donation can save a minimum of three lives.

