

South Africa

Superior Courts Act, 2013

Directives issued by the Chief Justice regarding COVID-19

General Notice 187 of 2020

Legislation as at 20 March 2020

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I, Mogoeng Mogoeng, the Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, acting in terms of section 165 of the [Constitution, 1996](#) and section 8(3) of the Superior Courts Act, 2013 after consultation with the Heads of Court, hereby issue the Directives in the Schedule to address, prevent and curb the spread of the COVID-19 in all court precincts in the Republic of South Africa.

Unless circumstances otherwise dictate, the Directives shall be in force for a period of sixty days from the date of publication.

1. Definitions

"**court**" means a court room or an office in which court proceedings are conducted and include Judges' chambers, Magistrates' chambers and Audio Visual Remand centre.

"**Court precinct**" refers to an area of court house demarcated by a fence or wall.

2. Restricted access to the court precinct

- 2.1 Persons with a material interest in a case, such as litigants, accused, witnesses, those who may be needed to provide support such as those accompanying children, victims of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse, elderly and people with disabilities, family members, representatives of special interest or support groups and members of the media will be permitted to enter the court precinct.
- 2.2 Non-essential visitors will only be allowed into the court precinct with the permission of the Head of Court.

3. Use of Audio Visual Remand centres and other electronic communication means for postponing cases

- 3.1 Audio Visual Remand centres in Correctional Centres linked to Magistrates Court must be used for purposes of the postponement of cases where accused persons are in custody.
- 3.2 No witnesses who are in foreign countries shall be summonsed to attend a trial in the Republic and in instances where such cases cannot be postponed to a further date such testimony may be obtained through electronic means.