

MEDIA STATEMENT

THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION PERIOD OF THE SPAZA SHOPS AND OTHER FOOD HANDLING OUTLETS IS DRAWING NEAR

INTRODUCTION

On 18 December 2024, President Cyril Ramaphosa decided to extend the registration period deadline for all Spaza Shops and other food handling outlets to 28 February 2025. In this regard and as from today, Wednesday, 12 February 2025, Spaza Shop owners and other food handling facilities are left with exactly thirteen (13) days to register their businesses.

The registration is open on business days only and excludes public holidays and weekends. Business owners who are eligible to register for this purpose are urged to visit their registration centres in their respective municipalities. The list of the registration centres and centre managers is attached as Annexure A.

The end of the registration period, on the 28 February 2025, does not in any way suggest that the foodborne illness challenges have been fully addressed as more work still needs to be done to ensure that this sector is fully regulated and that it adheres to applicable legislation and health regulations.

A lot still needs to be done in the value chain of business registration and compliance processes. This includes a sustained campaign on multi-disciplinary enforcement interventions, continued awareness campaigns, support and training for business owners, regular sustainable nationwide cleanup campaigns to deal with the challenges of waste management across the country.

THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND IMPORTANCE OF REGISTRATION

It is worth mentioning once again that business owners must adhere to all the applicable legal requirements relating to the registration and ownership of a business in South Africa – compliance is not a once off matter upon registration but rather continuous throughout the life cycle of the business. In addition to the requirements prescribed in the Businesses Act 71 of 1971, and municipal by-laws related to conducting a business, business owners must comply with the requirements of the Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002) (Immigration Act) as administered by the Department of Home Affairs.

During the initial period of the registration cycle, it has come to our attention that there are concerning incidents of fronting by illegal foreign nationals and in most instances aided by local business owners, landlords and ordinary members of the public.

It must be emphasised that this practice is a punishable criminal offence in terms of section 42 of the Immigration Act. Section 42 of the Immigration Act prohibits anyone, South African or foreigners from aiding, assisting and abetting illegal foreigners in any way, including registering a business on their behalf.

Foreigners who are legally in the country either through a valid asylum, visa or permanent resident status are also obliged to abide by the terms and conditions of their status in terms of the Immigration Act.

Government will continue to monitor this phenomenon as the deadline for registration looms and anyone who is found to be in contravention of the legal requirements will be subjected to the full might of the law this may include the possibility of closure of business.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTIONS AND COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH REGULATIONS

Eligible business owners must take note that registration alone does not mean that a business is eligible to trade. To obtain a licence or a permit to trade in food handling, business owners must also comply with all health regulations and municipal by-laws related to conducting such a business.

As mentioned previously, there will be zero tolerance for non-compliance with health, environmental and food handling regulations and other requirements, even as we allow time for others to first register their applications and secondly have their final business licenses issued.

The message is therefore clear and simple, where a business does not comply with health, environmental and food handling regulations and other requirements, they will not be allowed to trade. This will apply for both registered and non-registered businesses.

The previous period has proven that our multi-disciplinary response to the food-borne illness outbreak has helped us to curb the immediate threat and has strengthened our focus on addressing the challenges and gaps in the legal and regulatory framework environment. Fostering a whole of society approach, we can build a safer, healthier, environmentally friendlier and more equitable food ecosystem for all South Africans.

These multi-disciplinary enforcement interventions will continue to be undertaken by our Law Enforcement Agencies and Environmental Health Inspectors on both registered and unregistered establishments in terms of the existing legal and regulatory framework. These interventions help ensure that areas where such businesses are conducted are free from the use of harmful, hazardous and dangerous pesticides including other banned chemicals.

SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL CLEANUP CAMPAIGN

As part of government's response to curb foodborne illnesses, the President also announced a National Cleanup Campaign initiative which would ensure that waste is managed in a safe and secure manner. It has been observed that poor waste management practices create conditions for infestation of rodents, cockroaches and other illness carrying pests which necessitate the increased use of harmful restricted or banned chemicals and pesticides.

In his statement, the President made a clarion call to all the municipalities to improve their capacity to deliver waste management services and ensure waste collection service is provided to all households.

This call extends to all South Africans to play their part in ensuring that we properly dispose of waste and foster a culture of cleanliness in our neighbourhoods. Everyone can play their part by working together to clear litter and rubble that threatens our efforts to build a healthy South Africa.

Since this announcement, stakeholders in the waste collection business from both government and private sector have been collaborating to develop sustainable national cleanup campaigns and eco system. The program is aimed at fixing the regulatory environment in waste collection services but also to foster a culture of behavioural change in as far as environmental health and cleanliness is concerned.

Various municipalities and members of the public have since engaged in localized clean-up campaigns thus raising awareness about the challenges of illegal dumping and littering in our various communities.

In the coming weeks, the President will personally participate in a National Cleanup Campaign initiative to be announced shortly. He has made a commitment to make this a regular, consistent and sustainable national cleanup program as opposed to a once off event.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES TO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

In the previous registration period, it has also been observed that some of the Spaza Shop owners and food handlers did not have adequate information and knowledge regarding issues of compliance with health and safety requirements for running a business.

This is also true regarding compliance with municipal by-laws and other requirements regarding the registration of their business establishments. In this regard, government

has put together a training and support program to assist all eligible owners to comply with these requirements.

The Department of Small Business Development, in partnership with other government entities in the business development and support environment, have been conducting training sessions to empower small businesses with knowledge and information required in the sector. This program will continue beyond the deadline of the 28 February 2025 to ensure that business owners comply with the legal and regulatory requirements. You can contact Sedfa at +086 010 3703 or 012 748 9600 for more details of training taking place in your area or support offered to small business.

CONCLUSION

As government continues to implement the interventions that were announced by the President, to deal with the challenges of foodborne illnesses, it is important to emphasize the food handling and safety awareness messages both in the households and at the school environment.

Harmful restricted or banned chemicals and pesticides like Terbufos and Aldicarb (Galephirimi) are strictly prohibited in the household environment. Parents, schools and care givers must ensure that our children are kept safe and healthy from contaminated food products.

The government wishes to thank all those who have taken the time to register their businesses and urge those who are still to register to do so urgently as this is an important step in ensuring that these businesses uphold dignity, protect the human lives of the public they serve in which they derive their livelihoods from.

REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS. BE A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN.

For media Enquiries: Contact Mr. Foster Mohale 072 432 3792 or Mava Scott 083 391 2947

Issued by GCIS on behalf of the NATJOINTS

12 February 2025

Kind Regards

Daisy Benjamin

Office of the Head of Department

Department: Local Government

Western Cape Government

9th Floor 80 St Georges Mall, Waldorf Building, Cape Town, 8001

Private Bag x9076, Cape Town, 8000

Tel: (021) 483 3938

Cell: 071 362 5426

Email: Daisy.Benjamin@westerncape.gov.za

Website: www.westerncape.gov.za

