

BILL WATCH 48/2022

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Public Health Lock-down Order : New Rules

Last Friday the Government published SI 169 of 2022, which amends the COVID lock-down rules – the first such amendment since April. The SI can be accessed on the Veritas website [\[link\]](#), and so can a consolidated version of the Lock-down Order incorporating the latest changes [\[link\]](#).

Effect of the New SI

The new SI requires face-masks to be worn:

- Indoors at workplaces and places to which the public have access – by everyone, apparently, workers and visitors alike,
- In public transport (taxis, commuter and other omnibuses, goods vehicles, public service vehicles, trains and passenger aircraft). Again, wearing of face-masks is mandatory for everyone,
- Outdoors in public places, but only by people who have not been vaccinated at least twice against COVID-19.

Current Lock-down Rules

As we have said, the new SI is the first legal amendment to the lock-down rules since April, but in June the Cabinet announced some relaxations to the rules, namely that:

- businesses in the hospitality industry would be allowed to open from 8 a.m. to 3 a.m. the following day,
- the night-time curfew would be lifted.

These relaxations were never incorporated into the Lock-down Order so they never had the force of law and they make it more difficult for law enforcement officers to ascertain what the law really is.

To help them and others, we now explain what we understand the law to be. We shall not detail the provisions of the Lock-down Order where the law is to be found because the Order has been amended so many times, and the amendments have themselves been amended so many times, that it would make our explanation almost impossible to follow.

Curfew

Contrary to what the Cabinet announced, the Lock-down Order imposes a nightly curfew from midnight to 5:30 a.m. during which everyone must stay at home. Persons employed in essential services are exempted from the curfew, and so are people who leave their homes to get medicine or medical assistance or to provide care for others.

Businesses

- **Hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, bars and other businesses in the hospitality industry:** they are allowed to open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, unless their hours are further limited by their licences. They may serve only people who prove they have been fully vaccinated (i.e. have received two doses of a recognised Covid vaccination). Customers must submit to having their hands sanitised and, as stated in the latest SI, customers and employees must all wear face-masks.
- **Gyms, health spas and fitness centres:** They may open between 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Patrons must observe social distancing, wear face-masks (if indoors) and have their hands sanitised.
- **Other businesses:** They may open between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Workers and customers must have their hands sanitised and wear face-masks if indoors; if outdoors, those who have not received two doses of vaccine must wear face-masks.

Sports

- Sporting events are permitted so long as:
- approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Sport,
- Precautions are taken to protect players against the spread of COVID-19 – e.g. players are tested and are not allowed to share towels and clothing, and
- Spectators take precautions such as wearing face-masks (if not fully vaccinated) and having their hands sanitised.

Public gatherings

Any number of people can attend the following gatherings:

- gatherings held for educational, recreational, sporting or charitable purposes
- baptisms, weddings, funerals and cremations
- non-political meetings held by professional, vocational or occupational bodies or by clubs, associations and other organisations
- agricultural and industrial shows
- theatrical performances, film shows, musical entertainments, circuses and fireworks displays
- sales of goods or animals
- gatherings held by registered trade unions for trade union purposes (this presumably includes workers demonstrations and pickets)
- gatherings held to form non-political clubs, associations and organisations
- meetings of traditional leaders with their subjects.

No more than 100 people may attend political meetings and rallies if they can take place at all, which is doubtful in view of section 5 of the Lock-down Order. At outdoor gatherings, attendees who have not had two doses of vaccine must wear face-masks; at indoor gatherings all attendees must do so.

Intercity travel

Inter-city travel is permitted, but passengers and drivers must wear face-masks.

International travel

Visitors and returning residents will be allowed to enter Zimbabwe if they can produce proof that they are fully vaccinated (i.e. that they have received two doses of a recognised vaccine). Alternatively, if they cannot prove they have been fully vaccinated, they will be allowed in if they can produce a certificate showing they have had a negative PCR test within 48 hours of leaving for Zimbabwe.

Visitors who cannot do either of those two things will not be allowed into Zimbabwe.

Returning residents who cannot do those things will be given a PCR test at their own expense and, if they test negative, will have to be quarantined – again at their own expense – for ten days. If they test positive they will be isolated at a hospital or place of isolation.

Disclaimer

Veritas cannot guarantee the accuracy of what we have stated to be the current law on lock-down, though we have done our best to ensure it is correct. As we have said many times before, the Lock-down Order has been amended so many times and contains so many contradictions that it has become almost impossible to follow even using Veritas's consolidated version.

It is a pity that the Government did not take advantage of the recent lull in Covid infections to re-examine the Order and replace it with a simplified one. The sooner it does so the better.

COVID Statistics

The Veritas website now shows Ministry of Health statistics on COVID-19 infections in Zimbabwe. To see the latest statistics [\[link\]](#).

Veritas makes every effort to ensure reliable information, but cannot take legal responsibility for information supplied.
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If you are looking for legislation please look for it on www.veritaszim.net



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