



# SABOA

Southern African Bus Operators Association

*voice of the bus & coach industry*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

### **1. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SIZE AND MAGNITUDE OF THE BUS & COACH SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA?**

- a. The sector is responsible for about 26% of all public transport commuter trips (450 million per annum). More than twice the size of the commuter rail services and representative of around 17 000 buses and coaches in SA.
- b. Commuter services are provided in urban areas, rural – urban areas and deep rural areas. These services are provided by the private sector, municipalities as well as provincial bus companies and includes school bus services.
- c. Long distance, inter-provincial and inter-state services are also provided with typical commuter buses, semi-luxury buses and coaches. These services also focus on tourist and charter services.
- d. The sector also employs thousands of people in various capacities, many of whom are frontline staff dealing with the public daily, highlighting the risks associated with contact for all parties.
- e. SABOA as an Industry association represents approximately 73% of the buses operating in the sector.

### **2. WHAT KIND OF ENGAGEMENTS HAVE YOU HAD WITH THE DIFFERENT BUS OPERATORS SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19?**

- a. SABOA is in daily contact with member organisations and has structured communication channels to both disseminate information and receive updates.
- b. SABOA is actively engaging to keep abreast of the situation and address any arising challenges with the relevant authorities.

- c. Member Operators have been proactive, and essential measures have been implemented:
  - i. Awareness and education around the Covid-19 virus, with emphasis on the personal and individual responsibility for basic hygiene,
  - ii. Elevated cleansing and sanitising of buses,
  - iii. Focused business continuity strategies to minimise the risks and impact of the Covid-19 Virus.
- f. A common challenge being experienced is the lack and availability of gloves, masks and alcohol-based sanitizers. This concern has been raised with the National Department of Transport.

### **3. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED CUTTING THE NUMBERS OF COMMUTERS IN A SINGLE BUS TO MINIMISE THE RISKS?**

- a. At a meeting with the DoT on the 17 March 2020, SABOA proposed the reduction of bus loads.
- b. Operators require permission from the Transport Authorities to implement these measures, as it would mean additional trips to transport commuters, which have financial implications for government.
- c. Most commuter bus services are operated on behalf of the Transport Authorities and have strict contracting conditions attached to them.
- d. SABOA is awaiting government's response in this regard.

### **4. WHAT PROGRAMMES HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED AS PEOPLE START TRAVELLING TO DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS?**

- a. Bus companies have heightened the focus on cleansing procedures. Buses are sanitised at depots.
- b. Drivers have been provided with gloves and masks albeit with stocks running low and or out.
- c. Companies have also introduced awareness programmes for staff and passengers that includes the general guidelines on washing of hands, social distancing, reporting of illnesses etc.

## **5. HOW HAS THE CLOSURE OF SOME BORDERS OF ENTRY AFFECTED THE BUS SERVICE?**

- a. The borders that were closed are mostly smaller border posts with low levels of commercial and public transport traffic.
- b. The borders that we mainly operate through would be the main borders of Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia. These borders remain open and people still travel through them.
- c. It is difficult at this stage to make a call on direct impact but the related agencies like the Cross-Border Agency and entities like CBBASA would be better positioned to make comment thereon.

## **6. HOW CAN COMMUTERS WHO ARE STILL PLANNING ON TRAVELLING GET INFORMATION ON YOUR INTERVENTIONS SO THAT THEY ARE AWARE AND CAN PERHAPS PREPARE THEMSELVES?**

- a. SABOA has made a detailed proposal to the DoT on actions to be taken to mitigate the risks of public transport (bus, rail and taxi).
- b. The SABOA proposal, along with input from other transport sector stakeholders was planned for discussion at an Inter-Ministerial meeting scheduled for the 20 March 2020.
- c. SABOA awaits a public announcement by the National Department of Transport. The industry may also be called to a meeting to discuss implementation and other matters to be decided upon. We must, however, just be conscious of the overall limitation of 100 people per gathering.
- d. For immediate and ongoing access to information, commuters generally have access to the service provider being used and their communication channels.
- e. The public is also free to access SABOA via the traditional communication channels and platforms i.e. website, Twitter and Facebook pages.
- f. SABOA will provide ongoing updates as the situation progresses.