

Transport rules amended to accommodate social grant payments

In light of the payment of social grants from Monday onwards, Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has amended the public transport directions under the National State of Disaster.



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"Following the announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on the days social grants would be paid, a number of industry bodies have made representations on the relaxation of hours [in which] public transport vehicles are allowed to operate," the Minister said on Sunday.

Under the current lockdown aimed at slowing the spread of Covid-19, public modes of transport are allowed to operate from 5am-9am and again from 4pm-8pm.

As of Monday, 30 March 2020, these hours will be upscaled.

"Effective from tomorrow, 30 March 2020 until Friday, 3 April 2020, buses and taxis will be permitted to operate from 5am until 8pm in order to cater to the transportation needs of society's most vulnerable," said Mbalula.

A similar request to relax the hours was made by the Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu.

"Having considered Minister Zulu's request and representations made by various industry bodies, including the taxi industry, I have decided to amend the Public Transport Directions in order to accommodate grant beneficiaries," said Mbalula.

Earlier this month, the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) said it would pay social grants to older persons and persons with disabilities from 30 and 31 March 2020, while other beneficiaries will be able to access their grants from 1 April 2020.

The social security agency's decision to pay grants earlier is in response to the State of National Disaster, as announced by President Ramaphosa on 15 March 2020.

Mbalula urged those using public transport to observe social distancing.

"We will issue further directions in this regard," he said.

Grant recipients are required to carry their IDs and Sassa cards when travelling on public transport to assist law enforcement efforts.

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