

Yellow fever checks to resume soon

Checks for yellow fever at Lanseria and OR Tambo International Airports will soon be reintroduced, the Gauteng health department said on Tuesday, 27 November 2012.

"The department assures the community that this matter will soon be resolved and apologises profusely for any inconvenience caused during this labour dispute," it said in a statement.

The checks stopped because staff conducting them refused to work, claiming they had not been paid overtime and night-duty allowances.

The department said it was making money available to correct this and was also going to introduce a shift system to ensure there was no recurrence of the problem.

According to the World Health Organisation, yellow fever is a virus which is usually transmitted via mosquitoes. On average 30,000 people a year die of the virus, most of them in Africa. There is no specific treatment. According to a 2011 document on the national health department's website, there is a risk of the disease being introduced into South Africa.

On Monday (26 November), Democratic Alliance health spokesman Jack Bloom said in a statement that the checks were being neglected at the two airports. Bloom said the Gauteng health department was failing to protect citizens from exotic diseases carried by those entering South Africa.

"We could import all kinds of serious diseases because of [a] lack of controls at these airports, especially over weekends," Bloom said.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge