



## **SURFING AND THE CURRENT NATIONAL STATE OF DISASTER**

The Board of Surfing South Africa fully supports the Government of South Africa at this difficult time.

The measures implemented to try and mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 virus pandemic on all of us living in South Africa reflects the actions necessary as recommended by scientific advice from world leaders in pandemic medicine.

These actions negatively affect the lives of everyone and, although inconvenient, are necessary in order to retain focus on the primary objective, which is protecting the health of society and flattening the curve so that those who do contract the virus have the best possible chance of appropriate medical attention.

The country is currently in Level 5 lockdown and from 1 May will be on Level 4 lockdown. Certain parts of the country might revert back to Level 5 if their numbers of infections and fatalities increase dramatically.

Currently citizens are restricted from leaving their homes unless for specific reasons such as essential shopping, collection of medicines or visiting a doctor.

Exercise is restricted to within the boundaries of one's place of residence.

Beaches are closed. No activity may take place on the beaches of South Africa. This currently includes any access to the ocean via the coastline including rocks etc.

Surfing is one of 75 sporting codes recognised by SASCO, the Olympic governing body for sport in South Africa. Given that surfing is only actively represented in sufficient Provinces to meet the minimum criteria for recognition, surfing is classified as a minor sport. Given the diversity of sporting codes, specific criteria relating to individual sports is not practical at this time.

From a membership perspective, the number of paid up members represented by Surfing South Africa is also relatively small, although Surfing South Africa, as the recognised controlling body for surfing in South Africa, recognises that it has a role to play in the overall interests of surfing.

Our views, opinions and recommendations would carry significantly more weight if our membership reflected the majority as opposed to the minority of those who surf.

With this in mind, Surfing South Africa believes that at this time, until there is further clarity with regards to the ability of citizens to partake in their respective sports, the top down regulations should be complied with and surfers are accordingly encouraged to comply. Until such a time as one is allowed to move around under a broader scope of permitted activities and the beaches are open, our request is for surfers to not attempt to surf in breach of the regulations.

It would be a real pity if a blanket ban on surfing was implemented because a minority refused to comply with the regulations.

Surfing South Africa distances itself from the petitions currently in circulation as some contain factual inaccuracies and others reflect self-interest opinions that we at Surfing South Africa do not believe represent the opinions or the interests of the majority of surfers.

Surfing South Africa has in the last week made representations on behalf of surfing and other ocean users to both the government and SASCOC through the recommended channels.

Once greater clarity is available or there are structured processes through which the interests of the various sporting bodies can be motivated, Surfing South Africa will, again, respond accordingly.

Until such time, our request is that surfers stand behind the Government and comply with the regulations, as inconvenient as this may be. The more everyone cooperates, the sooner the lockdown will be relaxed and we can all get back to practicing the sport that we are all so passionate about.

We encourage surfers to join their district surfing associations listed on [www.surfingsouthafrica.co.za](http://www.surfingsouthafrica.co.za) to strengthen our voice.

Surfing South Africa

April 28<sup>th</sup> 2020