



**TRANSPORT MINISTER FIKILE MBALULA
URGES AVIATORS TO COMPLY WITH LOCKDOWN DIRECTIONS
18 APRIL 2020**

Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has urged aviators, particularly pilots and drone owners, to comply with the Disaster Management Act's regulations and directions aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The plea follows reports of a surge in the number of applications for permission to fly remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), commonly referred to as drones. The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) has also received a handful of requests from small private aircraft owners requesting permission to fly their aircraft for various business-related activities, including farm owners wanting to fly into various provinces to check on operations.

Minister Mbalula has appealed to aircraft owners for cooperation: "While these applications are being reviewed on a case-by-case basis, it is important to remember that the country is under lockdown for a reason. Restrictions are there to stop the spread of COVID-19; it is a matter of life and death. We cannot put lives at risk in an effort to rescue unessential business operations, if it is not deemed urgent, it must wait. We simply cannot put a price tag on human lives".

The Minister has also commended cargo operators, the national Department of Health's Port Health Services, the Department of Transport's aviation agencies as well as many other role-payers for not only ensuring smooth operations but also adherence to outlined regulations and directions. Minister Mbalula also noted daily reports that indicate that procedures as set by various organisations, including the World Health Organisation on disinfection and other hygiene and COVID-19 combating measures, are being followed precisely.

- Ends

**Issued by: The Ministry of Transport
Contact: Ayanda Allie Paine 072 566 0827**