

# Winter clothing directives preceded by detailed consultations - NCRF

By [Anthony Thunstrom](#)

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*A statement by Anthony Thunstrom, chair of the National Clothing Retail Federation (NCRF) and CEO of TFG.*

The announcement made [on Tuesday] by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition regarding the [finalisation of the clothing, footwear and bedding](#) that may be sold during Stage 4 of lockdown, was preceded by detailed submissions made by various retailers, manufacturers and organised labour to the department.

Whilst we were unable to reach agreement on all the items that retailers wished to be available for sale, we were greatly encouraged by both the spirit and consultative manner in which these discussions were conducted by the DTIC and by Minister Patel and his staff.



## SA's clothing retailers welcome directives from Patel

13 May 2020



There is clearly a growing concern amongst all South Africans as to the dire negative impact that continued lockdown will have on the South African economy, the levels of unemployment and the long term well-being of all its citizens. The economy needs to re-open as quickly as possible, but in a manner that balances these negative realities with the public health risk of re-opening sectors of the economy before they are ready and equipped to minimise the rate of new infections.

We have empathy for the dilemma faced by government in trying to balance the conflicting challenges faced by our country of burdening debt in a declining economy, with the risks to public health and to the overstretched health system caused by the pandemic.

Whilst the re-opening procedures were being debated with the DTIC, retailers were afforded the opportunity to ensure that store staff were issued with all the necessary PPE and were trained as to how they should operate stores in a manner that is safe for both themselves and for their customers.

Expanded list of clothing now allowed for sale under Level 4





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The re-opening of stores could not have come at a better time for clothing retailers and their local supply chain which have been prevented from trading for five weeks during the Level 5 of Lockdown, in common with most other non-essential businesses. It will mitigate, to some degree, the job losses amongst store staff as well as the local supply chain, including factories throughout South Africa.

As one of the largest contributors to tax collection and to employment in South Africa, clothing retailers are grateful that that phased re-opening, if handled responsibly and within the clear guidelines of public safety, will benefit the broader economy generally.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony Thunstrom is the chair of the National Clothing Retail Federation of South Africa and CEO of TFG.

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