



STIMELA

GROUP



Covid-19 Challenges to Cargo Surveying

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1. INTRODUCTION

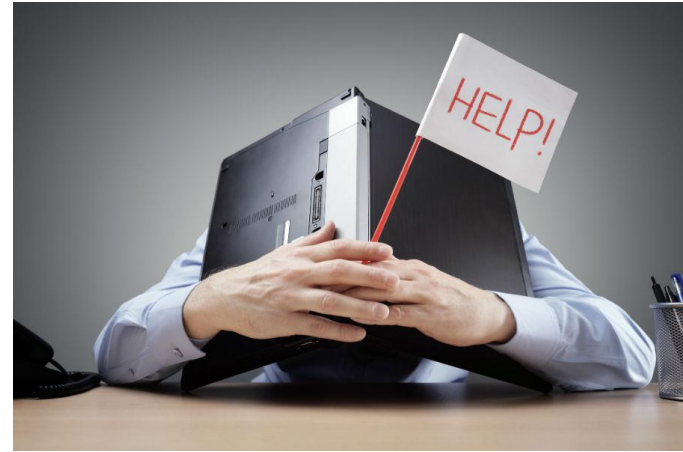


1. INTRODUCTION

- Besides the global event that transpired, South Africa created some of its own challenges. By rightly focusing on the health crisis, the government inadvertently created havoc in the supply chain by drastically reducing movement in public spaces. The regulations created critical unintended consequences.
- The trade network is highly integrated and functions as a system on its own, and it has been highlighted that the failure of one link in the chain can have a significant knock on effect and cause extensive disruptions.
- The supply chain cannot stop. Essential services, like cargo transport, must have the ability to provide the full suite of services they offer in order to promote operational efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- Furthermore, the international and domestic transportation of goods does not work without Pilots, Drivers, and Crews - People are essential.



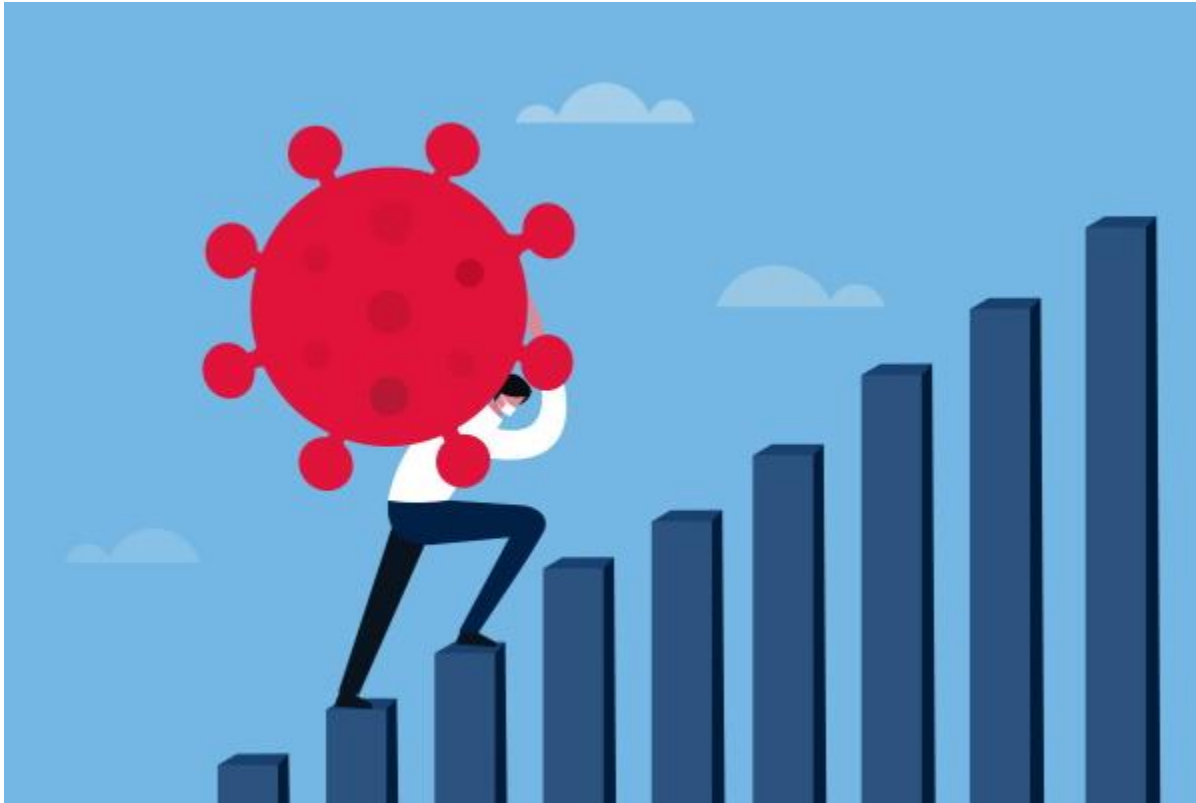
- Businesses were thrown into turmoil as Employees had to stay at home, cargo was not allowed to move, storage facilities became congested and standard operating procedures had to be repurposed.
- It did not take long before changes were made, businesses adjusted, and as the lockdown levels reduced South African businesses implemented business continuity plans.
- The majority of Traders and Operators in the shipping sector felt that Covid-19 had negatively affected their revenue, Employee headcount, and insurance premiums.
- Many Employees were required to work from home, however, Remote work was not possible for many sectors like manufacturing and construction.
- Each of us were faced with different circumstances and challenges while working form home, like looking after children full time, or noisy dogs and neighbours.
- Stress levels became high and we had to look out for each member of our Team and work together to be there for one another on the bad days.



- There were far more virtual meetings and communication and by email than by means of face-to-face meetings.
- The number Employees allowed in the workplace was drastically reduced to reduce the chances of Covid-19 transmissions.
- It was vital that all stakeholders worked together and shared information regarding response strategies, policies and procedures.
- Stakeholders should be committed to a cohesive and cooperative partnership, which aims to continue the provision of an effective pandemic response.



2. CHALLENGES



2.1 DELAY IN NOTIFYING INSURERS OF INCIDENTS

- Some Claimants failed to notify their Insurers timeously.
- These delays made it difficult to obtain information and documentation, especially after a prolonged time period.
- There were communication breakdowns within the Parties involved.
- Details become blurred.
- Vital evidence was lost.
- We contacted all Parties as soon as possible (in an attempt to minimise these problems and gather as much information before CCTV footage was wiped, emails archived etc.)



2.2 ON-SITE INSPECTION LIMITATIONS

- Not all Companies allowed face-to-face meetings.
- On site inspections / assessments were not always as effective (correct contact person not available to answer questions).
- The unavailability of instant feedback with regards to questions or queries, caused a delay in finalising matters.
- Communication became unclear as there was a “middleman” or a person not directly involved in the matter relaying the messages.
- We realised the value of face-to-face meetings.



- We were sometimes unable to inspect all areas as a result of the Companies strict COVID-19 protocols.
- Standard Operating Procedures had changed for some Companies and this change in procedures had lead to numerous discrepancies being identified.
- We contacted the various Parties involved to check the availability of all concerned and often split site inspections (to view cargo) with separate electronic meetings to gather information.
- We tried as far as possible to deal directly with the specific individuals involved to reduce the broken telephone effect.
- We invited Parties to attend to inspection remotely, via Whatsapp video call, thus allowing them to be “present” and view what we were viewing and provide input from their homes.



2.3 PPE AND HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- Long screening requirements resulted in extended times on site.
- Strict protocols had also required additional PPE in some instances.
- We always called ahead to ensure that we were aware of the onsite requirements before hand to reduce the time spent on site, as we were always conscious of our time being spent on the investigation.



2.4 GATHERING OF EVIDENCE

- We could no longer just walk to the neighbouring businesses and request a meeting with the Security Supervisor in order to obtain copies of footage or statements.
- COVID-19 protocols often prevented us from gaining access to these facility.
- Where there were no Employees on site (as they were working remotely) obtaining footage became a difficult and sometimes impossible task.
- With Employees working remotely, there were fewer Witnesses to confirm what actually happened.



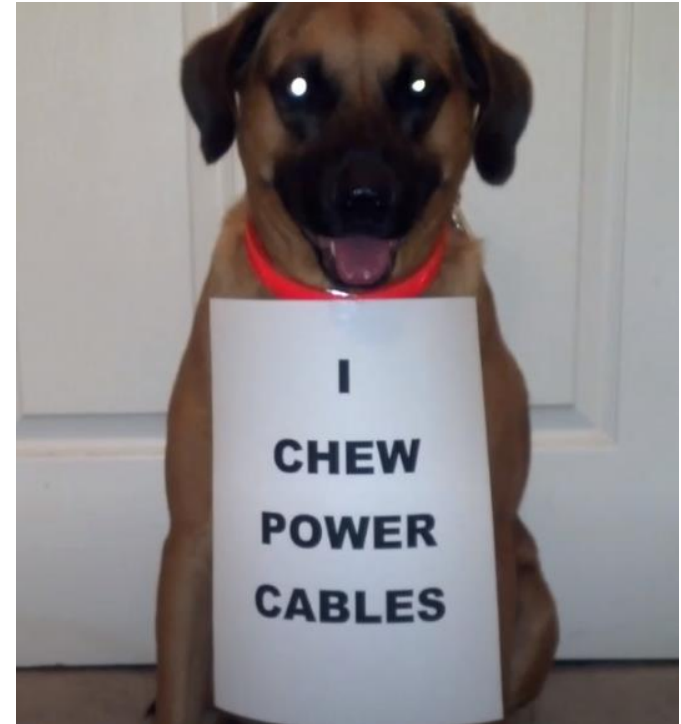
2.5 DIFFICULTY OBTAINING DOCUMENTATION

- Working from home meant that some Companies were unable to provide us with documentation (as they did not always have access to this information remotely).
- Documentation needed to be requested from multiple individuals some locally and some internationally.
- This process proved to be time consuming and caused further delays in finalizing matters.
- We attempt to identify all the documentation required, as early on in our investigation as possible, in order to prevent delays further down in our investigation.



2.6 COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

- There was a delay in response times from some Companies – due to a multitude of factors including:
 - Connectivity issues;
 - Varying working hours as a result from working at home, etc.
- Initially electronic meetings were plagued with connection issues with vital information possibly being missed, when screens or audio froze.
- A positive was that these meetings could be recorded to ensure that all information was reviewed.



2.7 DISRUPTED MOBILITY



- Restrictions on travelling and the cancellation of flights caused delays.
- Curfews being implemented to curb the movement of people, was also monitored as not all Parties could move around with a permit.
- We had to ensure that the correct travel permits were issued dependant on the appropriate lockdown level.
- This in turn meant that inspection times had to be carefully planned to ensure that all Parties could be present.

Form 7
Permit to travel to perform a service
 Regulations 33, 66 and 82

• Please note that the person to whom the permit is issued must at all times present a form of identification together with this permit. If no identification is presented, the person to whom the permit is issued will have to return to his or her place of residence.

I, being the head of institution, with the below mentioned details,

Surname	Lennon		
Full names	Bruce Mark		
Identity number	6707185033085		
Contact details	Cell nr.	Tel nr (w)	Tel nr (h) email
	0837887778	n/a	n/a bruce@stmelgroup.co.za

Physical address of Institution	1 st Floor, Block A, Bellevue Campus, 5 Bellevue Road, Kloof, 3610
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Hereby certify that the below mentioned official/employee is performing services in my institution

Surname	Lange
Full names	Lance
Identity number	8512315053088

Place of residence of Employee	24 Bluewater Crescent, Sea View, 4094
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Signed at Kloof, on this the 12th day of January 2021.


 Signature of Head of Institution

Official logo / stamp of institution / company
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2.8 SAPS LIMITED AVAILABILITY

- Limited availability due to:
 - Police Officers contracting COVID-19; &
 - “Covid enforcement”.
- Police Stations had been temporarily shut down putting additional pressure on neighbouring Police Stations, who had to handle the additional influx of cases and investigations.
- Delays in obtaining Investigation Reports and general information from the respective Investigating Officers.
- Making contact with Investigating Officers was difficult at times.
- We managed to expand our network of “contacts” in order to ensure that we gathered the information we required as soon as possible.



2.9 DEPOT, PORT AND VESSEL DELAYS AND CHALLENGES

- Restricted access to the Depots, Ports and Vessels made it difficult to obtain the evidence / information required.
- A lack of available stevedores or restrictions on boarding the vessel also lead to slower cargo operations.
- Additional operational downtime to sanitize equipment between shifts.
- Each Depot had their own restrictions and Covid-19 protocols to adhere to.
- Limited storage space meant that inspections were often delayed.
- We were always looking at ways to reduce costing for our Clients.



- Simple precautions were taken if attendance to inspections were unavoidable:
 - Minimised the number of Employees attending the Survey;
 - Limited the interaction between the Parties present;
 - Each Party was given a chance to view the damaged items separately to allow for social distancing;
 - Did not shake hands;
 - Most discussions were had in the open, and if this was not possible we spread out in a boardroom;
 - Carried sanitizer with us all the time;
 - Ensured that we always captured our personal information on any register clearly, so we could be contact in case we had been exposed to someone with Covid-19.



3. FACTORS GOING FORWARD



3.1 EMOTIONAL STRESSES

- The emotional impact of Covid-19 cannot be overlooked.
- According to an Ask Africa Covid-19 Tracker Study, the impact of lockdown on both socio-emotional and economic factors has been significant. The study found that depression and a heightened sense of anxiety was prevalent amongst South Africans.
- The prolonged lockdown – albeit now far less restrictive – has left many discouraged and facing uncertain futures characterised by higher levels of debt.



- Our Employees were working too hard and long hours without setting any boundaries.
- Clients, Insured's and various Third Parties were often very emotional and agitated when we conducting our investigations.
- We ensured that our Team sympathise with others, as we were not aware of what circumstances our Clients, Insured's or Third Parties were faced with.
- With an increase in absenteeism we ensured that the workload was balanced between all our Employees.
- We could not have achieved what we did without our dedicated Team who ensured we offered the best possible service to our Clients.
- Each Employee contributed to our success.



3.2 TEAM WELLBEING

- Our Team members were initially worried about their jobs as there were many people around them who were losing their jobs and companies closing their doors.
- The welfare of our Employees was critically important and we had the responsibility of ensuring the physical and emotional welfare of our Team.
- Our Employees were facing long periods of isolation and started to affect their wellbeing and mental health.
- We encouraged regular zoom meeting opportunities within our Team. Such occasions were used to remind the Team of critical protocols, escalation procedures and general remote working advice. But at the same time assuring them of their job security.



3.3 CYBER / IT SECURITY

- Cyber Fraud concerns have increased due to remote working.
- There is a fundamental need to provide support, equipment and IT infrastructure to enable remote working.
- We engaged with our IT service provider to ensure that our anti-virus software and firewalls were up to date and in working order.
- We conducted Cyber Fraud and Phishing Training with our Employees to raise awareness.



3.4 PRECAUTIONS

- Remained conscious of our surroundings.
- Continually sanitised at every opportunity.
- Conformed to each sites respective Covid-19 protocols.
- Ensured social distancing was maintained.
- We kept abreast of all Covid related Regulations.



4. SUMMARY



4. SUMMARY

- Covid-19 has taught us that we are all Equal. The pandemic can effect you, whoever you are, and we need to work together.
- We became aware of the importance of being able to diversify our business.
- We learnt we had to keep our Clients informed all the time of what we were doing and what was happening around us.
- Diversification, New Motivation and an Expanded Network where key aspects that helped us succeed.
- People took their responsibilities seriously and acted in a mature fashion.
- South Africans have shown that they are robust and adaptable.



***COVID-19 IS AFFECTING NOT JUST THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS TODAY,
BUT THE WAYS THAT WE WILL BE DOING BUSINESS TOMORROW***

**Lard Rhodin
Managing Director
The Swedish Club**





THANK YOU

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