

ACT

To provide for the compilation and maintenance of a population register in respect of the population of the Republic; for the issue of identity cards and certain certificates to persons whose particulars are included in the population register; and for matters connected therewith.

*(English text signed by the President.)
(Assented to 26 November 1997.)*

BE IT ENACTED by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, as follows:—

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CHAPTER 1

Interpretation and Application of Act

Definitions

1. In this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates—
- (i) “certificate” means a birth, death or marriage certificate referred to in section 15 13; (viii)
 - (ii) “Director-General” means the Director-General: Home Affairs; (ii)
 - (iii) “fingerprints” includes **palmpoints**; (x)
 - (iv) “identity card” means the identity card referred to in section 14 and, unless clearly inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, includes an identity 20 document referred to in section 25(1) or (2); (v)
 - (v) “Minister” means the Minister of Home Affairs; (vi)
 - (vi) “ordinary place of residence”, with reference to any person, means the place where he or she normally lives and to which he or she returns regularly after any period of temporary absence; (iii) 25
 - (vii) “population register” means the population register referred to in section 5;
 - (viii) “prescribed” means prescribed by regulation; (xi)
 - (ix) “regulation” means a regulation made under section 22; (vii)
 - (x) “temporary identity certificate” means a temporary identity certificate issued 30 under section 16; (ix)
 - (xi) “this Act” includes the regulations. (iv)

Utilising of information for purposes of Act

2. The information contained in the population register which existed immediately prior to the commencement of this Act, as well as the information contained in any 35 document kept by the Director-General under any law, which are appropriate for the compilation and maintenance of the population register referred to in section 5(1), shall be utilised by the Director-General for that purpose.

Application of Act

3. This Act shall apply to all persons who are South African citizens and persons who 40 are lawfully and permanently resident in the Republic.

Assignment of functions to officials

4. (1) The Director-General may—
- (a) delegate any power granted to him or her by or under this Act, except the power referred to in this section and section 6, to an officer in the public 45 service; and
 - (b) grant authority that a duty assigned to him or her in terms of this Act maybe performed by such an officer.
- (2) A power so delegated and a duty so authorised shall be exercised or performed, subject to the directions of the Director-General, who may at any time withdraw such 50 delegation or authority.

- (3) A delegation under subsection(1)(a) does not prevent the **Director-General** from exercising the power in question himself or herself.
- (4) A delegation or authority granted under a provision which is repealed by section 24 and which was in force immediately before the commencement of this Act, shall be deemed to have been granted under this section. 5

CHAPTER 2

Population Register

Compilation and maintenance of population register

5. (1) The Director-General shall, as soon as practicable after the commencement of this Act, in the prescribed manner compile and thereafter maintain a population register 10 for the Republic.
- (2) The particulars required for the compilation and maintenance of the population register shall be obtained by the Director-General in the prescribed manner from the information referred to in section 2.

Access to population register 15

6. Subject to the provisions of this Act, no person shall have access to the population register and no person shall record or amend any particulars in such register unless specifically authorised thereto by the Director-General.

Assignment of identity numbers

7. (1) The Director-General shall assign an identity number to every person whose 20 particulars are included in the population register in terms of section 8.
- (2) An identity number shall be compiled in the prescribed manner out of figures and shall, in addition to a serial, index and control number, consist of a reproduction, in figure codes, of the following particulars, and no other particulars whatsoever, of the person to whom it has been assigned, **namely**— 25
- (a) his or her date of birth and gender; and
 - (b) whether or not he or she is a South African citizen.

Particulars to be included in population register

8. *There* shall in respect of any person referred to in section 3, be included in the population register the following relevant particulars available to the Director-General, 30 **namely**—
- (a) his or her identity number referred to in section 7;
 - (b) his or her surname, full forenames, gender, date of birth and the place or country where he or she was born;
 - (c) if he or she has attained the age of 16 years, his or her ordinary place of 35 residence and his or her postal address;
 - (d) if he or she is a South African citizen but is not a citizen by birth or descent, the date of his or her naturalisation or registration as such a citizen, and, if he or she is an alien and was not born in ~~the~~ Republic, the date of his or her entry into the Republic, and the country of which he or she is a citizen; 40
 - (e) the particulars of his or her marriage contained in the relevant marriage register or other documents relating to the contracting of his or her marriage, and such other particulars concerning his or her marital status as may be furnished to the Director-General;
 - (f) a recent photograph of himself or herself, if he or she has attained the age of 45 16 years;
 - (g) his or her fingerprints, if he or she has attained the age of 16 years;
 - (h) particulars concerning passports and travel documents granted to him or her;
 - (i) after his or her death, the required particulars furnished when notice of his or her death was given, and on permanent departure from the Republic, the date 50

- of such departure, and **particulars** concerning the cancellation in the prescribed manner of his or her identity card or that card with the exception of the prescribed section thereof (if any); and
- (j) **any** other **particulars** determined by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette* as particulars which, subject to the conditions, exceptions or exemptions (if any) mentioned in the notice, shall be included in the register. 5

Photographs

9. Every person referred to in section 3 who has attained the age of 16 years shall at his or her own expense furnish two prescribed copies of a recent photograph of himself or herself to the Director-General **when—** 10
- (a) he or she applies for an identity card in terms of section 15; or
- (b) his or her identity card is required to be replaced by an improved one in terms of section 19(3)(a).

Fingerprints

10. Every person referred to in section 3 who has attained the age of 16 years shall, 15 when he or she applies for an identity card, have his or her fingerprints taken in the prescribed manner so that it may be included in the population register.

Change of ordinary place of residence or postal address and furnishing of particulars to municipalities

11. (1) Every person whose name is included in the population register shall, if he or 20 she attained the age of 16 years and an identity card has thereafter been issued to him or her, after any permanent change of his or her ordinary place of residence or his or her postal address, notify the Director-General within the prescribed time and in the prescribed manner of that change of residence or postal address.
- (2) If the Director-General on the ground of information at his or her disposal, is of the 25 opinion that a permanent change has occurred in respect of the ordinary place of residence or the postal address of any person whose name is included in the population register, he or she may in the prescribed manner record the change in the population register, in consultation with the person concerned, and shall thereupon notify the person concerned in the prescribed manner that the change has been recorded. 30

Verification of particulars

12. The Director-General may—
- (a) request any person to furnish the Director-General with proof of the correctness of **any** particulars which have been furnished in respect of such person in any **document** in terms of this Act; and 35
- (b) investigate or cause to be investigated any matter in respect of which particulars are required to be recorded in the population register.

Certificates of certain particulars included in population register

13. (1) **The** Director-General shall as soon ~~as~~ practicable after the receipt by him or her of **an** application, issue a birth, marriage or death certificate in the prescribed form 40 after the particulars of such birth, marriage or death were included in the register in terms of section 8 of this Act.
- (2) Any certificate issued in terms of subsection (1), shall in all courts of law be *prima facie* evidence of the particulars set forth therein.

CHAPTER 3

Identity Card

Identity Card

14. An identity card may contain only the following relevant particulars in respect of the person to whom it is issued, namely— 5

- (a) the particulars referred to in section 8(a), (b), (d) and (f);
- (b) the prescribed fingerprint or prints; and
- (c) any other particulars in the population register determined by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette* as particulars which, subject to the conditions, exceptions or exemptions (if any) mentioned in the notice, may be included in 10 identity cards.

Application for identity card

15. (1) Any person referred to in section 3 who has attained the age of 16 years shall in the prescribed form and within the prescribed period apply for an identity card.

(2) Two copies of the photograph referred to in section 9, and the fingerprints referred 15 to in section 10, shall accompany the application made under this section.

Temporary identity certificates

16. When any person has applied for an identity card, or has for official purposes lodged his or her identity card with the Director-General, the Director-General may on application issue to the person concerned whose particulars are included in the 20 population register in terms of section 8, a temporary identity certificate in the prescribed form and manner, which, for the period and on the conditions mentioned therein, shall for the purpose of this Act be regarded as his or her identity card.

Proof of identity

17. (1) An authorised officer as defined in subsection (3) may at any time request any 25 person reasonably presumed to have attained the age of 16 years to prove his or her identity to that officer by the production of his or her identity card as defined in subsection (4).

(2) If it comes to the attention of an officer acting in the service of the Department of Home Affairs that a person referred to in section 3 who has attained the age of 16 years 30 has not complied with the provisions of section 15(1), that officer shall take the prescribed steps to ensure that that person applies without delay for an identity card in terms of this Act.

(3) For the purposes of this section “authorised officer” means—

(a) a peace officer as defined in section 1 of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 35 (Act No. 51 of 1977); or

(b) a person, or a member of a category of persons, designated by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette*, and who for the purpose of this section shall be deemed to be such a peace officer.

(4) For the purposes of subsection (1) “identity card” includes any other proof of 40 identity issued by the State and on which the name and a photograph of the holder appear.

CHAPTER 4

Offences and Penalties

Offences and penalties

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18. (1) No person shall—

(a) for the purpose of this Act make or cause to be made a false statement;

- (b) record any particulars in the population register, unless authorised thereto in terms of section 6;
 - (c) record any particulars in the population register which are in a material respect false, or fraudulently change any particulars therein;
 - (d) having come into possession of an identity card, a certificate or a temporary identity certificate belonging to another person, present it as his or her own or belonging to any person other than the person to whom it belongs; 5
 - (e) imitate, alter, deface, destroy or mutilate any identity card or any part thereof, certificate or temporary identity certificate, or cause it to be done or allow it to be done; 10
 - (f) allow an identity card, a certificate or a temporary identity certificate belonging to him or her or which is under his or her control, to come into the possession of any other person for an unlawful purpose;
 - (g) give out that any incorrect particulars in an identity card, a certificate or a temporary identity certificate are correct; 15
 - (h) at any time after a new identity card was issued to him or her, regain possession of an identity card previously issued to him or her under this Act under an Act repealed in terms of section 24, or without lawful cause refuses to return for cancellation that previous identity card to the Director-General within 14 days after a written request to return such identity card was served upon him or her, or after he or she regained possession of the previous identity card, as the case may be; or 20
 - (i) possess any identity card or any part thereof, a certificate or temporary identity certificate which has been imitated, altered, defaced or mutilated or any particulars of which are incorrect. 25
- (2) Any person who—
- (a) contravenes a provision of subsection (1);
 - (b) without lawful cause fails or refuses to comply with a request in terms of section 12(a) or 19(4);
 - (c) without lawful cause refuses to comply with a provision of section 10 or 15(1); or 30
 - (d) contravenes a provision of section 19(1) or 21(1),
- shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.
- (3) A court convicting any person of an offence referred to in subsection (2) shall, if applicable— 35
- (a) declare the document or certificate in respect of which the offence was committed to be forfeited to the State; and
 - (b) declare any instrument used for the purpose of or in connection with the commission of the offence, or the convicted person's rights thereto, to be forfeited to the State: Provided that such declaration shall not affect any rights which any person other than the convicted person may have to such instrument, if it is proved that such person did not know that it was being used or would be used for the purpose of or in connection with the commission of such offence, or that he or she could not prevent such use. 40 45
- (4) The provisions of section 35(2) and (4) of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act No. 51 of 1977), shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to any forfeiture in terms of subsection (3)(b) of this section.

CHAPTER-5

General Provisions

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Correction, cancellation and replacement

19. (1) If—

- (a) an identity card does not reflect correctly the particulars of the person to whom it was issued; or
- (b) a temporary identity certificate or any certificate does not reflect correctly the particulars of the person to whom it was issued, 55

the person concerned or the guardian of the person to whom ~~the~~ card or certificate was issued, as the case may be, shall within the prescribed period hand over or send by registered post the identity card, temporary identity certificate or certificate, as the case may be, to the Director-General.

(2) If the identity card, temporary identity certificate or certificate referred to in subsection (1) is not handed over or sent in accordance with that subsection, the Director-General may in the prescribed manner obtain restoration thereof or seize it.

(3) If by virtue of this section the Director-General has obtained possession of—

(a) an identity card, he or she shall, subject to section 16, without delay cancel it in the prescribed manner and, subject to sections 9 and 10, replace it with a corrected identity card; or

(b) a temporary identity certificate or any certificate, he or she shall without delay—

(i) effect the necessary corrections directly on the temporary identity certificate or certificate, as the case may be, if in his or her opinion it can be done; or

(ii) in the prescribed manner cancel and replace it with a corrected temporary identity certificate or appropriate certificate, as the case may be.

(4) When it comes to the attention of the Director-General that an identity card has been issued to a person whose name is not required in terms of section 3 to be included in the population register, the Director-General shall request that person to return the identity card for cancellation.

Surrender or seizure of identity card of deceased person

20. (1) Any person who has in his or her possession a document being or purporting to be an uncanceled identity card of a person who has died, shall within 30 days after the document came into his or her possession, hand over or send by registered post such document for cancellation to the Director-General.

(2) A document handed over or sent to the Director-General in terms of subsection(1), shall without delay after the receipt thereof be cancelled and destroyed in the prescribed manner and, unless a relative of the deceased person indicates in writing that he or she wants it.

(3) When it comes to the attention of the Director-General that any person is in possession of a document being or purporting to be an uncanceled identity card of a person who has died, he or she shall without delay seize that document. and thereupon the provisions of subsection (2) shall *mutatis mutandis* apply in respect of that document.

Secrecy

21. (1) Subject to the provisions of subsections (2) and (3), no person shall publish or communicate to any other person any information recorded in the population register, an identity card, a temporary identity certificate or any certificate which he or she acquired by virtue of his or her functions in terms of any law, except for the purposes of this Act, judicial proceedings or the performance of his or her functions in terms of **any** other law, and no person who came into possession of any such information which to his or her knowledge has been communicated to him or her in contravention of the provisions of this section, shall publish the information or communicate it to any other person.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1), the Director-General may furnish any information in respect of a person whose name is included in the population register to—

(a) any person or institution on behalf of, and on the written instruction of, any such person;

(b) any State department, municipality or statutory body;

(c) any organisation, body, society or institution whose main activity is insurance business as defined in the Insurance Act, 1943 (Act No. 27 of 1943), or banking as contemplated in the Banks Act, 1990 (Act No. 94 of 1990); or

(d) any other organisation, body, society or institution,

subject to the restrictions, conditions, exclusions, directives and fees as may be prescribed.

(3) No information may be furnished to any organisation, body, society or institution contemplated in subsection (2) unless the information is required for the exercise or protection of any rights, is in the public interest, or is for the compilation of a voters' roll. 5

Regulations

22. (1) The Minister may make regulations as to—

- (a) the issue of duplicate identity cards, temporary identity certificates, or other certificates, the circumstances under, and the conditions subject to, which they may be issued and the fees payable therefor; 10
- (b) the form of and the issue of certificates *in* respect of particulars contained in the population register or in an identity card, the purposes for which such certificates may be used and the evidential value thereof;
- (c) the issuing of instructions and the prescribing of forms by the Director-General which may be necessary for the effective execution of the provisions 15 of this Act,

and in general, as to all matters which, in terms of this Act, are required or permitted to be prescribed or which he or she deems necessary or expedient to prescribe in order that the objects of this Act may be achieved.

(2) Any regulations made under subsection (1) may prescribe penalties of a fine or of 20 imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years for any contravention thereof or failure to comply therewith.

(3) A regulation made under a provision repealed by section 24 and which was in force immediately before the commencement of this Act shall be deemed to have been made under this section. 25

(4) Any fees which may be prescribed under this Act shall be prescribed by the Minister with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance.

Reproduction of documents

23. (1) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other law, the Director-General may, in respect of a person or class of persons determined by him or 30 her, reproduce or cause to be reproduced any document from which the population register is compiled or maintained by means of any process which in his or her opinion accurately and durably reproduces such documents, and may preserve or cause to be preserved those reproductions in lieu of such documents.

(2) A reproduction referred to in subsection (1) shall, notwithstanding anything to the 35 contrary contained in any other law, for all purposes be deemed to be the original document from which it was reproduced. and a copy of such reproduction which has been certified by the Director-General as a true copy, shall in any court of law be conclusive proof of the contents of the relevant original document.

Repeal of Laws

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24. The Identification Act, 1986 (Act No. 72 of 1986), the Identification Amendment Act, 1991 (Act No. 21 of 1991), the Identification Amendment Act, 1993 (Act No. 4 of 1993), and the Identification Amendment Act, 1995 (Act No. 47 of 1995), are hereby repealed.

Transitional arrangements

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25. (1) Notwithstanding the repeal of the laws referred to in section 24 the Director-General shall continue to issue identity documents in accordance with those laws until a date determined by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette*.

(2) (a) Any identity document issued in terms of an Act repealed by section 24, or which remain valid under a provision of such law, shall remain valid until an identity 50 card is issued in terms of section 14 or until a date contemplated in paragraph (b).

(b) The Minister may by notice in the *Gazette* fix a date for the replacement of identity documents referred to in paragraph (a) and may make regulations regarding such replacement.

Short title and commencement

26. This Act shall be called the Identification Act, 1997, and shall come into operation on a date set by the President by proclamation.