

New South African app shares info on the safest times to shop

Lightstone and Tracker have collaborated on a new app that provides consumers with up-to-date information on vehicle attendance at shopping destinations they choose to visit.



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In light of the Covid-19-related risks consumers are faced with when visiting high-density shopping centres, Lightstone, a provider of data analysis, worked with vehicle tracking company Tracker, to create the new ShopSafe app.

The website application is mobile-friendly and uses geo-location to identify one's closest shopping centres and provides comprehensive analysis on the number of visits each hour of a seven day week, to help shoppers to find the least busy time to shop. It is updated weekly, to reflect changing dynamics.

“Not only are we as South Africans very cautious of the exposure risk related to a trip to the grocery store, but with foot count restrictions stores have put in place, we are unaware of the number of fellow shoppers we could encounter, and the amount of time we may need to spend in a queue waiting to enter the store,” says Linda Reid, head of data at Lightstone.



Graph shows daily stops by the hour of arrival at Sandton City shopping centre on a Thursday.

[click to enlarge](#)

ShopSafe uses Tracker’s aggregated and anonymised data and includes around 1,300 shopping centres from across South Africa.

“The aim of lockdown is to minimise our exposure to other people, to ensure the risk of the virus spreading is as low as possible,” says Michael du Preez, head of product and marketing at Tracker. “ShopSafe will provide you with a view of when and where it’s safest to do your next shopping trip to reduce exposure to a crowded space.”



Map indicates most dense shopping centres by size of the dot.

How the app works

- Access the website here: <https://shopsafe.lightstone.co.za/>
- There are different ways to access the required information related to the shopping mall you would like to view
 - Either choose ‘allow’ when you are prompted to identify your location OR
 - Put your latitude and longitude into the relevant fields OR
 - Choose the shopping centre that you’re interested in, from the drop-down list

With the colder months and flu season upon us, the rate of infections is set to increase making it each citizen’s responsibility to act responsibly and limit their contact with one another. "Having the knowledge of the best times to visit shopping centres will add to lowering the risk," the companies note in a statement.

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