

# Operational guidelines on preparedness and response for COVID-19 outbreak for work settings

## General Guidelines

### **1. The transmission of COVID-19 may happen as follows:**

- Person to person transmission by direct contact with an infected person. (eg: hugging, shaking hands). The virus can enter the body through nose, mouth or eyes.
- When an infected person coughs, sneezes or exhales, surfaces and objects can get contaminated due to deposition of droplets containing the novel corona virus. If an uninfected person touches such surfaces, the hands of that person can get contaminated with the novel corona virus. When he/she touches the face, nose, mouth or eyes with contaminated hands, the novel corona virus can enter the body and infect the person.

### **2. Employees should not report for work when they belong to following groups**

- Those having fever, with or without acute onset respiratory symptoms such as cough, runny nose, sore throat and/or shortness of breath.
- Those who are being quarantined for COVID-19. They can report for work when Medical Officer of Health issues a quarantine completion certificate

Identify a specific isolation room preferably with an attached toilet/space in advance to keep a suspected COVID 19 patient, until sending to the hospital.

### **3. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces**

- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine wiping/cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other items in the work environment.
- First clean by damp dusting/wet mopping or washing with soap and water or a general-purpose detergent.
- Secondly disinfect
  - all metal surfaces with minimum of 70% v/v alcohol solution
  - all non-metal surfaces with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution.

Disinfection chambers are not recommended

### **4. Guide for meal rooms and canteens**

- Lunch breaks and tea breaks to be given in a batch-wise manner to prevent overcrowding
- Maintain a minimum distance of one meter among persons in the canteen
- Avoid sharing food, beverages, glasses, plates and other utensils during meals.
- Dedicated person(s) to serve meals/food/ beverages served in buffet style
- Self-serving should not be allowed to prevent cross contamination

### **5. Instructions for the staff at any service counter**

- Always wear a mask. (Mask should be worn securely and properly and should not be touched thereafter until it is removed)
- Keep a minimum distance of one meter from the customer. Or alternatively have a blind/glass/plastic shield in front of the counter leaving a space at the bottom to carry out transactions
- There shall be minimum handling of cash. (Ask for a credit/debit card). When using the credit/debit card ask the customer to insert it and also to remove it from the machine.

- The officer in the counter should not share his/her pen with customers (The customer should use his/her own pen).
- In case the customer does not carry a pen he may use the pen of the cashier. However, it should be disinfected immediately afterwards (Please refer section on disinfection)
- Keep an alcohol based hand sanitizer by the side (one per each person in the counter) and use it as frequently as possible or alternatively wear gloves (Gloves should never be re- used).

#### **6. When a person with suspected of COVID 19 is detected at the workplace.**

- Seek assistance from hotline 1390 or transfer the worker to the nearest government hospital.
- He/She should continue to wear a mask and kept in the isolation room. Take all relevant precautions to limit the spread of the disease, until transfer to the hospital.

**Note** - It is mandatory to inform the area Medical Officer of Health (MOH)/ area Public Health Inspector (PHI) in case of detecting a suspected or a positive case in the workplace.

#### **7. Transport of workers**

- Clean and disinfect the vehicles (the seats, all handles, interior door panel, windows, locks, exterior door handles, poles, etc.) before passengers are allowed in
- Ensure one person per seat when transporting workers
- All persons in the vehicle must wear masks while being transported

#### **8. What needs to be done on returning home from the workplace**

Before entering the house,

- Wash the hands properly with soap and water and remove the mask with minimal handling. Safely dispose of it to a garbage bag in a closed foot operated bin. Wash your hands again with soap and water.
- Remove the clothing and shoes/slippers and leave them outside. Wash them before wearing again or taking them inside.
- Take a bath before entering the house.
- If bathing facilities are not available outside, enter the wash room without touching anything inside the house and bathe yourself
- Clean/disinfect your accessories, bags using soap and water or alcohol (minimum 70% v/v) solution.

#### **9. Maintain good personal health and hygiene by practicing the following.**

- A balanced diet
- Drinking adequate amounts of clean water
- Regular physical exercise
- Abstain from unhealthy habits such as smoking and consuming alcohol

#### **10. Performing hand hygiene**

- Wash hands with soap and water at least for 20 seconds before entering. (Foot operated tap is the best for the wash basin). Alternatively, a hand sanitizer with alcohol (minimum 70% v/v Alcohol) can be adopted.
- Wash hands or sanitize as above
  - Before wear the mask
  - Before remove the mask
  - After removing the mask/gloves
  - Before and after meals
  - After using the washroom

For further details please refer,

- **“OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES ON PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK FOR WORK SETTINGS”**, Interim guidance dated 17th April 2020 document published by the Environmental and Occupational Health and Food Safety Directorate of the Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medical Services
- Website Ministry of health- [health.gov.lk](http://health.gov.lk)
- Medical Officer of Health of the area (List attached in the main guideline)
- Epidemiology unit, Ministry of Health <http://www.epid.gov.lk>
- Mental Health Helpline 1926 (NIMH), 1999 (Suwaseriya HPB)

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