

COVID-19: MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR WORKPLACES

This annex was developed for those involved in establishing policies and SOPs to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. This document offers general guidance for workplace including places such as sports arena, outdoor establishment and etc. and for workers in those settings. This annex is only meant as a guideline for best practice. Employers/ Organizations/ Association/ Federation should adapt it to the nature of their work, activities and their own environment by adhering as much as possible to the key principles outlined in this document

The Ministry of Health would like to recommend that Employers/ Organizations/ Association/ Federation take the following steps:

A. Acquire an understanding of COVID-19 to plan and act accordingly

Symptoms:

- Common symptoms include fever, dry cough sore throat and difficulty in breathing. Other symptoms include tiredness, aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, diarrhoea, loss of taste or smell or a rash on skin or discolouration of fingers or toes.
- 1 out of 5 people who get COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty in breathing.

Transmission:

- Mainly by droplets from someone with COVID-19 who coughs, sneezes or speaks within a distance of 1 meter
- Droplet contaminated surfaces and objects (fomites): by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth

Incubation Period

- Incubation period is currently estimated to range between 1-14 days.

Vulnerable Employees:

- Older persons
- Those with pre-existing medical conditions e.g. high blood pressure, heart disease, lung diseases, cancer or diabetes

B. All organizations should take appropriate steps to ensure maximum protection of employees.

Action by Employers/ Organizations/ Association/ Federation

- a) Communicate to employees about COVID-19;
 - Advice on preventive methods; including personal hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Refer Appendix 1.
 - The need to practice hand hygiene regularly e.g. via e mail, social media, gamification etc. Refer Appendix 2.
 - Regular updates on COVID-19
 - How to Use Surgical Masks refer Appendix 3
 - Appropriate health education materials regarding COVID-19
- b) Implement a system of safety and health measures at workplace
 - Establish and implement measures to provide a safe environment and minimise risk of outbreaks.
 - Implement a detailed monitoring plan to ensure compliance to safety and health measures.
 - Supervisors to assist the implementation and coordination of the system of safety and health measures:
 - To monitor temperature and symptoms of staff at entrance daily. If temperature is more than 37.5⁰C and or presence of symptoms such as cough, sore throat and difficulty in breathing, they are not allowed in and advised to seek treatment.
 - To monitor temperature of visitors at entrance daily. If temperature is more than 37.5⁰C, they are not allowed in and advised to seek treatment
 - Conduct mental health assessment among employees and carry out appropriate measures to reduce stress among employees.
 - Monitor sick leave and absenteeism among employees. Keep a record of staff sick leave including reasons for leave, duration of leave and current status

Action by Employees

- a) Keep updated on COVID-19
- b) Always maintain good personal hygiene;
 - Frequent hand washing with soap and water or hand sanitizer
 - Practice respiratory etiquette
- c) Practice social distancing in communal dining and encourage take away wherever possible
- d) Download and use MySejahtera app
- e) If develops symptoms;
 - Alert supervisor immediately
 - Wear face mask at all times
 - Seek medical treatment immediately
 - Avoid contact with fellow employees
- f) In areas where social distancing cannot be properly implemented, should wear face mask at all times

Action at the workplace

- a) Reduce physical interaction and ensure social distancing at all times
 - Consider alternate communication methods e.g. virtual meetings in place of face to face meetings, training sessions, and group chats etc.
 - Consider staggered working and break hours to reduce possible number of employees at all common spaces
 - Plan for contingency measures in case there are limited human resources and to allow those on home surveillance to work from home
 - Consider a no handshaking policy
 - Consider having meetings outdoor if possible
 - In case of indoor meetings or events, ensure all precautions are taken:
 - Limit number of participants based on size of venue
 - Settings should adhere to social distancing practices. When necessaries marking should be indicated
 - Inform employees not to attend if they are unwell and to join the meeting or training using a virtual platform

- Provide hand sanitizers where availability of soap and water is limited.
 - Face masks and tissues for those who develop respiratory symptoms
 - Consider opening windows for natural lighting and better ventilation where possible
- b) Ensure a clean and hygienic environment through regular cleaning and disinfection of the venue and its equipment.
- Cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas such as door handles, railings, taps, etc to be cleaned at least three (3) times in 8 hours
 - Cleaning and Disinfection procedures (refer Annex 36)
 - Enforce hand sanitization at premise entrance
 - Provide easy access to soap and water or provide hand sanitizers for maintenance of hand hygiene
 - Proper maintenance of toilet facilities and floor drains.

Travel Considerations for the workplace

- a. Before traveling:
- i. Make sure your organization and its employees have the latest advisory on traveling from MOH
 - ii. Based on the latest information, your organization should assess the benefits and risks related to upcoming travel plans.
 - iii. Ensure employees travelling are not of high risk to develop COVID-19
 - iv. Consider issuing employees who are about to travel with small bottles hand rub. This can facilitate regular hand-washing.
 - v. Consider providing employees with face mask in case there is a need to use it
- b. While traveling:
- i. Always bring along surgical mask and sanitizer for use when required
 - ii. Avoid crowded places and closed contact with people showing symptoms
 - iii. Maintain social distancing at least 1 meter apart
 - iv. Seek prompt medical treatment if developing symptoms
- c. When employees return from traveling:
- i. Observe home surveillance as per MOH advise

Annex 25

- ii. Immediately seek medical attention if you have symptoms of respiratory tract infections such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing within 14 days after returning from the visit

This guideline may be used as a basis for managing employees advised to keep up to date with the latest developments and advice issued by the Ministry of health.

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Personal hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Good personal hygiene should be observed at all times. Regular hand hygiene by washing with soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- Maintain at least 1 meter distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing
- Put used tissue in a waste basket
- If no tissue available, use upper sleeve or elbow instead of hands while sneezing and coughing.

Guidelines for Hand Hygiene

- Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer after any contact with respiratory secretions
- Remove jewellery beforehand wash procedure.
- Rinse hands under warm running water
- Lather with soap; cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers using friction.
- Rinse under warm running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly with a disposable towel
- Turn off faucet without re-contaminating hands.
- Keep fingernails short and do not use fingernail polish or artificial nails.
- If hands are not visibly soiled, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be used to decontaminate the hands.
- Apply alcohol-based hand sanitizer to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and finger, until hands are dry.

Respiratory Etiquette

- Cover mouth and nose with bend of elbow or tissue if coughing or sneezing.
- Throw tissue in the trash after using it
- Wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer

Guidelines on wearing surgical masks (3 Ply)

- If you have running nose or flu like symptoms, you are advised to stay at home. If you need to go out, make sure you wear a surgical mask.
- Avoid crowded places. Wear a surgical mask if you cannot avoid them
- Wash hands before wearing a surgical mask and after taking one off.
- When wearing surgical mask, the following should be noted:
 - The facemask should fit snugly over the face
 - The coloured side of the mask should face outside
 - Tie all the strings that keep the mask in place
 - The mask should fully cover the nose, mouth as well as the chin
 - The metallic wire part of the mask should be fixed securely over the bridge of the nose to prevent leakage
 - The surgical mask can be used for more than once but need to be replaced if it is wet, damaged or soiled by secretions or body fluid. Surgical masks should be kept in a self-adhesive sealed plastic bag whenever it is not in use.
 - Discard all used surgical masks into a plastic bag which should then be tied properly before disposing it into a rubbish bin.