



**GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL
(PP-2 BRANCH)**

Dated, Chandigarh: 04-05-2020

To

All Heads of Departments,
Registrar, Punjab & Haryana High Court,
Commissioners of Divisions,
District and Session Judges and
All Deputy Commissioners in the State

Subject: Guidelines for safe operation of Government office establishments in the State of Punjab during COVID-19 pandemic

Kindly refer to the subject cited above.

2. As you are aware, Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID -19) is a contagious disease caused by a novel Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2), transmitted in most instances through respiratory droplet and contaminated surfaces/objects. Though the virus survives on different surfaces for a varied period of time, it gets easily inactivated by chemical disinfectants. Further, personal hygiene and change in social behaviours according to the new paradigm can contain the spread of contagion. It is therefore imperative to lay down the set of protocol to be adhered to by all concerned so as to allow safe operation of Government office establishments during COVID-19 pandemic.

1. **General Recommendations:**

- i. The sitting arrangement in the offices shall be made while ensuring a minimum distance of two (2) metres between the employees.
- ii. Employees attending the office in person may be allowed flexible timings of reporting for duty, flexible timing of leaving the office, flexible timings for lunch and tea breaks, so as to ensure that crowding in the offices do not take place and social distance norms are maintained.
- iii. The Head of Office shall maintain a complete and proper record of all employees attending the office on any particular day.
- iv. Use of physical files and communication through physical letters/ notices/ memos/ orders should be avoided.
- v. The office work, to the extent possible, should be done through e-office, official emails, telephones, SMS, Whats App, PBGRAM and other electronic mediums.

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- vi. All official meetings, to the extent possible, should be conducted through video conferencing.
- vii. However, where meeting through video conferencing is not possible, not more than eight (8) employees should attend any meeting physically. While seating employees for such meeting, a minimum distance of two (2) meters should be maintained between any two employees attending the meeting.
- viii. Use of Biometric Attendance System (BAS) should be temporarily suspended.
- ix. Each Departments shall appoint Nodal Officers, who shall regularly monitor the health of the employees attending the office and shall submit his/her report to the Head of Office.

2. **Office Facilities:**

- i. Thermal scanners should be installed at the entry gate of the office premises to screen the employees and other visitors suffering from high fever (the normal human body temperature is 97.7 to 99.5-degree Fahrenheit or 36.5 to 37.5-degree centigrade).
- ii. Employees detected with high fever or other COVID-19 symptoms in the office premises, should be temporarily isolated and immediate medical advice should be sought.
- iii. Hand sanitizing stations should be installed at all strategic locations within office premises, particularly at the entrance and near high contact surfaces.
- iv. Alcohol-based sanitizer (minimum 70% ethyl alcohol v/v) be mounted at the entrance wall of the office for the staff to sanitize their hands before entering the premises.
- v. In case of multi-storied offices, where the elevators (commonly called lifts) are to be used, sanitizers shall be mounted near the entry door of the elevator at each and every floor. In case of self-driven lifts, the sanitizer should also be made available inside the lifts. Everyone should be advised to apply the sanitizer on their hands immediately after pressing the elevator's buttons and before touching any other surface/ body parts.
- vi. **Air Conditioning:** The Air-conditioning systems generally work on the principle of re-circulating the air inside the room. In the current COVID-19 situation, Government has issued guidelines vide No. 3129 (R) - 3136 (R) dated 24th April, 2020 (**Annexure-I**), which shall apply in all Government office establishments.

3. **Office Hygiene:**

- i. **Indoor Areas:** Indoor areas including office spaces and conference rooms should be cleaned every evening after office hours, or early in the morning before the rooms are occupied.
 - a. All indoor areas such as entrance lobbies, corridors and staircases, escalators, elevators, security guard booths, office rooms, meeting rooms, cafeteria

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- should be mopped with a disinfectant with 1% sodium hypochlorite or equivalent disinfectants commercially available in the market.
- b. If the contact surface is visibly dirty, it should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Start cleaning from cleaner areas and proceed towards dirtier areas.
 - c. High contact surfaces such as elevator buttons, handrails/ handles and call buttons, electrical switches, escalator handrails, public counters, intercom systems, equipment like telephone, printers/scanners, and other office machines should be cleaned twice daily by mopping with a linen/absorbable cloth soaked in 1% sodium hypochlorite. Frequently touched areas like table tops, chair handles, pens, diary files, keyboards, mouse, mouse pad, tea/coffee dispensing machines etc. should specially be cleaned.
 - d. Metal surfaces like door handles, security locks, keys, etc. should be wiped using disinfectants with 70% alcohol, in case use of bleach is not suitable.
 - e. Spray all mirrors and glass windows with a dilute mixture of detergent and warm water, and wipe with dry cloth.
 - f. The cleaner should wear disposable rubber boots, gloves (heavy duty), and a cloth mask.
 - g. Carefully clean the equipment used for cleaning at the end of the cleaning process.
 - h. Protective gear used during sanitation process should be discarded at the end of cleaning process.
- ii. **Outdoor areas:** Outdoor Areas have less risk than indoor areas due to air currents and exposure to sunlight. Cleaning and disinfection efforts of outside areas should be targeted to frequently touched/contaminated surfaces as already detailed above.
 - iii. **Office/Public toilets:** All the areas of the toilet such as the sinks, commode, taps etc. should be thoroughly cleaned/scrubbed using soap and water and then wiped with 1% sodium hypochlorite solution or equivalent commercial disinfectants available in the market (like Hydrogen Peroxide and bleaching powder). Other areas of the toilets should be cleaned as has been explained in Para (ii) above.
 - a. Adequate quantity of liquid soaps should be available at all times in the toilets.
 - b. Sanitary workers must use separate set of cleaning equipment for toilets (mops, nylon scrubber), one set for sink and another set for commode.
 - c. They should always wear disposable protective gloves while cleaning a toilet.
 - iv. **Pantry/ Canteen:**
 - a. All public canteens in office establishments should remain closed.
 - b. Wherever there are Pantries in the offices, following should be ensured:
 - i. It should be cleaned like other indoor areas as has been explained above.
 - ii. Special care needs to be taken while cleaning the slabs and the sinks, if any, with soap/detergent and water.



- iii. The utensils should be properly cleaned with dish wash bars/liquids and warm water.
- iv. The utensils should not be shared amongst the employees.
- v. Milk packets shall be washed with soap and water before opening the same for usage.
- vi. Raw fruits/vegetables should be washed with lukewarm water before consumption.

4. **Social and Personal Behaviour norms:**

- i. Employees should religiously follow the reporting time as well as the time to leave the office as prescribed by the Head of Office.
- ii. Employees should not indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other.
- iii. Employees should not roam unnecessarily in the office and should work only from their allotted space.
- iv. There should be no gathering of employees anywhere in the public space, like corridors, parking lots, etc.
- v. Wherever queuing is required, employees should stand by maintaining a minimum separation of two (2) metres.
- vi. Employees should use intercoms/electronic media for interpersonal communication.
- vii. Employees should avoid unnecessarily touching the surfaces, equipment etc.
- viii. Employees should refrain from touching face, mouth, nose and eyes with his hands.
- ix. Employees should not spit only in the washbasin of the toilets, and then rinse it with water.
- x. Employees should wear cloth masks at all times while outside their homes. The masks should be worn such that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth. The cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use.
- xi. Employees should avoid wearing loose cloths, like sarees, stoles etc., which can sweep the floor or can fall off.
- xii. Employees are advised to wear long sleeved thick clothes while attending office. One can wear home-stitched long coveralls while commuting to office and back.
- xiii. Employees are advised to discontinue the use of leather purse and handbags. They can carry a very small bag, if absolutely necessary and disinfect it on return to their home. Alternatively, employees may carry their personal things in a cotton bag, which should be washed daily.
- xiv. Employees should avoid wearing watches, rings or any jewellery while coming to office.
- xv. Employees are advised to wear closed bellies/ shoes rather than open toe sandals or slippers.
- xvi. Employees are advised to keep the nails short.

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- xvii. Each employee should themselves open and close their office, as well as clean their office space, as far as possible.
- xviii. Employees should sanitize or wash their hands with soap and water, whichever is feasible and available. Application of sanitizer as frequently as possible and hand wash at least once in two-hours is recommended, as per the following protocol:
- a. Employees should wash their hands with soap for at least 40 seconds by applying soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers.
 - b. Use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.
- xix. Employees advised to themselves clean their work area, including the top surface of their tables, handles of chairs, door handles, electric switches, office phones, pens, diaries, files, desktop, keyboards, mouse, mouse pad, etc. with a disinfecting wipe prior to use.
- xx. Employees should not share pens, pencils, mobile phones, etc. with others.
- xxi. Employees should keep their mobile phones in their pockets and not on any hard surface.
- xxii. Office plants should be kept outside in the open space and not inside the rooms.
- xxiii. Employees are advised to avoid using the elevator (lifts), to the extent possible, and should take stairs or ramps. They should climb in the middle, away from wall or railing.
- xxiv. Employees should carry their own lunch packets/ refreshment and water bottles from home. They should avoid using office utensils or sharing utensils with others. Employees should also avoid washing their lunch boxes and vessels in office.
- xxv. Employees should sanitize and wash their hands as explained above, before touching their lunch packets as well as any other edible items.
- xxvi. Employee shall not smoke or chew tobacco-based products, such as gutka, pan masala etc., in the office space.
- xxvii. In case of a cough/sneeze, employee should use their handkerchief to cover their mouth. The handkerchief, so used, should then be stored in their pocket/purse in a manner that the surface of the handkerchief exposed to the cough/sneeze should not touch their other belongings. In case an employee is not carrying handkerchief, he/she should cough/sneeze into the flexed/ bent elbow. In either case, the employee should immediately wash his/her hand and other surfaces exposed to cough/sneeze with soap in the manner prescribed above.
- xxviii. If someone has coughed in a meeting/conference/office room, without following respiratory etiquettes or mask, the areas around their seat should be vacated and cleaned with 1% sodium hypochlorite.
- xxix. If an employee is suffering from fever or other COVID-19 like symptoms (cough/sneezing/difficulty in breathing), the employee should voluntarily inform



the Head of Office and stay at home, and should also seek medical advice for timely detection and treatment of COVID-19.


- xxx. Employees, whose place of residence falls in the Containment or Buffer zone, shall not be expected to attend office, but they should inform the Head of Office forthwith.
- xxxi. Employees should not indulge in gossip/rumours with regard to COVID-19 without verifying the facts.
- xxxii. Each Government employee shall download "COVA APP" developed by the Government of Punjab for the correct, timely and authentic information with regards to COVID-19.

5. **Detection of COVID-19 Cases:**

- i. In case an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, and such an employee has attended office, the Head of Office shall immediately inform the Helpline No. 104 or the State Control Room No. 01722920074/ 08872090029, giving details about the employee and the contacts he/she might have had during their attendance in the office.
- ii. One need not panic in case a colleague, with whom an employee had a contact within the office, is diagnosed with COVID-19. One should report to the Helpline No. 104 or State Control Room No. 0172-2920074/08872090029, giving details and the exact nature of exposure, so as to assist the health authorities to undertake further necessary actions.

6. **Miscellaneous:**

- i. Everyone is encouraged to take proper diet to boost their immunity, keep themselves aware and updated with the correct information at all times, and indulge in safe social and personal behaviour at all times.
- ii. Employees who cannot attend office as they have tested positive for COVID-19 or because their place of residence has come in containment or buffer zone, shall be granted Quarantine leave for a maximum period of 30 days in terms of the provisions of the Civil Service Rules. If for reasons beyond their control, an employee is still unable to attend the office after 30 days of Quarantine leave, he/she shall be granted ordinary leave.


Dated, Chandigarh
03-05-2020

Karan Avtar Singh,
Chief Secretary, Punjab

A Copy is forwarded to all the Special/Additional Chief Secretaries/ Financial Commissioners/Principal Secretaries and Secretaries to the Government of Punjab for information and necessary action.


Under Secretary Personnel

To

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Financial Commissioners/Principal Secretaries and Secretaries to the Government of Punjab for information and necessary action.

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- A copy is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action:-
- 1) Director, Information and Public Relation Department, Punjab, Chandigarh to give wide publicity to these instructions through Print and other Electronic Media for the information and awareness of general public.
 - 2) Director, Health and Family Welfare, Punjab, Chandigarh.


Under Secretary Personnel