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Guidelines

Management of Stores During COVID-19 Outbreak

Ensuring Supply of Essential Goods in the times of COVID-19 Outbreak

Objective

To provide guidelines to the store owners/ managers and general public (customers) regarding preventive measures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission and ensure the availability of essential goods.

Rationale

COVID-19 pandemic has struck the world due to rapid human-to-human transmission. Global evidence shows that the outbreak can be curtailed through preventive measures, like social distancing and home quarantine, to minimize the interaction among individuals and hence reduce the risks of viral spread.

In this global health crisis, it is vital that all businesses (high scale or small) act responsibly and adhere to the national guidelines of social distancing. Despite the lockdown, some stores of the retail sector, pharmacies and food vendors cannot entirely close the shops to meet the public needs. These guidelines therefore introduce the protective measures the stores can take to prevent the spread of infection among the staff and customers, while ensuring the supply of essential goods during the COVID 19 outbreak.

Guidelines for Shop/Store Management

Store Staff:

- The staff should wash hands with soap and water frequently or use an alcohol-based (70%) hand sanitizer.
- Ensure the availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol) at the store entrance for the customers.
- Make sure each customer sanitizes his hand before entering the store and while leaving.
- Ensure the availability of thermal guns at entrance and allow customers only after checking temperature.
- Do not allow the customer with cough and flu to enter the store.
- To ensure the space does not get crowded, allow people to enter the shop only in small groups.
- Customers and salesperson should maintain the safe distance of 6 feet (and preferably 2 meters) among each other.
- Disinfect the most frequently used surfaces by the customers such as shopping trollies, door handles, cashier counter, product racks etc. with 0.5% diluted bleach or 60%-80% dilute alcohol solution.



- Disinfect the floor with bleach or alcohol-based surface cleaner regularly at equal intervals. (Disinfectant formulations such as sodium hypochlorite with concentration of 5000-6150 ppm to 500-615 ppm free chlorine are used for environmental surface cleaning)
- The ATM machines should be cleaned with alcohol swab after every customer use and make available a hand sanitizer beside each machine. The credit/debit card machine available at cashier counter should also be disinfected frequently.
- Each salesperson and receptionist must ensure the use of gloves.
- The rest areas for staff should be disinfected regularly and should be used in compliance to the social distancing measure (i.e. 6 feet) among each other.
- The sick staff members should practice social distancing and must keep a track of their symptoms. (Separate Guidelines for Management of Cough, Fever, Flu During COVID 19)
- Keep reminding the customer to buy as per their need to prevent hoarding of products.
- Ensure the public display of notices promoting hand hygiene and social distancing inside the stores as well as outside the stores, buildings and plaza.
- Ensure queue control, maintaining the advised 6 feet distance, outside of shops and other essential premises that remain open.
- The store manager and staff must keep themselves updated with the updated instructions issued by the government and show strict compliance to them.

Customers:

- Avoid going to the store or market if you are suffering from fever, cough or flu.
- Make sure to sanitize your hands before and after the shopping.
- Avoid touching the surfaces unnecessarily.
- Maintain distance of 6 feet (and preferably 2 meters) from salesperson or other customer within the store.
- Follow the safety guidance provided by the store management and cooperate with the staff.
- If you observe no compliance to the guidelines by the store management, play your responsible role as a citizen and inform the local authorities.

References

1. Public Health England, Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19), Government of UK.

Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international & national recommendations and best practices.

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