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## Guidelines

# Health & Safety of Building & Construction Workers during COVID-19 Outbreak

### Objective

To provide guidelines for the workers involved in building and construction work during the current epidemic of COVID-19.

### Rationale

Construction processes are dynamic with significantly varying number of workers on a construction project site from day to day. The workers coming from diverse environments and working closely together increases the risk of exposure to COVID 19.

Building construction involves earth work, procurement of materials and supplies and their storage, construction work done by masons, blacksmiths, electricians, carpenters, plumbers, painters, supervisors, managers and security personnel. These guidelines provide the safety measure to be implemented at the construction site having a dusty environment, continuous flow of different materials and make-shift type of arrangements for storage, food and sanitation calls for implementation of safety precautions at the very basic level of personal hygiene only.

### Advice for Site Managers:

Without prejudice to the following, all possible and prescribed actions shall be taken at the project site, as should facilitate the health of all life present at the site.

- Every construction project shall make proper arrangements for uninterrupted building services including but not restricted to, electricity, fuel, water supply, water disposal and sanitation, communication links, washrooms with hand hygiene and shower facility and with proper and adequate supply of soaps and disinfectants.
- Workers should not use biometric attendance machines or crowd during attendance, entry or exit to the premises of the construction site
- Ensure the availability of the thermal gun at the entry and exit of the construction site and no worker should be allowed without getting his/her temperature checked.
- Site manager must maintain a register of all contact details with NID number and addresses of all present at the site in case a follow up or tracing and tracking of contacts is required at a later stage.
- Develop the employee roster to decrease the number of people on the site very day. Split the shifts of the workers in morning and evening with limit of each shift to 8 working hours.



- Every worker must change into standard working attire at the time of commencement of duty and change back to their regular dress after taking shower when their duty hours end.
- In addition to all other internationally recognized safety precaution for construction workers and other staff, every individual must be provided with a face mask. It must be ensured that everyone during his or her presence at the site continues to wear the mask. Face mask shall be replaced as and when soiled or otherwise removed. Outer surface of face mask must not be touched with hands.
- Non-essential work trainings must be postponed avoiding gathering of people.
- Ensure the physical distance by creating more than one route of entry and exit to the site.
- Instruct the workers to inform the construction manager (or authorities) if
  - They develop any symptoms of cough, flu or fever.
  - They have been exposed to someone suspected or confirmed with COVID 19.
  - They have met someone who has a travel history of COVID 19 endemic country
  - They have travelled in last couple of days or plan to travel soon
- All incidences of appearance of the symptoms of COVID-19 shall be immediately documented and maintained at the site and information regarding which shall be immediately communicated through e-mail or else, to the designated health facility, and the sick worker shall be transported to the health facility for further advice and action. The site manager must establish a link with a nearby healthcare facility with arrangements for quick transportation of workers in case of an emergency.
- Persuade the workers to inform the authorities for their safety and of other if they observe any signs and symptoms in a colleague
- Do not allow any worker at the construction site who has the symptoms
- Display the awareness banners about hand hygiene and physical distancing, where you can, around the work site.
- Everyone on the construction site must observe sneezing and coughing etiquettes.
- Workers shall be requested and required to wash their hands as frequently as practicable and shall also be advised not to touch their face with their hands during work.
- Workers must maintain no less than two arm lengths between them before, during after work at all the times. They shall not make physical contact and shall be required to maintain separate personal gears and assets which must be clearly labelled and stored without intermix.
- Only sanitize-able dinning surfaces shall be used, which must be cleaned before each service. Food must be heated to a temperature to no less than 70° C before consumption and shall preferably be served in disposable utensils. If reusable utensils are used, these must be washed with soap and water immediately after use and stored at a safe place.
- The lunch breaks and stretch breaks of the workers must be staggered to avoid the clustering of workers. Workers must not sit at less than 2 meters distance while having meals and while any other activity requiring interpersonal communications.
- In the wake of current restrictions on transportations site mangers will ensure safe transport arrangements for worker which should not be crowded and should have social distancing in place during the entire process from pickups till drops at destination



- In case of workers sleeping in at the site of construction, a safe distance of 2 meters must be ensured in the sleeping rooms
- A supply of safe drinking water must be made available at the project site and maintained.

### **Advice for Construction Workers:**

- All possible and prescribed measures shall be taken to ensure your and others health
- Enter your contact details in the register maintained at the site, in case a follow up or tracing and tracking of contacts is required at a later stage.
- Follow hygiene practices at washrooms and shower facility with proper and adequate use of soaps and disinfectants.
- Every worker must change into standard working attire at the time of commencement of duty and change back to their regular dress after taking shower when their duty hours end.
- In addition to all other internationally recognized safety precaution for construction workers and other staff, every individual must use face mask. Face mask shall be replaced as and when soiled or otherwise removed. Outer surface of face mask must not be touched with hands.
- Workers should wash their hands as frequently as practicable and shall not to touch their face with their hands during work.
- Everyone on the construction site must observe sneezing and coughing etiquettes.
- Workers must maintain no less than two arm lengths between them before, during after work at all the times. They shall not make physical contact and shall be required to maintain separate personal gears and assets which must be clearly labelled and stored without intermix.
- Sick worker should immediately inform the site manager and must get medical advice from nearby health centre.
- Only sanitize able dinning surfaces shall be used. Food must be heated to a temperature to no less than 70° C before consumption and shall preferably be in disposable utensils. If reusable utensils are used, these must be washed with soap and water immediately after use and stored at a safe place.
- Do not sit at less than 2 meters distance while having meals and while any other activity requiring interpersonal communications.
- Do not use biometric attendance machines or crowd during attendance, entry or exit to the premises of the construction site.
- Use safe transport arrangements which should not be crowded and should have social distancing in place during the entire process from pickups till drops at destination.
- In case sleeping in at the site of construction, a safe distance of 2 meters must be ensured in the sleeping rooms.

### **Deliveries or Other Contractors Visiting the Site**

- Non-essential visits to the construction sites should be cancelled or postponed.



- Delivery workers or other contractors who need to visit the construction site must go through temperature check before entering and should be given clear instructions for precautions to be taken while on site.
- Designate the workers, with protective gears or at least gloved and mask, to attend to the deliveries and contractors.
- Make alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 70%) available for the workers handling deliveries.
- Instruct the visiting truck drivers to remain in their vehicles and whenever possible make use of contactless methods, such as mobile phones, to communicate with your workers.

*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.*

*The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of Irfan Mirza, Syeda Shehirbano Akhtar and HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH team to compile these guidelines.*

**For more information, please contact:**

HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH, PM National Health Complex, Islamabad

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