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## Guidelines

# Independence Day Celebrations Programme, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2021

### Objective

To provide health guidelines for prevention of transmission of COVID-19 during Independence Day celebrations and related events.

### Rationale

COVID-19 pandemic continues with emergence of variants of concern which cause rapid human-to-human transmission. Independence Day of Pakistan is celebrated every year on 14<sup>th</sup> August. The events conducted in relation to Independence Day celebrations during Covid-19 pandemic can amplify the transmission of the virus and potentially disrupt the country's response capacity. Preventive measures play an important role in limiting the spread of a disease and can help in reducing the infection transmission and unnecessary burden on health care facilities.

### Preparations-Administrative and Logistics

- Mapping of all event areas by district and provincial administration in line with COVID protocols
- Media campaign for awareness of masses.
- Strict enforcement of SOPs by civil administration.

### Maintaining Healthy Environments

Implement strategies to maintain healthy environments during independent day celebrations program/event

- Ensure vaccination of leaders and attendees (administration of at least one dose is mandatory)
- Hand sanitizers should be made available at the entry and exit points of the events/gathering.
- Encourage attendees ahead of the event to bring and use masks at the event.
- Ensure that:
  - masks are available at the venue
  - worn appropriately, to cover nose and mouth at all times during the event
- All common-touch surfaces must be frequently cleaned and sanitized with recommended disinfectants (alcohol or chlorine-based).



- Washrooms must be cleaned frequently and sanitized
- Ensure that shared equipment (e.g., microphones) are cleaned/disinfected frequently and after each use. Consider pre-recorded speeches.
- Ensure adequate ventilation
- Limit attendance and seating capacity to allow for social distancing. Encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart by providing signs or other visual cues such as tape or chalk marks.
- Where possible, use multiple entrances and exits; ensure that waiting areas are not crowded.
- Prioritize outdoor activities where social distancing can be maintained as much as possible.
- Broadcast announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on public address systems.

### Flag Hoisting Ceremonies

- The flag-hoisting ceremony should be restricted to Government officials in their designated areas, outdoors.
- Thermal scanning of all the participants attending the event may be carried out
- The participants should strictly follow the healthy behaviors to prevent the spread of disease.
  - Practice social distancing and maintain 6 feet distance
  - All attendees should use face masks appropriately to cover nose and mouth
  - The rope of the flag and other frequently touched surfaces should be sanitized
  - The government official hoisting the flag should wear gloves and immediately discard them after hoisting

*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 Ms Javeria Yousaf and HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH team to compile these guidelines.*

### References

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>
2. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/10665-332235>

### For more information, please contact:

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

<http://covid.gov.pk/>

<http://nhsrsc.gov.pk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHSRCOfficial>

<http://www.hsa.edu.pk/>

<https://twitter.com/nhsrcofficial>

<https://www.nih.org.pk/>

<https://www.youtube.com/NHSRC-PK>