

From: Addl. Director General of Police,  
Prisons, Punjab, Chandigarh

To: All Superintendents of Jails,  
Punjab

No: G. I/A-8/6565-6589 Date: 24-03-2020

**Sub: Guidelines for preparation of "Readiness and Response Plan" to tackle COVID-19 in jails, reg.**

As per the directions of hon'ble **Supreme Court of India** in Suo Motu Writ Petition (Civil) no. 1/2020 in RE: Contagion of COVID-19 in prisons, Prison specific 'Readiness and Response Plans' are required to be developed for all prisons ins state of Punjab.

2. A 'COVID-19 Special Task Force' is hereby constituted for each prison. This COVID-19 STF shall consist of the following officers:

- i. Superintendent of Jail : Chairperson
- ii. Senior most Medical Officer : Member
- iii. Dy. Superintendent(M) : Member  
(For Sub-Jail, senior most Head Warder)

It shall be the responsibility of the above COVID-19 STF to prepare the Readiness and Response Plan for the jail.

The "**Readiness and Response plans**" shall have the following Chapters:

- **Chapter-I:** Risk assessment of the prison for proneness to COVID19 outbreak.
- **Chapter-II:** Health screening.
- **Chapter-III:** Risk minimisation.
- **Chapter-IV:** Business Continuity Plan.
- **Chapter-V:** Outbreak Response Team.

3. Details about the content of each Chapter of the Readiness and Response Plan shall be as follows:

**Chapter-I: Risk assessment of the prison for proneness to COVID19 outbreak:**

Part 1: List of areas of more risk based on overcrowding, higher density of prisoners, vulnerable population, contact with outside etc.

Part 2: For each high risk area identified above, list out the gaps/issues which make it a high risk area like inadequate infrastructure, gap in procedure, lack of capacity/skill of prison etc.

**Chapter-II: Health Screening:** This chapter should detail the plan for health screening as per parameters mentioned below:

- All the individuals entering the jail must be screened immediately at arrival. Symptomatic individuals must be immediately isolated and rest shall be quarantined for preferably 7 days but at least 3 days, as mentioned in the SOP circulated earlier.
- Health screening should not depend upon only temperature measurement, but should also include investigation, past history, diagnostics and initial clinical management.
- Health screening must also serve as an opportunity to provide information on prevention measures.
- Availability of specimen collection infrastructure and training. Medical Officers shall hold this responsibility.
- If someone who is breastfeeding becomes ill, it is important to continue breastfeeding. The baby who has already been exposed to the virus by the mother and/or family will benefit most from continued direct breastfeeding.

**Chapter-III: Risk Minimization:** For all the gaps identified in Part II of the chapter-I above, make a plan of how to reduce that gap. This may include-

- Efforts that can be made immediately at Jail level by change in process, infrastructure, etc.
- Any outside help that can be taken for reducing the gaps.
- Plan for training of guarding/prison staff on contact tracing (to trace the origin of infection and identify potential threats from the same infected person) arrangements adapted to the collective sites, before they detect any case.
- Ensure immediate response if there is any prisoner/staff is found positive. This response shall bear two pronged strategy- firstly, to provide immediate medical support, and secondly, to initiate contact tracing.

**Chapter-IV: Business Continuity Plan:** In case of significant disruptions due to COVID-19, what will be the plan of action? Disruptions could be the following:

- If a large no. of personnel suffer from COVID-19 and are not available. What is the plan to maintain the continuance of jail functioning?
- Due to external disruptions due to COVID-19 like curfew, closure of municipal services etc., how will the essential services be maintained?

**Chapter-V: Outbreak Response Team:** In case there is an outbreak in jail, Outbreak Response Team shall deal with the situation. The team may comprise of the following:

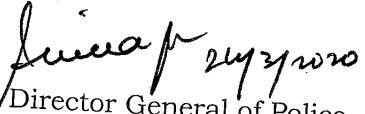
- (a) All Deputy Superintendents;
- (b) Medical Officers;

- (c) Assistant Superintendents (As per requirement);
- (d) A few trustworthy prisoners.

The mandate of Outbreak Response Team shall be as follows:

- It shall work under the supervision of Superintendent Jail;
- All the members must have clear cut roles and responsibilities;
- The team shall take note of the situation regularly and at such occasions when required.

Keeping in view the sensitivity and urgency of this matter, all Superintendents of Jails are directed to prepare the above said plans and inform this office by 5:00 p.m. on 27-03-2020.

  
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