

Government of Punjab
Department of Health & Family Welfare
(NHM, Punjab)

No. MD/NHM/2020/3275 (R)- 3278(R)

Dated, Chandigarh the 5th May, 2020

To

1. Additional Chief Secretary (Governance Reforms), Punjab.
2. All Divisional Commissioners, Punjab.
3. CEO, Punjab State e-Governance Society.
4. All Deputy Commissioners, Punjab

Subject: **Advisory on maintaining the hygiene and sanitization of Sewa Kendras and the staff working therein during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID -19) is a systemic disease caused by a novel Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2), transmitted in most instances through respiratory droplets, direct contact with cases and also through contaminated surfaces/objects. Though the virus survives on environmental surfaces for a varied period of time, it gets easily inactivated by chemical disinfectants. Thus, correct and timely information and knowledge about the corona virus is the key to control the pandemic.

The Government of Punjab has imposed severe restrictions on free movement of people in the larger public interest of controlling the transmission of Corona virus through the imposition of Curfew in its all 22 districts. The Government has, nevertheless, allowed essential activities to continue/start with an objective to minimise the hardships to its residents. The Government has planned a phased approach to resume the citizen-centric services provided by the Sewa Kendras. However, the Sewa Kendras need to meticulously comply with the following guidelines to prevent the spread of Corona virus:

I. General Advisory

1. Only the Sewa Kendras permitted by the Government to resume services shall start its functions as per the plan fixed by the Government.
2. A comprehensive plan with regard to staff should be drawn up which shall include the sitting arrangement of the Staff in a manner that a minimum distance of 1 metre is maintained amongst them at all times. The possibility of use of alternate counters for the Staff may be explored. A flexible timings of reporting for duty by the staff, flexible timing of leaving the office, flexible timings of lunch and tea breaks in between with an objective to avoid crowding the office premises shall be planned.

3. Posters displaying messages of social distancing, no handshaking, hand hygiene, wearing of masks & gloves, washing of hands with soap and water and use of sanitizers should be put up at the entrance of the Sewa Kendra.
4. Installation of thermal scanners at the entry gate of the Sewa Kendras is advisable to screen the staff suffering from high fever. The *normal human body temperature is 97.7 to 99.5-degree Fahrenheit or 36.5 to 37.5-degree centigrades*.
5. The staff should be encouraged to stay at home in case of any fever or other symptoms related to the COVID-19 and seek medical advice.
6. Staff detected with high fever in the Sewa Kendra premises does not mandatorily mean that he/she is suffering from COVID-19. It is advised to get such staff suffering from high fever medically examined by temporarily isolating him/her from the rest of the office space before drawing any conclusion/inferences and before sending him/her back to home.
7. Alcohol-based sanitizer (minimum 70% ethyl alcohol v/v) be mounted at the entrance wall the Sewa Kendra for the staff/citizens to sanitize their hands before entering the premises further. The sanitizers are to be refilled/replaced frequently.

8. Disinfection of the Sewa Kendra

- a. **Indoor Areas:** Indoor areas including office spaces, waiting areas, staff seating area etc. should be cleaned every evening after office hours or early in the morning before the Sewa Kendra is occupied. If the contact surface is visibly dirty, it should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Prior to cleaning, the cleaner should wear disposable rubber boots, gloves (heavy duty) and a cloth mask.
 - Start cleaning from cleaner areas and proceed towards dirtier areas.
 - All indoor areas such as office rooms, waiting areas, staff seating area etc should be mopped with a disinfectant with 1% sodium hypochlorite or equivalent disinfectants commercially available in the market.
 - High contact surfaces such as 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 or equivalent disinfect solution. Frequently touched areas like table tops, chair handles, pens, diary files, keyboards, mouse, mouse pad, tea/coffee dispensing machines etc. should specially be cleaned.

- For metallic surfaces like door handles, security locks, keys etc. 70% alcohol based disinfectant can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach is not suitable.
- Inside the Sewa Kendra, if someone is coughing, without following respiratory etiquettes or mask, the areas around his/her seat should be vacated and cleaned with 1% sodium hypochlorite or equivalent disinfectant.
- Carefully clean the equipment used in cleaning at the end of the cleaning process.
- Protective gear used during sanitation process should be discarded as per the requirements.

In addition, all staffs should consider cleaning the work area in front of them with a disinfecting wipe prior to use and sit one seat further away from others and if possible 2 seats.

- b. **Outdoor areas:** Outdoor Areas have less risk than indoor areas due to air currents and exposure to sunlight. Cleaning and disinfection efforts should be targeted to frequently touched/contaminated surfaces as already detailed above.
 - c. **Office/Public toilets:** Sanitary workers must use separate set of cleaning equipment for toilets (mops, nylon scrubber) and separate set for sink and commode. They should always wear disposable protective gloves while cleaning a toilet. 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.
9. Lines/squares/circles should be drawn at a distance of six feet in front of the service area of the Sewa Kendra.
 10. Similar lines/squares/circles should be drawn in front of all counters. The first line/square/circle should be at 2 feet from the counter to ensure appropriate distance between counter & citizen.
 11. Separate queues should be designated for senior citizens visiting the Sewa Kendra so as to segregate them from the rest of the public.
 12. Packing tape or paint may be used to draw lines/squares/circles.
 13. Only citizens with valid appointments to be allowed inside Sewa Kendras. The process of fixing the appointment shall be duly publicized as well as displayed at the entrance gate of the Sewa Kendra.

14. The citizens waiting for their turns should be advised to stand at these lines/squares/circles. This will ensure an appropriate social distancing between two citizens.
15. Citizens waiting for their turn while sitting shall be advised to sit at alternate seats only with the intervening seat vacant.
16. Citizens should be encouraged to make digital payment for the service availed.
17. Citizens shall be advised to return immediately after the availing the service at the Sewa Kendra.
18. Manual delivery of the documents over the counter should be discouraged. Delivery of certificates should, preferably, be done only through Speed Post.
19. Waste bins with removable bags must be compulsorily placed at Sewa Kendras at appropriate places for collection of waste.

II. Advisory for the staff

1. A staff member suffering from high fever/cough/sneezing/difficulty in breathing should voluntarily report the same to employer as well as seek immediate medical advice for timely detection and treatment.
2. The staff should meticulously follow the reporting time as well as the time to leave the office as prescribed by the employer.
3. The staff shall be advised not to indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other.
4. The staff shall be advised not to roam unnecessarily in the Sewa Kendra or its periphery/outside and to work from their allotted space only. Use of intercoms/electronic media for interpersonal communication of the staff be encouraged.
5. Staff should be advised to wear cloth masks at all times immediately from leaving the house till the entry back into the house.
6. The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snuggly covers the nose as well as the mouth.
7. The cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use.
8. Wash the hands with soap for at least 20 seconds by applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger and the thumb and the wrist wherever and whenever the opportunity to wash the hands is available. However, a two-hourly hand wash is recommended. The staff shall preferably wash the hands with soap and water before starting the days work and after the completion of the days work.

9. The staff handling documents or cash transaction is advised to sanitise/wash their hands with soap and water after the transactions.
10. Use a minimum of 3ml (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) of the Alcohol-based sanitizer (minimum 70% ethyl alcohol v/v) on DRY HANDS for at least 20 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.
11. Sanitize the hands even if the hands appear to be apparently clean.
12. The hands should be either sanitized or washed with soap and water whichever is feasible and available.
13. The staff should mandatorily hand wash/sanitize in the manner prescribed before touching the refreshments during tea-break/lunch-break etc.
14. The utensils should be properly cleaned with dish wash bars /liquids and water.
15. The meals and utensils should not be shared amongst the staff.
16. Consumption of raw fruits/vegetables during refreshment period should be discouraged and the same shall be washed with lukewarm water before consumption.
17. The staff should not smoke or chew tobacco based products such as gutka, pan masala etc. in the Sewa Kendra.
18. In case of a cough/sneeze, the staff should use the handkerchief to cover the space which shall then be kept in his/her own pocket/purse in a manner that the surface of the handkerchief exposed to the cough/sneeze shall not touch the other parts of the belongings directly.
19. In case someone is not carrying the handkerchief he/she should cough/sneeze into the *flexed/bent elbow*.
20. In either case, the staff should immediately hand wash with soap in the manner prescribed his hands/other exposed surfaces to cough/sneeze.
21. The staff should refrain from touching face, mouth, nose and eyes with his/her hands at all times.
22. The staff should not spit except when absolutely essential and only in the washbasin of the toilet in the Sewa Kendra.
23. The staff should not indulge in gossip/rumours with regard to COVID-19 without verifying the facts. The vendor may encourage the staff to download “COVA APP” developed by the Government of Punjab for the correct, timely and authentic information.

III. Advisory for the general public visiting the Sewa Kendra

1. Only citizens with valid appointments will be permitted inside the Sewa Kendras. Citizens are requested to cooperate in this regard.
2. All the citizens visiting the Sewa Kendras should abide by all the measures of social distancing laid out by the Government at all times while availing their services.
3. No associates of applicants should be allowed inside Sewa Kendras except in case of differently able citizens, elderly citizens & minor children.
4. Senior citizens are advised to avoid visiting any public places, including the Sewa Kendra and may preferably ask their relatives/caretaker to do the needful.
5. Citizens are advised to sanitize their hands with the Alcohol-based Sanitizer mounted at the entrance wall of the Sewa Kendra before entering the Sewa Kendra premises.
6. Citizens should wear a cloth mask all the time except for a few minutes when his/ her live photograph is being clicked. No one should be allowed to enter Sewa Kendras without any mask.
7. Citizens are advised to stand within circles/squares or at lines drawn inside the Sewa Kendras at the Service counters. Similarly, citizens are advised to sit on intervening seats while waiting for their turn.
8. Citizens should preferably make digital payment for the service availed
9. Citizens are advised to return immediately after availing the service at the Sewa Kendra.

IV. A Air-Conditioning/Coolers :

1. Prefer natural ventilation at workplace.
2. The detailed guidelines issued in this regard may be meticulously followed. (Copy Annexed)

V. In case a co-staff/colleague is diagnosed as COVID-19 with whom one had a contact during office, there is no need to panic. One should report to the Helpline No. 104/State Control Room No. 01722920074/08872090029, detailing the exact nature of exposure so as to assist the medical facility to undertake further necessary actions.

VI. The employer, in case a staff is diagnosed as corona positive and such a staff has attended the office, shall immediately inform the Helpline No. 104/State Control Room No. 01722920074/+91-8872090029 along with all the facts about the staff and the contacts he/she might have during the attendance in the office. A complete and proper record of all employees attending the office and the citizens who have visited the Sewa Kendra on any particular day should be maintained.

All are encouraged to take proper diet, assimilate correct information and keep themselves aware and updated with the information at all times, and indulge in useful and productive activities during the available free time.

**Secretary Health &
Mission Director, NHM, Punjab**

No. MD/NHM/2020/3279(R)-3281(R)

Dated, Chandigarh the 5th May, 2020

1. A copy is forwarded to OSD to Chief Secretary, Punjab for the kind information of Worthy Chief Secretary please.
2. A copy is forwarded to PS to ACS (Home), Punjab for the kind information of Additional Chief Secretary (Home)
3. A copy is forwarded to PS to PSHFW, Punjab for the kind information of Principal Secretary, Health & Family Welfare.

**Secretary Health &
Mission Director, NHM, Punjab**

No. MD/NHM/2020/ 3282 (R)-3289 (R)

Dated, Chandigarh the 5th May, 2020

Copy forwarded to :

1. Commissioner, FDA, Punjab for information please.
2. MD, PHSC for information please.
3. Commissioner AYUSH cum PD-PSACS for information please.
4. Director Health Services, Punjab for information please.
5. Director Family Welfare, Punjab for information please.
6. Director (ESI), Punjab for information please.
7. Executive Director, SHSRC, Punjab for information please.
8. All Civil Surgeons, Punjab for information & necessary action.

**State Programme Officer (IEC)
NHM, Punjab**

Government of Punjab
Department of Health & Family Welfare
(NHM, Punjab)

No. 3129 (R) - 3136 (R)

Dated, Chandigarh the 24th April, 2020

To

1. All the Special Chief Secretary/ Additional Chief Secretary/ Financial Commissioners / Principal Secretaries/ Administrative Secretaries to the Govt. of Punjab.
2. All the Head of the Department of the Govt. of Punjab.
3. All the Commissioners of the Divisions.
4. All the Commissioners of Police.
5. All the Deputy Commissioners/ District and Session Judges of the State
6. Registrar General, Punjab and Haryana High Court
7. All Senior Superintendents of Police
8. The Secretary, Punjab Vidhan Sabha.

Subject: **Advisories regarding the use of Air-conditioning in Residential/Commercial and Hospital Settings in wake of COVID-19 pandemics.**

Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID -19) is a systemic disease caused by a novel Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2), transmitted in most instances through respiratory droplets, direct contact with cases and also through contaminated surfaces/objects. Though the virus survives on environmental surfaces for a varied period of time, it gets easily inactivated by chemical disinfectants. Thus, correct and timely information and knowledge about the corona virus is the key to control the pandemic.

With the onset of summer season in the past few weeks, concerns with regard to the safety and usage of Air conditioners/coolers etc. in the wake of COVID-19 pandemics have been raised. The Air-conditioning systems generally work on the principle of re-circulating the air inside the room and in the current COVID-19 situation, there are apprehensions that the air conditioning poses a threat to other people especially in large facilities such as malls, offices, hospitals, health centres etc.

The State has therefore decided to come up with an advisory to allay all such apprehensions and concerns with regard to safety and usage of Air conditioning/coolers etc. in different settings. The guidelines for usage of air conditioning in various settings is as follows:

SECTION A: RESIDENTIAL APPLICATIONS

1. Room Air Conditioners(Window/Split):

- a) Recirculation of cool air by Room Air Conditioners must be accompanied by outdoor air intake through slightly open windows and exhaust by natural exfiltration.
- b) The room temperature should be set between 24-27 degrees Celsius and the relative humidity should be maintained between 40% - 70%.
- c) The Air conditioners should be serviced often so as to keep the filters clean.
- d) Exhaust fans can be installed in the rooms containing a large number of people so as to create a negative pressure in the room and ensure the entry of fresh air in the premises.
- e) The circulated air inside the room should be vented out frequently.

2. Evaporative/Desert Air Coolers:

- a) It is advisable to prevent dust entry and maintain hygiene. Evaporative cooler tanks must be cleaned and disinfected and the water drained and refilled frequently.
- b) *Disinfection of Air Coolers:* The evaporative air coolers must be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals. The water tank should be emptied and then wiped gently with a soft cloth, sponge and warm water to eliminate moldy residue that may have built up since the previous cleaning. The tank can also be washed with mild soapy water and then flushed out with clean water.

For the cooling pads and air vents, a mixture of 50-50 water and vinegar should be used to soak and rinse the pads and the vents.

- c) Evaporative coolers must draw air from outside to ensure good ventilation.

3. Fans:

- a) Fans should be operated with windows kept partly open.
- b) If an exhaust fan is located at a nearby location then it must be kept running to exhaust air for better ventilation.

SECTION B: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES

1. The best action to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19 infection through air is to ventilate the indoor environments with outdoor air as much as possible.
2. Mechanical ventilation systems and air conditioning systems, which provide ventilation, can perform this function more effectively than simply opening the windows, because they improve the quality of the outdoor air with filtration.
3. If fresh air is not provided, it is advisable to introduce a fresh air duct attached to a central inline fan filter unit and distribute the fresh air by grilles into the space or near the indoor units in case of multiple cassette or multiple hi-wall units.
4. A minimum fresh air volume of 3 cubic meter/hour per person and 3.75 cubic meter per hour per square metre (5 cfm per person and 0.6 cfm per sq ft) is recommended.
5. In case of ducted fan-coiled and air handling units, fresh air must be provided by an inlet duct and fan.
6. In buildings without mechanical ventilation systems, it is recommended to actively use operable windows.
7. In case of re-circulating system, it is advisable to limit the return air circulation. The return air system could be converted to an exhaust system.

SECTION C: HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

1. In healthcare settings, the probability of spread of infection is higher especially in COVID-19 wards or isolation centres.
2. It is therefore recommended that the air-conditioning system in these facilities should be isolated and different from rest of the hospital or the building so as to prevent the re-circulation of air which may be containing the droplet nuclei having virus.
3. In certain settings, where a separate air conditioning is not possible/feasible, exhaust air is likely to contain particles carrying the virus and hence a suitable technique should be deployed to prevent the spread of infections. The treatment of exhaust air can be done by HEPA filtration or by chemical disinfection of the exhaust air from COVID-19 patient room by bubbling the exhaust air through a “Diffused air aerator tank” (preferably of non-metallic material) holding a 1% sodium hypochlorite solution.
4. Exhaust Air can also be treated by exposing it for 45 minutes to a temperature of 75° Celsius to inactivate the SARS-CoV.
5. Similarly, an UVC (254 nm wavelength) irradiation with an exposure time of 15 minutes at irradiation intensity of $4016 \mu\text{W}/\text{Cm}^2$ results in complete inactivation of SARS-CoV.
6. Due to the possibility of presence of active viral particles on the exhaust systems, it is advised to follow suitable personal and environment protection protocols during any maintenance activity on the exhaust system.
7. In resource constrained settings, certain make-shift Isolation enclosures can be designed to provide the necessary protection from the COVID-19 viral particles. This could be a temporary makeshift cubicle or tent constructed out of a skeleton structure (of plastic or metal) and plastic sheet or canvas covering.
8. A quarantine centre shall be well ventilated and preferably be maintained at a negative or neutral differential pressure. When mechanical ventilation is resorted to, it shall be a once through system (non- recirculatory system) that provides a “clean to dirty” (towards the patient and away to the exhaust) air flow pattern.

9. Preventive maintenance on all units as per the manufacturer's guidelines shall be ensured.

This should include disinfecting and cleaning of:

- i) Filters, grilles, diffusers & internal surfaces: It is recommended to use 5% Cresol solution (containing 50% Cresol and 50% Liquid soap solution) for the purpose of disinfection. Mix 1 liter of this solution in 9 liters of water. The surface shall be sprayed with this solution, left for 10 minutes and then washed / wiped clean with water / cloth. (the above methodology is only for washable filters)
- ii) Condensate drain pan: Disinfecting / treatment of condensate drain pan is suggested using UV treatment or 1% sodium hypochlorite dosing. This will apply only if the HVAC equipment is working on a re-circulatory mode.
- iii) Coils: Follow standard recommendations of coil cleaning and then sanitize using the same protocol as that of the filters specified above.

The fresh air and ventilation system should be kept on throughout the off cycle and on the weekend and holidays in air circulation mode.

SECTION D : OFFICES

1. The offices use different types of air conditioning, ie, Window/ Split air conditioners to centralized air conditioning to coolers during summer seasons. The employers are advised to refer to relevant section in this advisory depending upon the type of air conditioning installed in their offices.

**Secretary Health &
Mission Director, NHM, Punjab**

No. 3137 (R) - 3138 (R)

Dated, Chandigarh the 24th April, 2020

1. A copy is forwarded to OSD to Chief Secretary, Punjab for the kind information of Worthy Chief Secretary please.
2. A copy is forwarded to PS to PSHFW, Punjab for the kind information of Principal Secretary, Health & Family Welfare.

**Secretary Health &
Mission Director, NHM, Punjab**

No. 3139 (R) - 3145 (R)

Dated, Chandigarh the 24th April, 2020

Copy forwarded to :

1. Commissioner, FDA, Punjab for information please.
2. MD, PHSC for information please.
3. Commissioner AYUSH cum PD-PSACS for information please.
4. Director Health Services, Punjab for information please.
5. Director Family Welfare, Punjab for information please.
6. Director (ESI), Punjab for information please.
7. All Civil Surgeons, Punjab for information & necessary action.

**State Programme Officer (IEC)
NHM, Punjab**