

भारतीय डाक विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF POSTS, INDIA

मुख्य पोस्टमास्टर जनरल कार्यालय , केरल परिमंडल , तिरुवनंतपुरम - 695 033
Office of the Chief Postmaster General, Kerala Circle, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 033

दूरभाष/Tel: 0471-2304434

फैक्स/Fax: 2308081

ईमेल/e-mail: adgaco.keralapost@gmail.com

By Email

सेवा में / To,

1. The Postmaster General, Northern Region, Kozhikode - 673 011
2. The Postmaster General, Central Region, Kochi - 682 020
3. The Director of Accounts (Postal), Thiruvananthapuram – 695 001
4. The SSPOs, Thiruvananthapuram (N) – 695 001 / Kollam Divisions - 691 001
5. The SSRM, 'TV' Division, Thiruvananthapuram-695 036
6. The SPOs, Trivandrum(S)-695 036/Pathanamthitta-689 645/Tiruvalla-689 101 Divisions.
7. The Superintendent, PSD, Thiruvananthapuram- 695 023
8. The Superintendent, KCSD, Ernakulam- 682 020
9. The Exe. Engineer, Postal Civil Division, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 009
10. The Asst Engineer, PESD, Paruthippara, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 015

No. COVID/GEN/2020

dated at Thiruvananthapuram 695033, the

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Sub : Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Preventive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Post offices and Mail offices -reg

Please find enclosed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the above subject, for information, guidance and necessary action.



/ N. Janakiraman /

Assistant Director (General Administration)

Copy forwarded to:

1. All Circle Secretaries, Service Associations - For information.
2. All Group Officers in Circle Office - For information and necessary action.
3. Consultant to Chief PMG/ PS to DPS (HQ) - For information.
4. Dy OS, CO - For information and necessary action



Assistant Director (General Administration)

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES
TO CONTAIN SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN POST OFFICES & MAIL OFFICES**

1. Background

COVID-19 infection has spread through the length and breadth of our country. Post offices/ Mail offices and some staff have been affected. Various instructions for prevention and containment of COVID-19 issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare from time to time have been circulated to all Units. This SOP is issued in continuation of the earlier orders consolidating various instructions received, to contain the spread of the disease, safety of staff and ensure smooth working of the offices.

2. Scope

This document outlines the prevention and response measures to be observed to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Post Offices and Mail offices in particular and other admin offices in general. The document is divided into the following sub- sections :-

- a. Generic preventive measures to be followed at all times.
- b. Common preventive measures for Post Offices & Mail Offices.
- c. Specific preventive measures for Mail Offices.
- d. Measures to be taken in case of occurrence of cases.

3. Generic preventive measures

The generic preventive measures include simple public health measures that are to be followed to reduce the risk of infection with COVID-19. These measures need to be observed by all (employees and visitors) at all times. These include:

- a. Officials must maintain a minimum distance of 1 meter at all times in work place.
- b. Use of face covers/masks are mandatory.
- c. Practice frequent hand washing with soap and running water wherever feasible, even when hands are not visibly dirty. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be done in cases where hand washing is not possible.
- d. Etiquettes such as covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing off used tissues properly are to be strictly followed.
- e. Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting of any illness at the earliest to the immediate supervisory officer has to be followed. Thermal scanner and oximeter supplied to all HPOs/MDGs/Mail Offices/Admin offices will aid in self monitoring.
- f. Spitting and Smoking is strictly prohibited.
- g. Installation & use of '**Aarogya Setu**' App by employees to be done wherever compatible mobile phone is used.



4. Common preventive measures for Post Offices & Mail Offices

In charge of the office should ensure the following :-

- a. There has to be mandatory arrangement of soap and water (running water wherever possible) or/and hand hygiene (sanitizer dispenser) at the entrance.
- b. Thermal screening of staff and visitors has to be done wherever provisioned.
- c. Only asymptomatic staff and visitors shall be allowed.
- d. Symptomatic staff and visitors would be advised not to enter office. A written board shall be placed at the entrance in a visible manner.
- e. Customers will not be allowed to enter office beyond the counter, unless necessitated.
- f. While accepting postal articles/parcels/cash from the customers, care should be taken to sanitize the hands after handling such articles.
- g. Staff residing in containment zone should inform the same to the supervisory officer and not attend the office (if their office is outside containment zone), till containment zone is denotified. Such staff shall be permitted to work from home.
- h. Proper cleaning and frequent sanitization/disinfection of the interior of the office, counters, frequently touched surfaces, door handles, furniture, keys, sorting cases, washrooms etc., using 1% sodium hypochlorite solution/ spray shall be done frequently. This is the responsibility of all the staff working in an office and should not be left to the responsibility of housekeeping personnel such as sweepers.
- i. Ensure timely supply of quality PPEs to all officials.
- j. Pregnant staff having underlying medical conditions may be given preference to work from home. If deployed, they should preferably not be exposed to any front-line work requiring direct contact with the public.
- k. All staff and customers shall be allowed entry to the office only with face cover/masks. The face cover/mask has to be worn at all times inside the office premises.
- l. Posters, Pictures printed from MOH web site, Posters sourced from Dist health authorities can be displayed prominently in office premises.
- m. Audio visual documents received from Public health authorities may be played in televisions installed in counter area in bigger HOs (wherever available).
- n. Staggering of office hours, lunch hours, coffee breaks shall be done, as far as possible. Staggering does not mean curtailment of Hours of business, unless specifically ordered by administrative authorities in special circumstances.
- o. In the parking lots and the premises social distancing norms shall be ensured.
- p. Number of people in the elevators shall be restricted, duly maintaining social distancing norms.



- q. Ensure regular supply of soap and running water in the washrooms.
- r. Wash rooms should be cleaned and disinfected at frequent intervals.
- s. Seating arrangement to be made in such a way that adequate social distancing is maintained.
- t. For air-conditioning/ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which inter alia emphasises that the temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30°C, relative humidity should be in the range of 40- 70%, intake of fresh air should be as much as possible and cross ventilation should be adequate.
- u. Proper disposal of face covers / masks / gloves left over by the customers and/or staff shall be ensured. Staff / GDS should dispose the used PPE materials on their own.
- v. In the canteen/Tiffin rooms:-
 - (i) Adequate crowd and queue management to be ensured to observe social distancing norms.
 - (ii) Canteen staff should wear mask and hand gloves and take other required precautionary measures.
 - (iii) The seating arrangement should be with a distance of at least 1 meter.

4.1. Specific preventive measures for Mail offices in addition to para 4 above.

- a. The Set timings may be arranged in such a way to enable sanitization after the working of each Set.
- b. If there are overlapping timings between Sets or Sub Sets, such arrangements may be discontinued, until further orders. However, it may be ensured that the mail agency functions happen without any disruptions.
- c. Staff deployment in every Set should be according to the requirement. There is no necessity to deploy man power against vacant posts, unless necessitated by mail volume.
- d. Staff arranged in one Set including Data Entry Operators/Outsiders/Mazdoors are not to be arranged in the subsequent Sets, as far as possible.
- e. Staff engaged in the Sub Sets may be deployed in other Sets of the mail office. Suitable changes to mail arrangement should be ordered so that there is no disruption of any of the existing activities.
- f. The staff working in TMO / Mail Agency branch should be advised to use proper sanitisation methods after every mail exchange and after handling of mail bags.
- g. Proper and daily sanitisation of the sections and the Rest house/ Rest rooms/canteens should be ensured.
- h. Closing of day Set on Sundays/Holidays for disinfection of entire premises may be done. One day per week for deep cleaning/disinfecting has to be ensured.



5. **Measures to be taken in case of occurrence of case(s):**

When one or more staff (s) who share a room/close office space is/are found to be suffering from symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 :-

- a. Shift the unwell person to a room or area where he/she is isolated from others at the workplace.
- b. If cases of Covid-19 is reported in a PO/Mail Office, the functioning of the office is to be suspended and immediate action should be taken to disinfect entire premises. The office will start functioning from the Second day after the day of disinfection.
- c. However in larger offices, if there are one or two cases reported, the disinfection procedure will be limited to places/areas visited by the patient in past 48 hrs. There is no need to close the entire office building/halt work in other areas of the office and work can be resumed after disinfection as per laid down protocol.
- d. If there is a larger outbreak, the building/block will have to be closed for 48 hours after thorough disinfection. All the staff will work from home and staff not quarantined may work in other offices if need be at the direction of Divisional Heads
- e. Immediately inform the nearest medical facility (hospital/clinic) or call the state or district helpline.
- f. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the designated public health authority (district RRT/treating physician) and accordingly further advice shall be made regarding management of case, his/her contacts and need for disinfection.
- g. The necessary actions for contact tracing and disinfection of work place will start once the report of the patient is received as positive. The report will be expedited for this purpose.
- h. 'Get Well Soon' App shall be used to feed data of affected staff/GDS so that administrative machinery will be alerted spontaneously and aid and assistance by the "Kaithangu" assigned staff reaches the Covid suspect. In addition, Covid Response & Support Group (Kaithangu) be used to feed information.
- i. Management of contacts is to be done as per the advice of the health authorities.
- j. The local health authorities may be contacted for the arrangement of Covid-19 detection tests for the staff working in the unit. Divisional Heads should ensure treatment for Covid-19 confirmed staff through local health authorities. Also, ensure better treatment for the Covid-19 confirmed staff through their support group.
- k. Offices in Containment zones/Critical containment zones/Buffer zones/Triple lockdown zones etc. shall be closed, only if ordered so specifically, by the District collector/DDMA. Even in such cases, delivery of articles containing medicines, Speed Post, payment of eMOs etc. should be arranged through nearby offices, in consultation with and taking advice of the Health authorities and Police.
- l. Notwithstanding the above, any advice from the local health authorities specific to the location affected by Covid-19, is to be followed.

