



news flash

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES & PREVENTIVE MEASURES AT WORK PLACES

Background

Pursuant to the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (“MHA”) on 17 May 2020, the Government of Maharashtra released its own guidelines (“**Maharashtra Guidelines**”)¹ on 19 May 2020. These guidelines demarcate the zones within the state, prescribe limits for lifting of restrictions in each zone and set out the Standard Operating Procedures (“SOPs”) to be followed at work places which are discussed below.

Maharashtra Guidelines

The Maharashtra Guidelines state that they supersede the provisions (and subsequent amendments/ clarifications thereto) of lockdown order dated 2 May 2020. However, they further state that all earlier orders shall be aligned to the Maharashtra Guidelines and shall remain in force up to and inclusive of 31 May 2020.

The Maharashtra Guidelines have divided the State into Red, Orange, Green and Containment Zones as prescribed by the MHA. All Municipal Corporations of Mumbai Metropolitan Region (including MCGM), Municipal Corporations of Pune, Solapur, Aurangabad, Malegaon, Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Akola and Amravati are categorized as red zones. There are additional restrictions for cities in red zones. The rest of the State falls in non-red zones which have been granted considerable relaxations.

Red zones: E-commerce activities for essential and non-essential items & materials are now permitted in red zones. All other activities which were allowed and permitted before the Maharashtra Guidelines shall continue to be permitted. However, all private offices are to remain shut in red zones.

In the non-red zones all activities which are not specifically prohibited are permitted.

Annexure III to the Maharashtra Guidelines provides a tabular list of activities permitted for each zone.

Please [click here](#) to read the Maharashtra Guidelines dated 19 May 2020.

¹Government of Maharashtra - Department of Revenue, Forest, Disaster Management, Relief and Rehabilitation guidelines - Order No. DMU/2020/CR.92/DisM-1

Directives for work places

Use of Arogya Setu App

1. Arogya Setu enables early identification of potential risk of infection, and thus acts as a shield for individuals and the community.
2. The Arogya Setu app is now dealt with in the main part of the Maharashtra Guidelines. While it was previously compulsory for an employer to ensure that all employees installed it, now an employer may, on best effort basis, ensure that the app is installed by all employees having compatible mobile devices.
3. This to ensure safety of offices and work places and to facilitate timely provision of medical attention those individuals who are at risk.

SOPs under the Maharashtra Guidelines

The SOPs to be followed at a workplace (which has been allowed to open) are provided in Annexure – II of the Maharashtra Guidelines which prescribe as follows:

1. As far as possible, the practice of work from home should be followed.
2. Staggering of work/ business hours shall be followed in offices, workplaces, shops, markets and industrial and commercial establishments.
3. Provision for thermal scanning, hand wash, sanitizer will be made at all entry and exit points and common areas.
4. Frequent sanitization of entire workplace, common facilities and all points which come into human contact, e.g., door handles etc., shall be ensured, including between shifts.
5. All persons in charge of workplaces shall ensure social distancing through adequate distance between workers, adequate gaps between shifts, staggering the lunch breaks of staff, etc.
6. Wearing of face cover is compulsory in all public and workplaces.
7. Spitting in public and work places shall be punishable with fine as may be prescribed in accordance with laws, rules or regulations by State/local authority.

Guidelines by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has prescribed a guidelines dated 18 May 2020 (“**Ministry of Health Guidelines**”) on measures to be taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 at work places.

Preventive measures

Some of the measures to be observed by employees & visitors include:

- a. Physical distancing of at least one meter to be followed at all times.
- b. Practice frequent hand washing (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty and use of alcohol based hand sanitizers (for at least 20 seconds).
- c. Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering one’s mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing off used tissues properly.
- d. Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest
- e. Any staff reportedly suffering from flu-like illness should not attend office and seek medical advice from local health authorities [e.g. CGHS wellness center, medical attendance under CS (MA) etc.]. Such persons, if diagnosed as a suspect/confirmed case of COVID-19 should immediately inform the office authorities.

- f. Any staff requesting home quarantine based on the containment zone activities in their residential areas should be permitted to work from home.

Measures to be taken on occurrence of a case

When any person who shares a room/close office space is found to be suffering from symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, the following measures (amongst others) will be taken:

- g. Place the ill person in a room or area where they are isolated from others at the workplace. Provide a mask/face cover till such time he/she is examined by a doctor.
h. Report to concerned central/state health authorities.

Closure of work place & Disinfection procedures

- i. If there are one or two cases reported, the disinfection procedure will be limited to places/ areas visited by the patient in past 48 hours. 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.
j. If there is a larger outbreak, the entire building will have to be closed for 48 hours after thorough disinfection. All staff will work from home, till the building is adequately disinfected and is declared fit for re-occupation.

The Ministry of Health Guidelines contain links to various other detailed guidelines as follows:

- Guidelines for [disinfection](#) of the workplace
- Guidelines issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (“**DOPT**”) regarding [preventive measures](#) to be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Guidelines for [home isolation](#) of very mild/ pre-symptomatic cases
- Revised [testing guidelines](#) issued by the ICMR
- Guidelines for [home quarantine](#)
- A [Guidance document](#) on management of suspected cases

Please [click here](#) to read the Ministry of Health Guidelines dated 18 May 2020.

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