



Confederation of Indian Industry

COVID-19: WORKPLACE PROTOCOLS

April 2021

WORKPLACE PROTOCOL FOR ENTERPRISES, OFFICES AND FACTORIES

Introduction

The surge in COVID-19 in recent weeks has been unprecedented and the country has witnessed peak levels of virus incidence. This is leading to imposition of curfews, mini-lockdowns and other restrictions on normal activities which will once again impact lives and livelihoods and full resumption of economic work.

Due to the hard work of scientists and researchers as well as relevant businesses across the world, vaccines have been brought out on emergency use basis and the Indian Government has achieved one of the fastest vaccination programs in the world. However, achieving herd immunity will take its own time, while new strains of the virus are coming in.

CII has been working closely with the empowered group on vaccines and has recommended various measures from time to time, stressing that full lockdown of economic activities must be avoided as far as possible to keep livelihoods protected. CII has made suggestions for vaccination of workers and their families as well as permitting vaccination of the surrounding communities under CSR. CII has also been coordinating on medical equipment.

Therefore, safety, hygiene and precautionary measures would remain the utmost priority for the near future. Uncertainty and unpredictability in the different strains of the virus are causing anxiety and the only way to control the spread of the virus is to maintain the highest levels of personal and workplace precautions. Often, the virus is asymptomatic, causing further transmissions without people being aware of it.

In these circumstances, Indian businesses must continue to keep the safety protocols at the topmost agenda to keep their workplaces functioning and safe. These would involve the below:

- Continued intensive measures for health and hygiene in the workplace, including work-from-home wherever possible, to prevent transmission among employees and their immediate contacts;
- Contingency plans in case of COVID-19 incidence in the workplace and possible impact on normal business operations;
- Contingency planning for spread in local areas and consequent containment or lockdown measures;
- Re-working of usual business models to incorporate possibilities of disruption.

The best way to contain transmission of the disease is through **limiting close contact**:

- **Quarantining of close contacts of infectious people for 14 days from last exposure**
- **Fabric face masks**
- **Frequent hand washing**
- **Respiratory etiquette/social distancing**
- **Environmental cleaning and disinfection**
- **Good environmental ventilation in closed settings**

It is strongly reiterated that the SMS protocol is the **ONLY** way to prevent spread of the disease – **S**anitization and hand washing, **M**ask wearing, and **S**ocial distancing.

Unless public awareness and responsible behavior on this becomes a way of life, the pandemic cannot be controlled. It is imperative for all businesses to ensure that their circles of contact are made aware and follow the SMS protocol at all times in public.

Guidelines for businesses as below must be followed and processes put in place, if not already done.

1. Continuing protocols

a. Home and workplace interaction

i. Management

- Set up a Covid-19 control room of senior management and employee representatives.
- A list of such personnel along with mobile numbers shall be displayed at prominent locations.
- Identify and set up sub-teams for visitors, employee health monitoring, maintenance, transportation of employees, etc.
- Maintain protocols worked out for functions deliverable from home and minimize workplace presence for all staff.
- Ensure that only workers and management staff whose functions require physical presence enter the premises.
- MSME leadership should personally ensure hygiene protocols are followed.

ii. Facilities

- Arrange medical and life insurance for the staff/workers, not covered by ESI, for COVID-19 specifically. Contract workers and temporary staff should also be covered in this. Employees may be requested to contribute.

- Arrange transportation for employees who do not have their own transport to reach workplaces so as to avoid public contact. Transport should be properly sanitized.
- Tie up with a reputable e-commerce company to deliver groceries at employee homes to ensure that outside movement outside of work hours is minimized. This can be optional for employees.
- Arrange regular testing for employees who are physically present.
- Arrange vaccination as per the Government directive of setting up vaccination centres in workplaces with more than 100 workers in the eligible age group and ensure all eligible employees are vaccinated.

iii. Communication outreach

- Undertake massive awareness program through SMS / public announcements/posters and notices on the premises regarding washing hands, wearing masks and maintaining distance between employees. This should be done on a continuous basis and action monitored closely by supervisory staff.
- Updates on new drugs, notifications for health, and COVID-related information at the workplace should be advised to employees regularly, including through virtual meetings.
- Undertake massive awareness program for employee families through SMS. If possible, reach out to employee families once every fortnight through phone. For large companies, families themselves could be involved in this on a voluntary basis.

b. Symptoms

- If any employee reports a cough or a fever, they must remain at home for 7 days and be closely monitored.
- Arrange RT-PCR testing of all staff whose presence is required at premises once in a while.
- Ensure self-certification of employees and their families through messages.
- Arrange direct link with nearby designated clinic or hospital for rapid evacuation of anyone with symptoms and follow up medical treatment for employees and families.
- If family members display symptoms, employee to self-isolate for 7 days on paid basis and return to work only if family member and he/she tests negative.

2. General health and hygiene

- All employees to mandatorily wear masks at all times.
- Organisations shall continue to check employee temperatures as they walk in.

- If an employee registers elevated body temperature, immediately send to the designated clinic for further advice.
- Testing of the entire workforce through individual testing of critical talent, pool testing and serological testing of general category and dual testing of positive serological tests.
- Bio-metric (finger touch) swiping for attendance shall be temporarily discontinued and doors to be kept open to the extent possible to prevent touch contamination.
- Where doors cannot be kept open and use of AC is required, the door handles shall be frequently sanitized and a microfilter installed in the AC.
- Proper disposal of used PPE equipment, such as used masks, gloves, etc and cleaning equipment etc shall be arranged in coordination with local authorities.
- Garbage areas shall be regularly sprayed and fumigated.
- For large factories and construction sites, additionally, companies shall improve hygiene and health monitoring by having medical staff onsite, as well as establish quarantine facilities at sites.

Visitor Management

- Discourage visitors except when absolutely necessary.
- A visitor may be permitted in the most exceptional and important situations only after pre-approvals.
- The visitor's temperature will be checked, and it should be ensured that he/she is wearing a mask. Social distancing for meetings should be followed.
- All restrictions and protocols against Covid-19 shall be adhered to. The visitor will not be permitted beyond the reception area and will not meet anyone other than the designated person/appointment.

3. Offices

Management and facilities

- All offices not in contact services must work from home with digital interactions.
- During face-to-face interaction, masks must be worn. Spacing of 1.5 meters to be maintained.
- Air conditioning should be kept at 24-30 degrees with humidity at 40-60 per cent. Air flow of air conditioners should be kept close to the ceiling. Ventilation and air circulation should be maintained. If required, employees at their desks should be provided with small fans.
- Stagger office hours or ask staff to come on limited number of days of the week.

Sanitization

- Undertake sanitization every evening after work.
- Ensure hand-wash facilities before entering the premises.

- Keep sanitizers at all workstations.
- All employees in offices must wear masks at all times. Office should provide masks and ensure that these are changed once or twice during the day. Adequate stock of surgical masks / 3 ply masks / cotton masks @ 2 per individual per day and infrared (non-touch) thermometer shall be maintained in every plant and office.
- Housekeeping staff / food handlers to ensure hand washing regularly.

Social distancing

- Elevators should be applicable only for 4th floor and above. One elevator personnel should be designated so that nobody else touches the buttons. Minimal people to be permitted in elevators at a time.
- Keep all doors open to minimize touching of handles.
- Employees to meet only at designated meeting areas with adequate social distancing.
- No food services to be provided by office, including tea and coffee. All employees to arrange their own meals and snacks for workplace. No dish washing facilities to be provided. No designated lunch hour and employees should take their meals separately at their own convenience at their desks.

Toilets

- Arrange wet wipes at doors of toilets.
- Arrange sufficient hand wash inside toilets and clean all touchable surfaces such as taps, toilet seats, hand wash bottles, etc. every hour.

4. Factory premises

Management and facilities

- Stagger the shifts, if possible.
- Earmark queue standing positions at least 1.5 meters apart at factory gates with clear signages for employees to enter.

Sanitization

- Arrange hand wash/sanitizer facilities at the gate as employees enter.
- Arrange sanitizers at common places.
- Carry out disinfection and sanitization of entire premises every 24 hours. A protocol for regular sanitization as per the shifts should be devised.
- Workers should be provided hand gloves.

Social distancing

- Workers should maintain 1.5 meters distance among themselves. If close proximity is necessary, disposable protective covering and face shields may be provided.

- Mealtimes should be staggered effectively to avoid crowding. Open-air canteens may be considered at premises.

Toilets

- Facilities for changing clothes and laundry should be considered upon entry and exit from premises.
- Clean toilets and washrooms every hour. Keep tissues outside washrooms to avoid touching handles.
- Spitting to be prohibited.

5. Goods and tools

- Sanitize all raw materials and components entering the premises. It is preferable to keep them in a separate holding room for at least 24 hours before use.
- Materials should be segregated as per metals, plastics, fabrics, etc. These all have different infection levels regarding coronavirus.
- Just-in-time procedures should be extended so that more components are in place and are at workstations for longer duration. This will reduce movement and allow any infection to be timed out.
- Separate hand tools for workers or keep sanitizing them if required to be used by several people.
- Individual hand tools such as sewing machines should be designated for employees. For shifts, the same 2-3 employees should be assigned to one machine.
- All goods going out of the premises should be kept aside for 4-5 hours before packaging and loading, if non-perishable.
- Sanitize trucks and vehicles using sanitizer sprays before entering the premises.
- Truck drivers need to be sensitized adequately and all proper arrangements made for their movement, meals and stay to avoid interactions.
- Packaging material should be sanitized before movement and if possible, covered with plastic covering at all times during movement.
- Maintenance/repair personnel from outside the organization will follow all entry protocols as applicable to employees.

6. Protocol to be followed in case of detection of COVID-19 positive case in an establishment

Provided strict social distancing and health and hygiene protocols are followed in all establishments, given below is a targeted approach to be followed if an employee tests COVID-19 positive despite all precautions.

Employee:

- Isolate the employee as per the directions of MoHFW.
- Inform the necessary authorities and take their assistance for tracing, isolation and treatment requirements. Facilitate monitoring by authorities.
- Resumption of duties after confirmation of the hospital discharge and self-certification of 14 days' self-quarantine
- Check if family members have been infected. In such case, employee may be asked to remain home till all members test negative.

Contact Tracing among Co-workers:

- Identify co-workers based on the details given by the employee and his manager
- Declare the case at the Business Unit of the infected person and encourage co-workers for self-identification if they had come in contact with the person
- Quarantine for the entire group at home till COVID-19 tests are done on all of them
- Quarantine of 14 days at home for all the people who test negative.
- Home quarantine for all the people who test positive and to be followed up for hospital, if required.
- 7 days' self-quarantine at home for the infected persons post discharge from the hospital

Others, including family members (in contact):

- Identify other persons, including family members, based on the details given by the employee, neighbours and other responsible persons
- Declare the case and encourage others for self-identification if they had come in contact with the person
- Quarantine for the entire group at home
- Self-quarantine for 14 days at home for all the people that test negative
- Isolation centre/hospital quarantine/treatment for all the people that test positive
- 7 days' self-quarantine at home for the persons, post discharge from the hospital

Co-workers (not in contact):

- The normal COVID-19 operating protocols to be followed.
- No additional precaution required.

Work Area:

- Identify and define the zone of operation depending on the work profile of the person
- Sanitize the entire affected zone twice for two days each
- Resume normal operations with all employees who test negative

Common Areas (used):

- Identify used common areas from the employee himself and from others who would have seen him using the common areas
- Cordon off the areas while identifying alternate common areas for use of all
- Sanitize the areas without disrupting operations twice

Common Areas (not used):

- Sanitize the areas in phases without disrupting operations
- Follow the normal COVID-19 process of sanitization and hygiene



Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering industry, Government and civil society, through advisory and consultative processes.

For 125 years, CII has been working on shaping India's development journey and, this year, more than ever before, it will continue to proactively transform Indian industry's engagement in national development.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization, with about 9100 members from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 300,000 enterprises from 288 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

CII charts change by working closely with Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialized services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

Extending its agenda beyond business, CII assists industry to identify and execute corporate citizenship programmes. Partnerships with civil society organizations carry forward corporate initiatives for integrated and inclusive development across diverse domains including affirmative action, livelihoods, diversity management, skill development, empowerment of women, and sustainable development, to name a few.

With the Theme for 2020-21 as *Building India for a New World: Lives, Livelihood, Growth*, CII will work with Government and industry to bring back growth to the economy and mitigate the enormous human cost of the pandemic by protecting jobs and livelihoods.

With 68 offices, including 10 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 8 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with 394 counterpart organizations in 133 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

Confederation of Indian Industry

The Mantosh Sondhi Centre

23, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi – 110 003 (India)

T: 91 11 45771000 / 24629994-7

E: info@cii.in • W: www.cii.in



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