

P@SHA Recommended Guidelines to Businesses for Health, Prevention, and Protection of the Employees during COVID-19 Pandemic

Pakistan Software Houses Association for IT & ITeS has formulated the guidelines for the businesses in IT and ITeS sector for the protection of their employees from COVID-19 infection in the workplaces. These guidelines are to be seen as a set of recommendations and they do not replace the SOPs issued by the regulatory bodies or the provincial/federal governments.

1. General and at the Entrance

- All the employees (including the non-desk staff) are properly briefed on the COVID-19, its spread and symptoms as well as the required precautions against the disease, including the required steps of self-isolation and seeking proper medical advice.
- Display the instructions and posters in Urdu, English, and any other regional language that is deemed necessary at the prominent places such as the entrance, cafe, and board room(s) of the office. Pictorial versions of these instructions and awareness posters are also effective. Some of these are available in the annexure to this document.
- Frequent handwashing with disinfectant soap and water helps to minimize the risk of getting infected.
- Daily and careful cleaning, at least once prior to the beginning of the working day or after the closure of office hours, with the disinfectant of the entire office premises including the door handles, chairs arms rests and employees desks
- Social distancing is compulsory and must be strictly adhered without any exception or circumstances.
- Thermal guns are to be used by a trained person at the entrance to screen all entrants without an exception. A register may be maintained for keeping the readings of a person's daily temperature for the record.
- Persons with a temperature higher than 36.5–37.5 °C (97.7–99.5 °F), flu-like symptoms or cough should not be allowed and are advised on the steps to be taken for diagnosis of the illness. (The temperature stated earlier is a normal temperature range of a body - WHO/CDC threshold is 100.4 °F).
- The person checking the body temperature of the persons entering the facility must himself/herself be wearing gloves and face mask and he/she maintains an arm-length distance while checking the other person's temperature.

- Sufficient availability of hand-sanitizers or in the ideal case, a handwashing facility with disinfectant soap to be ensured at the entrance/exit of the office.
- No towels anywhere. Tissues to be available in all handwashing facilities, along with dustbins places nearby. Tissues must be disposed of immediately after use.

2. Distancing Measures

- It is recommended to operate the office with a skeletal staff and continue the work-from-home arrangements for the rest of the staff.
- Modify work stations or stagger hours to increase space between staff and visitors. Also determine and display room/hall capacity for persons, keeping in consideration the overall six feet distance required to be kept between individuals.
- Minimize congestion by implementing staggered/phased arrival, departure, and break times.
- A regular visit across the workplace to ensure strict compliance of the safe distancing

3. Precautions for Human Resources

- All the staff members wear face masks and hand gloves especially when they commute to the workplace.
- Washable face masks and disposable gloves are provided free of cost to the non-desk staff.
- Employees should be advised to use reusable face masks which can be washed. Disposable face masks are not advised.
- Greetings should only be done through gestures and no contact should be made through a handshake or an embrace.
- A distance of a minimum of 3 feet but preferably 6 feet must be maintained while employees interact with each other
- Every employee should keep their own personal water bottle and mug for the consumption of beverages.
- It is advised for employees to bring their own utensils and cutlery to avoid the use of shared utensils and cutlery provided by the company.
- Office boys may wear a different set of face masks, gloves, and aprons while going out of the office and working inside the office.
- All the cleaning staff must wear gloves at all times and dispose of them properly.
- Since the cleaning staff will be extra busy with the cleaning of common areas, every employee is advised to take care of the cleaning and disinfection of their own workstations.

4. Workplace Cleanliness

- A-grade hand sanitizers must be placed in different places of the office and employees must be advised to use them at regular intervals.

- The floor, tables, and chairs must be cleaned with a disinfectant on a regular basis. (See annexure for cost effect self-prepared disinfectant)
- All the items that are touched/used by multiple users must be wiped clean with proper disinfectant regularly. This includes door handles, copy machines/printers, remote controllers, light switches, telephones, water dispenser machines, tea kettles, etc. Dedicated staff should be deputed for this purpose.
- Proper ventilation of the workplace and all places is to be ensured.
- Dustbins can be placed at different locations in the office which must be emptied by the cleaning staff regularly.

5. Meeting/Conferences Rooms

- Meeting Rooms and Conference rooms must be cleaned before and after each meeting with a disinfectant. Special focus on chair handles, tabletop and electric wall buttons and sockets
- If a distance of six feet cannot be maintained between employees, the place of meeting should be changed.
- The meeting room equipment may be controlled by one person per each meeting.

6. Prayer Room/Ablution

- No carpets in the prayer area. Prayers can be offered on the floor.
- Floors to be cleaned with disinfectant before prayers.
- Six (6) ft space between any two persons in the prayer area.
- Staff visiting the prayer room should be reminded to keep their duration in the room short
- At least 3 ft distance to be maintained during ablutions.
- Place a hand wash so the staff can wash their hands prior to the wuzu.
- Proper ventilation should be ensured in prayer rooms
- Other applicable SOPs as agreed and updated from time to time between the government and ulema for prayers congregation in Masjid.

7. Cafeteria/Common Room/Recess Room

- The safe distancing of six feet must be ensured. If the space is small, the breaks should be phased for maintaining safe distancing.
- Toilets are to be kept clean and disinfected after every use. Dedicated workers wearing proper safety equipment and using regularly disinfected tools to be employed for this purpose.
- Kitchens/Cafeterias, as applicable, to adopt the same measures of distancing, including floor markings for those serving as well as being served, and use of disposable gloves, masks, and headcovers by the cook and serving persons. The utensils will be cleaned after every use. Raw material to be touched and prepared wearing gloves all the time as well as while serving.

- All food items can be heated using microwave ovens or stoves. Food items delivered from outside must be heated in the microwave oven for at least one minute.
- For employees who order food from outside, advise them to order from places which ensure the required hygiene. However, it is strongly advised to not order food from outside as it causes unwanted exposure and puts more pressure on the domestic and cleaning staff.

8. Passenger Lift

- Lifts are often the crowded places in any workplaces so special attention is given to maintain the safe distance while it is understood that at least 3ft distance is not possible at all times. Therefore, it is advised to use stairs instead of the lifts.
- Mark the spots in the lift so the persons stand such that no two persons face each other.
- A face mask is compulsory for using the lift.
- Disinfect the lift buttons and support railings on an hourly basis.

9. Visitors/Clients

- Entry in the premises of outsiders is allowed only when necessary
- Recording of body temperature should be compulsory for each visitor, regardless of his/her duration or time of the visit
- A designated visitor meeting room/area can be established, preferably outside the main entrance/premises of the office.
- A visitor can be politely asked to wash their hands or to make use of a hand sanitizer especially placed in the room/visitor's area.
- The visitors' meeting room/area shall be disinfected frequently.
- The room can also be used for the delivery/collection of postal mail, packages, items, etc.
- Wherever possible, parcels and postal mail envelopes should also be disinfected.

10. Handling of Postal Mail/Packages/Food Deliveries

- A team of two or three persons can be designated for this purpose.
- One person can be responsible for receiving the items, others can be responsible for disinfecting the items and handing them over to an office boy or the concerned person inside the office.
- For certain items, space can be designated to leave them for 1-2 days before opening them up or using them.
- All the packages can be sprayed with a disinfectant before opening. If it cannot be sprayed upon, it must be wiped with a clean cloth sponge having a disinfectant.

11. Transportation of Human Resources

- During these crucial times, employees can be advised to use their own personal transportation. However, the instructions of the provincial authorities must be followed.

12. Others

- Employees must change their clothes and take a bath as soon as they reach their homes.
- Employees must inform if anyone is sick at their home with COVID like symptoms so that a risk-decision can be taken.

More from Home Department of Sindh Government

- An electronic / physical register should be maintained of all the persons engaged in any form of activity at the office premises.
- No employee or worker over the age of 55 should be called for working at the workplace.
- The Home Department, Government of Sindh has also issued details of responsibility, transportation of human resources and goods transportation into the workplace.
- Most importantly, the operations can only be permitted after an undertaking by the Owner/CEO ensuring that all the required safety guidelines are in place. For more information, please refer to [this link](#):

Annexures

1. [Cost-effective Disinfectants Preparation detailed on page 1 of this PDF](#)
2. [Awareness Video for Frequent Viewing of Staff During COVID](#)



How to fight COVID-19 at the Workplace
(English)



آپ کام پر کووڈ-19 کا مقابلہ کس طرح کر سکتے ہیں
(Urdu)

3. Facility Posters (various)

4. Other ideas

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876212/COVID19_Guidance_Employers_and_businesses_.pdf