



International
Labour
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Envisaged Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Public Works Programmes and Recommended Mitigation Measures





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Preface

This Guideline is intended for use by national and local authorities implementing employment intensive public works programmes and practitioners (such as project managers, academia, engineers, technicians, supervisors, etc.) to reduce the impact of COVID-19 or similar pandemic. Whilst the Guideline builds on conventional practices, it introduces particular provisions to create a safer working environment and to minimise infection and spread of the virus in a labour intensive or labour-based infrastructure work site.

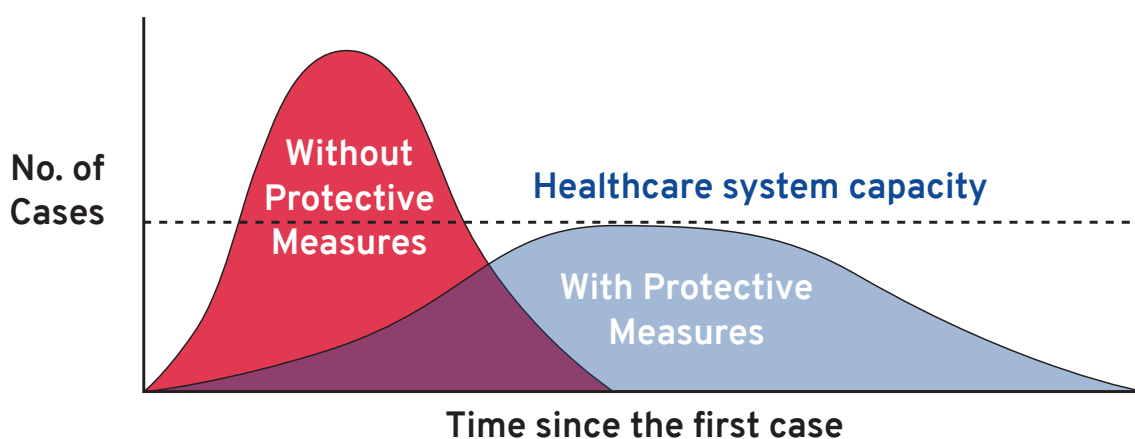
The Guideline provides practical measures that are useful in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the effectiveness of the guidelines rely on an enabling environment in the form of supportive upstream policy and operational frameworks.

The Guide is written in generic terms for use in various stages of the project cycle during provision of different types of infrastructure including buildings, roads, water works and solid waste management. Users in different countries are encouraged to domesticate it to reflect the local context.

This guidelines should be read in conjunction with EIIP response Guidance was also uploaded to EIIP webpage on COVID-19 response: https://www.ilo.org/employment/units/emp-invest/employment-intensive-investment/WCMS_741011/lang--en/index.htm

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Prevention is Better than Cure





Policy Inspiration

“The coronavirus pandemic is the worst global crisis since World War II ... and it could trigger conflicts around the world. The scale of the crisis was due to “a disease that represents a threat to everybody in the world and... an economic impact that will bring a recession that probably has no parallel in the recent past.”

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

“The Corona virus pandemic is not just a medical crisis, but a social and economic one too. If our response is to be effective it must take into account all these factors, and be delivered in a co-ordinated, global way. In particular, it must answer the needs of the most vulnerable.”

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder

► Increase in unemployment by countries' income groups

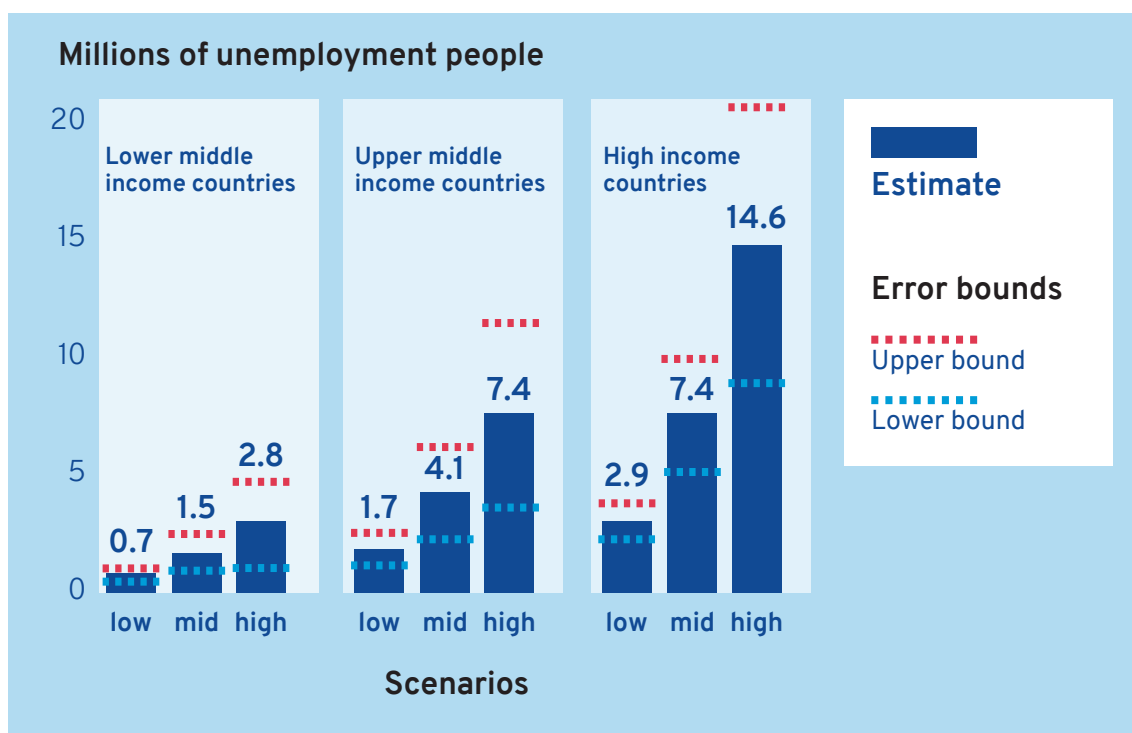
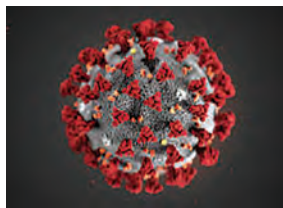


Table 1: Covid-19 at a Glance

What are Coronaviruses? Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that infect both animals and humans. Human coronaviruses can cause mild disease similar to a common cold, while others cause more severe and fatal disease (such as MERS - Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome).	
What is COVID-19? COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. The severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV 2) causes the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.	
What are the symptoms? The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome and even death. At the time of publication of this guideline, there is no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-2019. However, those affected should receive care to relieve the above symptoms.	
Means of transmission The Virus is commonly spread from an infected person to others. The virus enters the human body through the nose, mouth, or eyes. It affects the upper respiratory tract and can spread to lungs. In serious cases the infection leads to acute respiratory distress syndrome and possibly death. The virus can also end up in droplets that escape the lungs through coughing or sneezing; this leads to contagion directly to other humans such as through close personal unprotected contact with an infected person (touching, shaking hands) or indirectly through contaminated surfaces.	
Risk and Fatality The virus appears highly transmissible. According to WHO, as of March 2020, on average one infected patient transmits the virus to 1.6 to 2.4 other people. It disproportionally affects older patients with a fatality rate that is 3 to 4 times larger for people above the age of 70 than the average. For those under 40 the fatality seems to be around 0.2%. Men are twice more likely to get infected than women. People with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes and those with compromised immunity are also at relatively higher risk.	
Basic protective measures Good hygienic practices can mitigate the spread of the virus, including regular washing of hands with soap, covering your mouth when coughing/sneezing, social distancing etc. Here are the four steps one can take to keep her/himself and families safe:	
1. Wash your hands frequently – including every time you enter the home or office, after shaking hands with other people, after you cough or sneeze, and before you eat – using soap and water or an alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol content) hand rub; 2. Cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, dispose of used tissue immediately, and wash your hands; 3. Avoid close contact (shaking hands, hugging, etc.) with anyone who has cold or flu-like symptoms; 4. Seek medical care early if you or your household member or someone you share your space with has any of the above mentioned symptoms.	



1 Introduction

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis that poses the greatest challenge to humanity since World War Two. The pandemic has had far-reaching consequences beyond the spread of the disease and efforts to quarantine it. As the pandemic has spread around the globe, concerns have shifted from supply-side manufacturing issues to decreased business in the services sector.

The first case of the Virus was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) from Wuhan in China in early December 2019. The virus spread to almost every country within three months, which obligated the WHO to declare a COVID-19 Pandemic¹ on 11 March 2020.

The full impact of the pandemic is not yet known, but a Global recession seems inevitable. Every day, people are losing jobs and income, with no way of knowing when normality will return. Small island nations, heavily dependent on tourism,

have empty hotels and deserted beaches. The ILO estimates that over 195 million people could become unemployed, with a loss of workers' income exceeding USD 3.4 trillion.

Enterprises of all sizes have already stopped operations, cut working hours and laid off staff. Many are teetering on the brink of collapse as shops and restaurants close, flights and hotel bookings are cancelled and businesses shift to remote working. Often the first to lose their jobs are those whose employment was already precarious (ILO, 2020).

The burden of such calamities lies heaviest on vulnerable groups (poor households, youth, women, people living with disabilities (PWDs), etc.) who are the least able to cushion themselves from it particularly in developing countries whose governments do not have capacity to address the urgent needs.



2 COVID-19 Impact in the Africa Region

The human and economic cost of the COVID-19 pandemic for Africa is likely to be huge due to the widespread disruption of economic activities (trade, tourism, etc.) and reduced foreign direct investment/aid coupled with the huge cost of public containment measures and health

provisions. In a world where only one in five people are eligible for unemployment benefits, layoffs spell catastrophe for millions of families. Because paid sick leave is not available to many carers and delivery workers - those we all now rely on - they are often under pressure to

¹ According to WHO: "A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges and spreads around the world, and most people do not have immunity."

continue working even if they are ill (ILO, 2020).

In the developing world, piece-rate workers, day labourers and informal traders may be under similar pressure due to the need to put food on the table. Most communities will all suffer because of this. This situation will not only increase the spread of the virus, but in the longer-term dramatically amplify cycles of poverty and inequality.

Many countries in the region depend on public work/employment programmes

in dealing with prevailing un/under-employment and poverty and enhancing the resilience and livelihood of the vulnerable communities. These programmes are now being disrupted by the Pandemic. However, given their potential in playing a pivotal role in the containment and suppression of the COVID-19, Public Employment/Works Programmes must be ready to realign their strategic role by being part of mitigating the impact of the pandemic, emergence response and post pandemic rebuilding of livelihoods.



3 COVID-19 Response

Different strategies and associated policies have been devised across nations, with varying effects (Surico and Galeotti, 2020). These have ranged from social distancing (banning large gatherings, self-isolation and quarantines) to geographic lockdowns as well as introduced unprecedented stimulus packages and social protection measures to protect their societies and economies including maintaining certain level of cash flowing to workers and businesses.

Many countries are also adopting the strategy of “flattening the curve” to reduce and delay peak demand, that is, slowdown the speed of contagion in order

not to overwhelm health care facilities with a large number of patients in critical condition.

The ILO notes that tailored measures will be needed for the most vulnerable workers, including the self-employed, part-time workers and those in temporary employment, who may not qualify for unemployment or health insurance as well as those undocumented individuals who are harder to reach. Public Employment Programmes, which targets the poor and unemployed can play a pivotal role in providing income support to some of the most vulnerable who cannot be absorbed by the active labour market.



4 ILO response

Natural disasters, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, usually compound existing socio-economic challenges by disrupting production lines, severely reducing access to essential necessities of life as well as breaking down the public health infrastructure, which may lead to significant human suffering, unemployment, hunger and conflict. Such disasters also expose the prevailing inequalities and unfair distribution of national wealth in many countries as well as acute shortage of access to basic infrastructure, i.e., potable water, basic sanitation and health facilities, schools as well as communication and transport.

The ILO has been promoting social justice and peacebuilding since its foundation in 1919 in line with its constitutional mandates. In collaboration with its tripartite constituents and national and international partners, the ILO pursues a comprehensive and coherent set of responses to disaster response and disaster risk reduction as well as the creation of decent work and sustainable livelihoods for the vulnerable communities.

In June 2017, the ILO member States adopted a new Recommendation number 205 (R205) on “Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience”², an innovative normative instrument providing guidance to member states, organizations and practitioners dealing with employment and decent work in fragile settings that will be of critical relevance in addressing the impending COVID-19 pandemic.

R205 places social dialogue, the role of Employers’ and Workers’ organisations, public services, education, social protection, rights at work and ILS, international cooperation – amongst others – at the centre of Disaster³ Preparedness and Recovery.

The main strategy for rolling out Recommendation 205 is the promotion of employment intensive investments approach in responding to natural and manmade disasters.

² Web link: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3330503.

³ Disasters are defined in R205 broadly as “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts”. Hazardous events include biological hazards (viruses, epidemics, etc.).



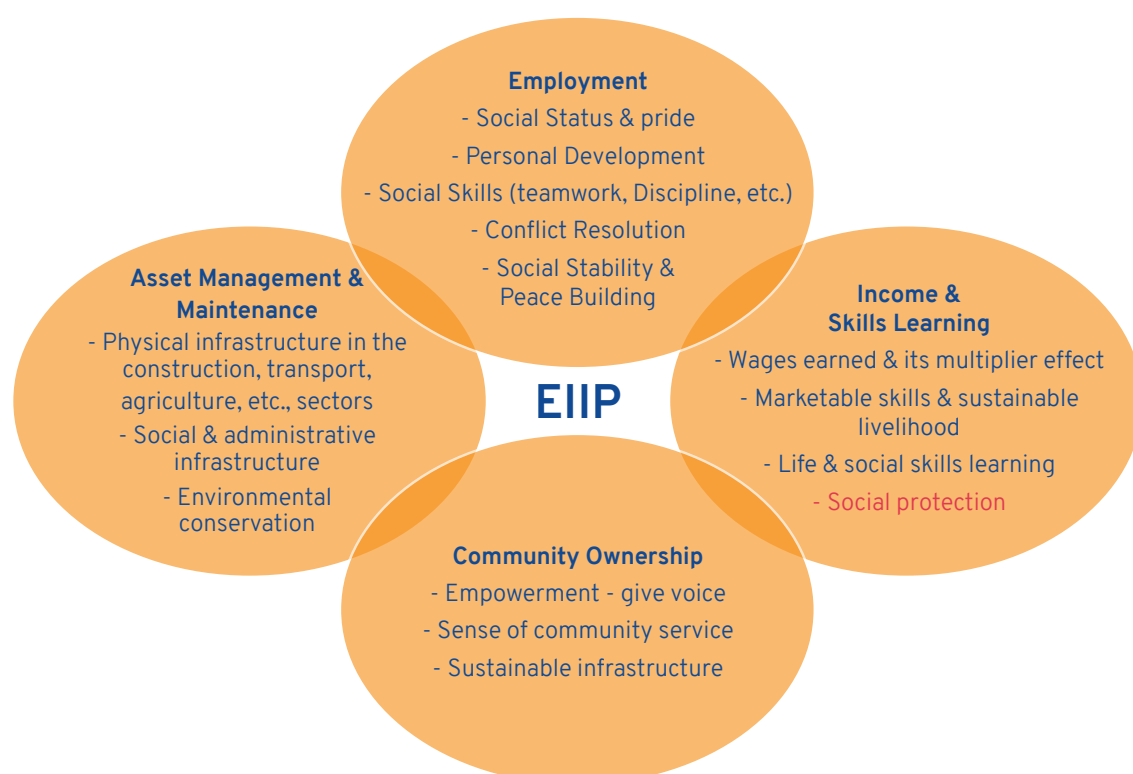
5 Employment Intensive Investments Programme

In time of disaster, many workers lose their jobs, businesses collapse and social coping mechanisms are stretched to their limits. Strengthening the world of work is therefore very crucial in order to promote/create decent employment and income-generation opportunities, improving access to basic social services and social protection particularly the most vulnerable people. The Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) is a means to deliver these essential ingredients of disaster response and recovery.

The EIIP is one of ILO's vehicles to promote full and productive employment and decent work. The programme was

introduced in early 70's to address rising un/under-employment & declining wage rates and was basically intended to influence public/private investments, in job-rich sector (e.g., infrastructure dev.), in order to maximize employment outcomes for the poor. The programme promotes Rights-based approach in all stages of implementation cycle to ensure equal opportunities and treatment to men and women, PWDs and those affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. The EIIP is rolled out through knowledge development, capacity building and technical advisory services at policy, institutional and operational levels. The main benefits of EIIP can be summarised as follows:

Figure 5.1: EIIP Concept and Benefits



The EIIP is among the first respondents in conflict and disaster situations and supports countries in their relief and reconstruction efforts. In addition to delivering durable public infrastructure, the

EIIP promotes job creation as a quick entry point for more sustainable livelihood development. It also helps in jumpstarting the local economies and restore the livelihood of the disaster victims.





6 Guiding principles on protection against COVID-19

Public Works programmes rely on labour as the primary resource in favour of capital. Over and above the occupational and infectious diseases, COVID-19 presents additional challenges to such programmes. Project workers are potentially exposed to risks of the pathogen at home, during transit to and from work as well as at the place of work. In order to slow down the spread of the disease, measures should be taken to reduce exposure to the workers at their residences, during transportation and at the workplace.

The safety and health provision in the workplace are normally guided by national or sectoral Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) policies and regulation, which are in turn informed by the ILO Code of practice on Safety and Health in Construction of 1992[1]. The objective of this code is to provide practical guidance on a legal, administrative, technical and educational framework for safety and health in construction with a view to:

- (a) preventing accidents and diseases and harmful effects on the health of workers arising from employment in construction;
- (b) ensuring appropriate design and implementation of construction projects;
- (c) providing means of analysing from the point of view of safety, health

and working conditions, construction processes, activities, technologies and operations, and of taking appropriate measures of planning, control and enforcement.

The code also provides guidance in the implementation of the provisions of the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), and the Safety and Health in Construction Recommendation, 1988 (No. 175).

The General impact and spread of any pandemic in the workplace can be minimised by strict adherence to OSH regulations including⁴:

1. **Registration of workplaces:** in accordance to national regulation and must be completed prior to occupying working premises and commencing work.
2. **Preparation of Safety and Health Policy:** An employer (or occupier) must prepare, and revise as often as necessary, a “statement describing his general policy with respect to the safety and health at work of his employees, the organisation and arrangements as well as enforcement mechanism” for carrying out the policy. The safety and health policy will likely contain the general principles and rules

⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_107826.pdf

that will guide future actions to limit risks to the safety, health and welfare of all persons, worker and non-worker alike.

3. **Appointment of Safety Supervisors/Officers:** employers must appoint a safety supervisor/officers to carry out workplace duties related to employee safety and health, coordinate first aid and serve as liaison between employers and workers.
4. **Provision of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Equipment is to protect a worker from specific job-related hazards, the PPE package issued to a worker must be specific to the hazard associated with the task. List of typical PPE is attached in Annexure I. Recent experiences has shown that construction grade PPEs (masks, gloves, etc.) can be used as protection against the transmission of COVID-19.

These provisions, however, must be reviewed and safety protocols updated to cater for COVID-19 particularly relating to provision of basic hygiene facilities (sanitizers, body-washing and ablution facilities, etc.) and social distancing.

There is also need to assess and mitigate the impact of the virus at all levels of a Programme/Project Life Cycle. In the short-term, adequate protection measures should be instituted in the programme/project implementation and monitoring processes, which will then be incorporated in the national and sectoral policies in the longer-term.

The following are some the key measures

to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

6.1 Compliance with the National Governments and WHO Guidelines

In response to the escalation and spread to a pandemic of COVID-19, Governments across the globe have set up Guidelines for the management of the disease. These Guidelines are modelled around the WHO's response to the pandemic. WHO has also developed several other easy to use guides for use in the workplace and at home. It is, therefore, very important that all programme managers, service providers (contractors and consultants) and workers strictly comply with all the above Guidelines to ensure the effective management and control of COVID-19.

6.2 Programme/Project Management

All Implementing/client Bodies and their Service Providers (Contractors, Sub-Contractors, Consultants and Suppliers) should review project/contract documents and service agreements and align their operations to conform to all recommended COVID-19 management and control measures. This may entail, amongst others, review and update:

1. Project implementations plans, work organisation on site (including transportation of workers) and Risk Registers;
2. Resource and budgetary provisions (including protection of workers' incomes);
3. Allowing the contractor to claim relief in the form of an extension

- of time or reimbursement of its loss and expense arising from the COVID-19 emergency
4. Provision for the possible suspension of works or termination due to the impact of the COVID-19 emergency.
 5. Ensure that all workers and stakeholders are kept well informed at all stages of the COVID- 19 Response plans;
 6. OSH requirements;
 7. Provision of additional hygiene facilities including isolation centres;
 8. Provision of COVID-19 related training of all workers and affected communities; and
 9. Formalise paid COVID-19 sick leave to ensure income security for those who are sick, quarantined or caring for COVID-19 sick children, elderly or other family members.

Ideally, it is advisable to keep projects in operation in many countries given the socioeconomic challenges including lack of alternative income, lack of decent housing and hygiene facilities as well as poor access to information. Projects can be used to mitigate some of these challenges by providing workers with COVID-19 training and basic PPEs. However, in the event of a Government instituting medium or long-term movement restrictions, the Programme Managers must comply according stop all operations. The Managers should also develop Business Continuity Plans to ensure the protection of completed works and the safekeeping of Equipment, Tools, Materials and Project Premises. Client Bodies may also involve Service Providers and some workers in

emergency activities related to COVID-19 management of the pandemic.

Adversely affected workers and Service Providers should be registered with relevant authorities in order to benefit from available measures set up by Governments to mitigate loss of income and livelihood. Among key issues that parties may wish to consider is whether their contract:

- Allows the contractor to claim relief in the form of an extension of time or reimbursement of its loss and expense arising from the COVID-19 emergency.
- Provides for the suspension of works or termination due to the impact of the COVID-19 emergency.

Initially the virus was “imported” into respective countries by people with a foreign travel history. These are predominantly people with relatively higher income who live in low-density urban areas. At the onset of the pandemic low-density urban areas reported higher incidences of COVID-19 cases whilst higher density urban areas and rural communities reported very few if not no cases at all. Programme Managers should therefore put measures in place to limit movement of Project Staff and workers between areas with high cases of the disease and those with limited or no cases. This will slow down the spread of the virus and protect workers and vulnerable communities.

6.3 Payment of Wages

Exchange of money (cash) may pose a risk of increased transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19, due to fact

that it attaches itself to surfaces (coins and notes) and remains active for long periods of time. Health Authorities in several countries have already deemed cash transactions as a risk in the transmission of the pathogen. Whenever possible, projects must minimise payment of wages and allowances to workers in cash. Instead, workers should be assisted to open bank accounts with lowest maintenance fees possible so that wages may be paid through direct deposits or wire transfers. Other cashless modes of payment to be considered include Mobile money facilities and use of payment intermediaries.

Some countries use eGovernment platforms to deliver online services to business which can be adopted to continue providing essential services during COVID-19 lockdown and/or to facilitate cashless payments to service providers and workers alike.

6.4 Conflict Resolution

The COVID-19 pandemic may cause a lot of anxiety, fear and strong emotions among workers and service providers due to potential loss of income and business prospects. This may in turn lead to disgruntlement and conflict between workers and employers as well as service providers and their clients. It is, therefore, very crucial to put an effective conflict resolution mechanism and social dialogue that is anchored to the recognition of human rights, fair play and the need for social protection.

6.5 Provision of Personal Protective Equipment

All workers shall be issued with appropriate PPEs to ensure protection from

the usual occupational hazards as well as COVID-19. In general it is known that normal construction PPEs also offer protection against COVID-19 and must be provided on all projects. At the minimum workers must be provided with facemask, tissues and hand sanitizers in accordance with the WHO recommendations.

No PPEs should be shared among workers under any circumstances. Some PPEs such as face masks should be sanitised and regularly replaced. Work suits and overalls shall be washed regularly in order to control transmission. Where feasible, all PPEs will be cleaned, sanitised and stored in the workplace to reduce transmission of pathogens between residential areas and the workplace. Provisions for these measures shall be included in Contracts with Service Providers and their Sub-Contractors.

Exchange amongst workers of certain PPEs (such as masks, gloves, googles and foot wear) is discouraged as much as possible. Single use PPE should not be used multiple times.

6.6 Project Support Services

During the course of the pandemic, Office and Support Services will be adversely affected. Offices may be intermittently closed and/or staff may work on a rotational basis. Other staff may have to telework and hence responses to inquiries from the field may be slower thus affecting project delivery. If a Lockdown is ordered only a small corps of select critical staff will be readily available to support projects. Thus project delivery may be slower and extreme due care should be taken to ensure that quality is not compromised.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has developed a simple guideline⁵ on how workplaces can prepare for the pandemic. The link to this Guideline has been included in Section X: “References for potential adaption and use by Implementing Bodies and Service Providers”.

6.7 Worker and Community awareness measures

Programme Managers should arrange Social facilitation measures to educate the workers and their communities on the COVID-19 virus. All appropriate media shall be employed in this regard including radio, television, text messaging, fliers, Billboards and loudhailers. Workers shall attend mini-workshops and briefings, in line with social distancing requirements, in order to understand the transmission mechanism and symptoms of COVID-19. The workers shall, therefore, be able to self-evaluate before departing for work so that if they exhibit any of the symptoms they can self-quarantine and contact the Health Authorities. When at work, workers who develop symptoms should immediately retreat to the designated quarantine points and await medical attention.

Workers who reside in households where any one person in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is diagnosed to be COVID-19 positive should not report to work and ideally should self-quarantine and contact Health Authorities.

6.8 Temperature Screening and other measures

All workers, who after self-evaluation consider themselves non-infected and

fit for work, should be screened for fever upon arrival at work or at pick-up points if the Service Provider is responsible for their transportation to the place of work. Those workers with fever symptoms shall be separated immediately, from other workers, and directed to self-quarantine and seek medical assistance.

The physical addresses and contact telephone numbers of such workers, with fever symptoms, are to be recorded and conveyed to the Health Authorities within two-hours of such screening.

Implementing Bodies (Contracting Entities) shall take all the necessary steps to establish processes to meet and enforce this requirement including, but not limited to, procurement of the necessary non-contact thermometers and training for all those responsible for screening (ideally OSH Officers). Service Providers shall also be required to take random observations of workers to ensure maintenance of appropriate social distancing measures and proper use of PPEs during work, as well as identifying and separating any workers who may show symptoms of any illness in the course of work. The Project Managers and Service Providers shall report such incidents to Local Health Authorities and comply with their recommendations which may include the isolation some or all of the workers concerned.

Service Providers shall submit a signed solemn undertaking that they will conform to this requirement. Employees of Service Providers are expected to undergo a similar regime of screening measures.

⁵ <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/advice-for-workplace-clean-19-03-2020.pdf>

6.9 Transportation of participants

Mass transportation of workers shall be minimised unless unavoidable. Workers should ideally be recruited within 5 km walking distance of the project work areas where practicable. Where transportation is inevitable, appropriate measures including, but not limited to, vehicle ventilation, disinfection, sanitisation, social distancing and other measures recommended by the Health Authorities shall be adopted.

Transportation vehicles shall be sanitised at least after each round trip.

6.10 Supply of Goods and Materials

The Service Providers shall ensure that all their suppliers adhere to strict requirements of the control of the spread of COVID-19. Their premises and vehicles shall be sanitised as necessary. Workers handling goods and materials shall be provided with the appropriate PPEs including facemasks, gloves, boots and eye protection.

6.11 Hygiene Measures

The Client Bodies shall put measures in place to ensure that all Service Providers and Contracting Companies provide the necessary facilities to ensure that all workers are able to exercise a high level of hygiene. These measures shall include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Ensuring that all Immovable Facilities, tools and equipment are kept clean and hygienic.

- (b) Tools and Equipment shall be sanitised before issue as well as upon return to the storage facilities.
- (c) Ablution facilities shall be kept clean and hygienic. They shall be sanitised every two hours during working time. Workers shall have access to hand washing facilities or alternatively a sanitiser with a minimum of 60% alcohol content within a maximum walking distance of 100 metres throughout the working hours.
- (d) All surfaces, tools and equipment that are subject to touch by multiple users shall be wiped down with water, soap and/or sanitising fluid regularly during working time.
- (e) Where feasible, body-washing facilities shall be provided for the workers.
- (f) Where feasible, facilities for washing protective clothing shall be provided for the workers to avoid potential transfer of the pathogens between the workplace and residential areas.
- (g) All workers without access to reliable water supply systems shall be issued with hand sanitisers for their own and family use.
- (h) Sufficient supplies and materials, including tissues and hand sanitisers should be made available in adequate quantities for all workers.
- (i) Face masks shall be made available to offer anyone who develops respiratory symptoms in the course of work. Face masks are on projects to protect workers not only from respiratory diseases but also from dust, fumes and other harmful par-

ticles. It is therefore necessary to encourage workers to use them at all times. It is important to provide workers with appropriate masks for the work to be done and operational environmental conditions.

- (j) Quarantine facilities shall be made available for any project personnel with suspected symptoms of COVID-19 and awaiting medical care.
- (k) Workers with certain underlying conditions should be made aware of their higher risk of developing complications upon contracting COVID-19 so that they take the necessary extra precautions in accordance with relevant guidelines from the Health Authorities.

6.12 Programme/Project Meetings and Events

Large meetings and events are restricted and discouraged as these pose a risk in the transmission of the virus. For example, Disaster Management Regulations in South Africa prohibit meetings and events of 100 people or more at the beginning of the pandemic, which has since been revised downwards. Other countries have also instituted even more stringent regulations for public gatherings. It is, therefore, recommended that as much as is possible, Managers are encouraged to make use of information communication technologies (ICT) such as online training and virtual meeting platforms.

Where meetings or events are unavoidable,

the following guidelines recommended by WHO be adhered to:

- Advice from the Health Authorities related to the venue and locality of the meeting should be sought beforehand.
- A COVID-19 preparedness plan⁶ should be developed to prevent infection at the meeting or event.
- A response plan should be developed in case someone at the meeting becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19. This plan should include at least:
 - Details of a temporary isolation room/area.
 - A plan for the safe transfer of a patient from the meeting to a health facility or designated quarantine facility.
 - A plan for tracking meeting participants should a participant test positive for COVID-19.
 - An Agreement with a partner healthcare provider or Health Authorities for support in case of an emergency.
 - Provide information or a briefing, orally and in writing, on COVID-19 and the measures that organizers are taking to make this event safe for participants.
- Have dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub prominently around the venue.
- Arrange seats so that participants are at least one metre apart.

⁶ <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/advice-for-workplace-clean-19-03-2020.pdf>

- Ensure the venue is well ventilated.
- If any participants become ill, follow your preparedness plan or call your hotline.
- After the meeting:
 - Retain the names and contact details of all participants for at least one month. Also take photographs of the event showing the sitting arrangements of participants. This will help public health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 if one or more participants become ill shortly after the event. To ensure compliance with privacy requirements it is recommended to secure written consent from workers that they will be photographed during the course of their employment for health compliance reasons.
 - If someone at the meeting or event was isolated as a suspected COVID-19 case, the organizers should let all participants know about this. They should be advised to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days and check their temperature twice a day if feasible.
 - If they develop even a mild cough or low-grade fever (i.e. a temperature of 37.3 degrees Celsius or more) they should stay at home and self-isolate. This means avoiding close contact with other people, including family members. They should also telephone their healthcare provider or the local public

health authorities, giving them details of their recent travel and symptoms.

6.13 Site Work Organisation

As far as is technically feasible, the individual Task work system shall be adopted for most activities implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ideally, no Group Task work is employed during this time. However, in case a Group Task is unavoidable and workers work in close proximity of each other, then workers must be provided with adequate personal protective equipment including face masks, full side shielded eye protection and gloves.

Large projects shall split their workforce to small teams not exceeding the maximum number recommended by the Health Authorities to work in different sections of the project to minimise interaction within groups. Where feasible Project Managers can introduce shift work.

All of the workers shall observe the minimum recommended social distance from each other and work on individual tasks. As a rule of thumb, in work sites the recommended minimum social distance shall be calculated as follows:

Minimum social distance in work sites: shall be computed as the higher of (a) the recommended spacing for a given task, OR (b) two (2) metres. For this purpose, the social distance shall be defined as the clear spacing between adjacent workers standing at ease

As far as it is technically feasible, workers should not work downwind of other

workers. Where this is not feasible, those working downwind of other workers shall increase their social distance as recommended by the Health Authorities or WHO and be equipped with all the necessary PPEs.

6.14 Food Service Providers

Service Providers shall ensure that all entities that supply food to their workforce comply with the Health Authorities' COVID-19 health and hygiene standards to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus and any other foodborne diseases.

Small-scale vendors supplying food to project workers should be made aware of the COVID-19 management and protection requirements.

6.15 COVID-19 Fear and Stigma

The rapid spread of the Coronavirus and the unprecedented measures being taken by Governments to manage the pandemic on the one side, coupled with limited awareness about the disease is causing a certain level of anxiety and fear in many communities. This in turn has resulted

in unwarranted stigmatisation of some victims. Programme Managers should therefore work towards mitigating this through information sharing, awareness creation and training programmes, peer education and active community engagement.

Cases of workers who are infected or affected by COVID-19 and their families should be handled with utmost care and their privacy protected, and should be supported without stigma and discriminations. This could include persons who have recently travelled to an area reporting cases, or other personnel who have conditions that put them at higher risk of serious illness (e.g. diabetes, heart and lung disease, older age).

6.16 Penalties for non-compliance

Client Bodies shall be required to incorporate these provisions in project and contracts documents as well specific Agreements with Service Providers. As appropriate, financial and legal penalties for non-compliance shall be included in these agreements in line with the prevailing legislation and regulations.



7 Other Considerations

In addition to the above general measures applicable in most situations, there may be a need to consider mitigation measures depending on the type and severity of COVID-19 in different countries' context. Two scenarios are envisaged, namely, where there is partial restriction of movement is instituted, and the second where a complete Lockdown is put in place (total restriction of movement). Furthermore, medium and long-term mitigation measures should be considered and adequately planned for.

7.1 Impacts and Mitigations during Partial and Complete Lockdown

During level one restrictions, project operations will be allowed to continue, albeit with strict measures to ensure the protection of workers and society. In the second level, only critical activities will be allowed primarily to support Public Health operations. Annexure II shows the typical activities during project operations and how they may be affected under the two scenarios.

7.2 Immediate aftermath of the Lockdown

There are indications that COVID-19 will affect 40-70% of the global workforce⁷. It is also concerning that although normally people gain immunity after recovering from a viral infection, it is still not

100% clear that this will be the case with COVID-19. There may therefore be a protracted lingering threat from the virus.

On the other hand, many countries in the region may not be able to maintain full/partial restriction of movement long enough to overcome the disease in the short term. This would mean workers will still be working under the threat of virus once normal work resumes and the risk of community transfer of the disease may still remain high. Therefore, COVID-19 protection measures shall become an absolute necessity with potential increase of OSH and other operational costs.

The measures of COVID-19 protection recommended herein will have to be at the very least maintained but, ideally, improved.

7.3 Medium to long-term impacts

Over and above the health and socio-economic impacts, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the rampant inequality in terms of access to basic infrastructure, including decent housing, water and sanitation, health services and access roads. Production and Supply chains across the globe have already been disrupted which will likely lead to a possible global economic recession, exacerbating the already high unemployment and underemployment in many developing countries. No country

⁷ https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/impacts-and-responses/WCMS_739048/lang--en/index.htm

seems to be immune from these shocks. There will be pressure on the Governments to intervene in improving the labour markets through job creating initiatives and support to businesses.

The pandemic also tested the disaster preparedness and response of many counties. Local Authorities in charge of high-density urban settlements, peri-urban and rural areas have no/limited capacity to absorb and recover from such shocks within a reasonable time. Poor planning and infrastructure shortfalls in these areas need to be addressed in order to improve the resilience and livelihoods of affected communities. Communities should be empowered through targeted training and availing the necessary resources in order to be able to actively participate in managing similar pandemics. Reducing inequalities (income disparities, lack of access to basic services, etc.) and gradually building the coping mechanisms and resilience of the most vulnerable communities is the only sure way of minimizing the impact of disasters like COVID-19 pandemic. This in turn requires countries to take deliberate measures ranging from policy, institutional to programme management levels.

The following are some of the key upstream policy measures that are necessary to address the aforementioned challenges:

- Realign macroeconomic and investment policies to address inequalities in terms of distribution of basic infrastructure and social services in line with National priorities and SDG Goals.
- Strengthen pro-employment policies, strategies and programmes to build resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable communities.
- Strengthen institutional capacity of National and Local Authorities in disaster preparedness and response in terms of human and material resources as well as development of technical and management tools.
- Public works implementing bodies adapt and implement Employment Intensive Investment approach as a means to creating jobs, skills learning and business opportunities for vulnerable communities as well as creating durable public assets.

- Adapt inclusive Public Procurement Policies and Regulations to increase the productive participation of youth, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the delivery of development programmes.
- Review and update OSH Policies and Regulations to cater for natural or man-made disasters and their impacts in the workplace and then enforce their use in all public works programmes.
- Mainstream Social (Gender, decent working conditions, community participation etc.) and Environmental safeguards in all public works programmes.
- Targeted financial support and Tax relief for Emerging Contractors and SMMEs engaged in public works programmes in times of disaster.

The above measures are in line with National Priorities of many countries and SDG goals. National and Local Authorities, Programme Managers and Practitioners in charge of Public Works are encouraged to advocate for the realisation of these measures.



WHO estimates: Up to 190 000 people could die of COVID-19 in Africa if not controlled



References

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- (5) WHO, *Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19*, 19 March 2020 (<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/advice-for-workplace-clean-19-03-2020.pdf>.) [Accessed 3 April 2020]
- (6) Surico P. and Galeotti A., 2020, *The economics of a pandemic: the case of COVID-19 (Presentation)*, LSE London.
- (7) The Citizen, 2020, *De Lille's plan to engage 20,400 workers to help fight virus* (<https://citizen.co.za/news/covid-19/2260439/de-lilles-plan-to-engage-20400-workers-to-help-fight-virus/>) [Accessed 3 April 2020]
- (8) Guidelines for the implementation of Labour-Intensive infrastructure projects under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), 2015.



Annexure I: Typical PPEs for construction works

NOTE:

Reference to any branded product is purely for **illustration only** and does not imply endorsement.

Personal Protective Equipment			
Road-Construction or Road-Maintenance Workers			
Item		Purpose	Specifications
Particulate Respirator		To protect the respiratory system (nose, throat and lungs) from particulate matter including fugitive dust and airborne crusher fines	• Suitable for use in stone quarrying and cement handling; • Moulded nose bridge seals easily without a metal nose band; • Naturally contoured face piece relieves pressure points; • Flame retardants are added to the shell to help decrease flammability; and • Filter efficiency level of 95% or greater against airborne particulates free of oil.
Particulate Respirator		To protect the respiratory system (nose, throat and lungs) from particulate matter including fugitive dust and airborne crusher fines	• Suited for work settings that involve heat, humidity, or long periods of wear; • Use for dry chemical handling, surface preparation, processing of minerals and certain other substances; • Low profile collapse resistant design, exhalation valve and a soft nose foam pad; and • Filter efficiency level of 95% or greater against particulate aerosols free of oil.
Vapour Respirator		To protect the respiratory system (nose, throat and lungs) from organic vapours including bitumen vapours and toxic chemical aerosols	• Use for protection from certain organic vapours such as prolonged exposure to vapours emitted by bitumen; • Use in a variety of workplace applications, including chemical and construction; and • Entire unit, including chemical cartridges, are disposable.

Personal Protective Equipment			
Road-Construction or Road-Maintenance Workers			
Item		Purpose	Specifications
Safety Helmet		To protect the head from falling or propelled objects; striking one's head on overhead structures; and physically contacting energy sources up to 650V	• Durable injection-moulded, high-density polyethylene; • Adjustable crown straps and suspension system to allow air circulation; • Type I hard hat intended to reduce the force of impact resulting from a blow to the top of the head; and • Type II hard hat intended to protect against both side impact and blows to the top of the head.
High Visibility Vest		To increase the wearer's visibility while at work on the job site and along travelled roadways	• Standard colours: fluorescent orange or green; • Reflective material; • Lengthwise reflective silver stripes; and • Standard flexible mesh for added comfort in hot, humid weather.
Leather Safety Boot		To protect the foot from injury due to falling objects, cuts and punctures, abrasions, slipping and splashed hazardous liquids	• Lacing leather work boot with dual density polyurethane sole; • Steel toe cap; • Steel midsole for underfoot protection; and, • Resistant to oil and slipping

Personal Protective Equipment			
Road-Construction or Road-Maintenance Workers			
Item		Purpose	Specifications
Rubber Safety Boot		To protect the head from falling or propelled objects; striking one's head on overhead structures; and physically contacting energy sources up to 650V	- Durable injection-moulded, high-density polyethylene; - Adjustable crown straps and suspension system to allow air circulation; - Type I hard hat intended to reduce the force of impact resulting from a blow to the top of the head; and - Type II hard hat intended to protect against both side impact and blows to the top of the head.
Ear Muffs		To increase the wearer's visibility while at work on the job site and along travelled roadways	- Standard colours: fluorescent orange or green; - Reflective material; - Lengthwise reflective silver stripes; and - Standard flexible mesh for added comfort in hot, humid weather.
Safety Helmet/Ear Muffs		To protect the foot from injury due to falling objects, cuts and punctures, abrasions, slipping and splashed hazardous liquids	- Lacing leather work boot with dual density polyurethane sole; - Steel toe cap; - Steel midsole for underfoot protection; and, - Resistant to oil and slipping
Ear Plugs		To protect the ears from permanent injury caused by high single-event noise levels or continuous exposure to moderately high noise levels	- Foam for one-time only use; - Non-irritating, smooth surface for comfort; - Tapered for easy ear insertion; - Bright green colour for compliance checks; and - NRR 33.

Personal Protective Equipment			
Road-Construction or Road-Maintenance Workers			
Item		Purpose	Specifications
Ear Plugs		To protect the ears from permanent injury caused by high single-event noise levels or continuous exposure to moderately high noise levels	• TPE (thermoplastic elastomer, mix of rubber and plastic) for multiple use (if properly washed and dried, can be worn daily for 2-4 weeks); • Soft flanges offer a better fit in the ear canal; • Blue colour for compliance checks; and • NRR 27.
Safety Goggles		To protect the eyes from exposure to hazardous substances, corrosive materials and airborne particles (large and small)	• Standard goggle design with ventilation system; • Adjustable, flexible head-band; • UV (ultraviolet or invisible light rays with a wavelength shorter than that of visible light but longer than that of x-rays) protection; • Resistant to liquid (chemical) splash, large dust particles and molten materials; • Resistant to medium impacts; and • Replaceable lens.
Safety Glasses		To protect the eyes from exposure to hazardous substances and/or corrosive materials and limited protection from particulate matter (large and small particles)	• Cowhide leather palm; • Leather fingertips, knuckle bands and full-leather index finger; • Cotton lining to keep hands cool and comfortable; and • Safety cuff (6 cm) to protect wrists.

Personal Protective Equipment			
Road-Construction or Road-Maintenance Workers			
Item		Purpose	Specifications
Work Gloves		To protect the hands and wrists from injury due to impacts, abrasion and contact with corrosive and/or hazardous materials	• Foam for one-time only use; • Non-irritating, smooth surface for comfort; • Tapered for easy ear insertion; • Bright green colour for compliance checks; and • NRR 33.
Work Gloves		To protect the hands, wrists and forearms from injury due to contact with corrosive and/or hazardous materials	• Nitrile rubber for protection from contact with chemicals including bitumen; • Gauntlet length (35.5cms long) to protect against skin contact from splashes; • Embossed surface for secure grip; • Resistant to heat up to 100°C; • Resistant to abrasion, cuts, tears and puncture; and • Cotton lined to wick moisture from hands.



Annexure II: COVID-19 Workplace Scenarios Checklist

Item	Description	Restricted	Comment	Lockdown	Comment
Off-site activities					
1	Social facilitation and community awareness campaign.	✓	With compliance to rules on mass gathering.	Limited	Through radio, television, online and social media
2	Exercising self-hygiene for the workers and their households.	✓		✓	
3	All workers eligible to work.	✓	A small proportion of workers may be laid off.	✗	Only a select group of workers to remain at work.
4	Worker self-evaluation and self-quarantine.	✓		✓	
5	Workers who have members of their households displaying symptoms or having been diagnosed with COVID-19 shall be excluded from the workforce. They shall self-quarantine and report to the relevant Authorities.	✓		✓	
6	Screenings – at pickup points and on site.	✓		✓	Workers with underlying diseases, including diabetes, heart and lung disease, to be excluded from the workforce.
7	Travel to work sites on foot.	✓	Observe social distance.	✓	With written authority from the Contracting Authority. Observe social distance.

Item	Description	Restricted	Comment	Lockdown	Comment
8	Group transportation to work sites.	✓	Preference given to workers closest to the work site. Observe social distance. Disinfection and sanitisation of vehicles on every round trip.	✓	Observe social distance. Disinfection and sanitisation of vehicles on every round trip.
9	Transfer of workers with symptoms to health centres or State designated Quarantine facilities.	✓		✓	
10	Online and or Social Media awareness training for all classes of Project Staff and Workers including short videos.	✓		✓	
On-site activities					
11	Programme and Project Managers to continually monitor health of all Project Staff and Participants. Participants who exhibit any health symptoms associated with COVID-19 to be immediately separated from all other Project Personnel and reported to the relevant health authorities.	✓		✓	
12	Site inspections may be reduced.	✓		✓	
13	Ad-hoc screening.	✓		✓	
14	Disinfection and sanitisation of Facilities, tools, equipment, delivered goods and materials.	✓		✓	

Item	Description	Restricted	Comment	Lockdown	Comment
15	Workers to be divided to teams of 100 or less preferably 50 or less where feasible.	✓		✓	Smaller Teams of 50 or less recommended.
16	Provision of appropriate PPEs.	✓		✓	
17	Individual task work construction activities.	✓		✓	
18	Limited group task construction activities where individual task work is not practicable.	✓		✓	
19	Provision of ablution and self-hygiene facilities.	✓		✓	
20	Food vending complying with Department of Health requirements.	✓		✗	Contracting Authority to arrange subsistence.
Restricted activities					
21	Meetings, construction teams or events with more than one hundred (100) participants.	✓		✗	

PREVENTION OF COVID-19



WASH HANDS

Wash your hands frequently – including every time you enter the home or office

HAND SANITIZER

Use an alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol content) hand rub if possible, otherwise wash with soap.

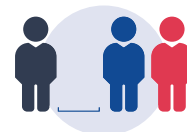


WEAR MASK

Everyone should wear a cloth face-mask when in public. Commuters travelling in taxis and other forms of public transport, as well as people spending time in spaces where physical distancing is difficult to practice, are particularly encouraged to wear cloth face-masks.

SOCIAL DISTANCE

The term “social distancing” basically means one needs to keep their distance from others. This includes avoiding public spaces such as malls, the work place, and of course, social events as well as recreational areas where others usually gather.



Keep a distance of at least two metres from others.



AVOID HANDSHAKE

One needs to avoid handshakes, hugs and other forms of direct contact.

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