



**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL
REFORMS MAURITIUS**

16 August 2021

Circular Letter No 36 of 2021
E/152/75/22/01A V3

From: Secretary for Public Service

To : Supervising Officers in charge of Ministries/Departments

**Updated Protocol on Measures to be taken in the event of suspected cases
of Coronavirus**

Please refer to this Ministry's Circular No. 17 issued on 26 April 2021 to all Ministries and Departments regarding the measures to be taken whenever there is a suspected case of COVID-19 infection and the procedures to be followed for cleaning and disinfecting premises.

2. In the light of new developments, the protocol has been reviewed in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Henceforth, the procedures laid down therein will have to be closely followed in the event of a suspected case of Covid-19 infection. A copy of the updated protocol is enclosed.
3. Supervising Officers are kindly requested to stand guided by the revised protocol whenever a suspected case of Covid-19 infection is reported and disseminate the enclosed protocol to the Local Authorities, Parastatal Bodies and State-Owned Enterprises falling under the aegis of your Ministry.
4. I rely on your usual collaboration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Boyramboli'.

B. Boyramboli
Secretary for Public Service

Copy to: Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service

What to do if you were potentially exposed to coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

1. How people can be exposed to COVID-19



If you've been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or begin to experience symptoms of the disease, you may be asked to isolate.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms. When the virus causes symptoms, common ones include fever, body ache, dry cough, fatigue, chills, headache, sore throat, loss of appetite, and loss of smell. In some people, COVID-19 causes more severe symptoms like high fever, severe cough, and shortness of breath, which often indicates pneumonia.

People with COVID-19 may also experience neurological symptoms, gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms, or both. These may occur with or without respiratory symptoms.

2. Close contact with someone with COVID-19



Close contact means:

- *Being within 2 metres of a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, including travelling in a vehicle, or*
- *Having direct exposure to respiratory secretions (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing a drinking glass or utensils, kissing), or*
- *Caring for a person who has COVID-19, or*
- *Living with a person who has COVID-19. Close face-to-face contact (under 1 metre) for any length of time – including talking to them or coughing on them.*

Employees who have been in close contact with someone tested positive with COVID-19 need to follow the procedures set at **Annex 1** or **Annex 2** as the case may be.

Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people infected with COVID-19 from those who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay at home until it is safe for them to be around others as per the recommendations of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

Self –Isolation

Self-isolation refers to a voluntary act of home-based quarantine by any person who **might** have been exposed to COVID-19 to contain the possible spread of COVID-19.

VACCINATION



Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases, before they come into contact with them. It uses your body's natural defenses to build resistance to specific infections such as COVID-19 and makes your immune system stronger.

An individual is considered **Fully Vaccinated**:

- ✓ 2 weeks after the second dose in a 2-dose vaccines; or
- ✓ 4 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as **Johnson & Johnson's Janssen** vaccine

If these requirements are not met, the individual is **NOT** considered to be **Fully Vaccinated**.

3. Steps to take if you had close contact with someone with COVID-19

- *Prior to resuming work ,inform your organization, the Head of Department, of your exposure.Proceed according to the advice given.*
- *Do not come to work. Do not take public transportation or taxis.*
- *Stay home and away from others. Avoid contact with others to avoid spreading COVID-19.*
- *Stay separate from sick members in the household as much as possible.*
- *Avoid sharing the same space within the home, including being in the same room.*

Protect others. Separate yourself at home in a specific room away from other people and animals. Use a separate bathroom if possible. This is called self-isolation or home isolation.

- Avoid sharing household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, they should be washed well with soap and water or laundered and dried.
- Wear a mask when you have to be in the same room with other people or animals in your home and keep as much distance as possible between yourself and others. Put on a mask before going to medical appointments.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in a covered bin with disposable bag. Wash your hands right after.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together for at least 30 seconds until they feel dry.

Get tested. Contact the Ministry of Health and Wellness on 8924 for necessary advice.

- *Get tested immediately with a **COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test** as advised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoH&W).*
- *If you develop symptoms, you should get tested immediately, even if you already had a negative test as advised by MoH&W.*
- *When fully vaccinated even if you do not have symptoms and your COVID-19 test is **positive**, you will need to self-isolate as per advice of the Health Authorities and continue to **monitor** your symptoms for the full 14 days.*

4. Standard Operating procedures to access building and premises.



Organizations are recommended to establish effective controls at all points of entry before granting access to their premises. This comprises amongst others, arrangements for checking the temperature of their employees as well as for visitors before granting them access to the building. (*Refer to Annex 1*)



An employee showing a temperature above **37.8 degrees Celsius (°C)** would be denied access and if he/she is displaying certain symptoms of Covid-19 such as runny nose, dry cough, and/or shortness of breath the employee should be isolated and referred to Health Authorities as soon as possible for appropriate medical examination.

- In the event the condition of the employee necessitates rapid transfer to a medical institution or to home, the organization should make appropriate travel arrangements for the safe evacuation of the employee considering physical distancing measures in the vehicle used for transporting the employee.
- Vehicles used should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before being used again.
- Any visitor showing a temperature of **37.8 degree Celsius (°C)** or above will not be allowed access to the work premises.

5. What to do in the event of a suspected case of Covid-19 infection?



- Isolate immediately any employee who is feeling unwell or has symptoms from the workplace to an Isolation room or area while preparing for future course of action.
- Organise for the employee to undergo a **COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test**.
- An employee with suspected Covid-19 infection (sometimes fever, sore throat, dry cough) should be:
 - ✓ *Informed to proceed as per the advice of the Health Authorities through the Hotline **8924***
 - ✓ *Encouraged to isolate himself/herself immediately so as not to infect others around him/her while waiting to be tested.*
 - ✓ *Advised to undertake a **COVID-19 RAPID ANTIGEN TEST**. If test positive proceed as per **Annex 1** or **Annex 2** as may be the case or as instructed by the Health Authorities.*
- Identify all those who may have been in contact with the affected person (in office and outside in the course of his duties if possible), tell them they have been in contact with a suspected infection, and ask them to undergo a Rapid Antigen Test.
- Keep records of other employees who have been in contact with the affected person in case COVID-19 is confirmed and there are wider requirements to self-isolate.

- Ensure that the areas, the affected person has been in, are either isolated or cleaned and disinfected, giving particular attention to equipment, frequently touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, button for lifts) and common areas.
- Ensure that those employees performing the cleaning or disinfection of affected areas are using appropriate PPE and following agreed safe working operating practices.
- Arrange for employees to resume work as per advice tendered by the MoH&W.

6. Cleaning and disinfecting the immediate workspace/area when someone has a covid-19 diagnosis.



Step 1. Close off areas used by the person

Step 2. Open outside doors and windows and use fans or other engineering controls to increase air circulation in the area. Wait for **2 hours** before cleaning or disinfecting when the suspected employee is **Fully Vaccinated** or **24 hours** in the case of a **Not Fully vaccinated employee**.

Step 3. Clean and disinfect the immediate workspace/area used by the person who is diagnosed with COVID-19

Step 4. Clean surfaces using soap and water including high touch surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, sinks, etc., then use a household disinfectant.

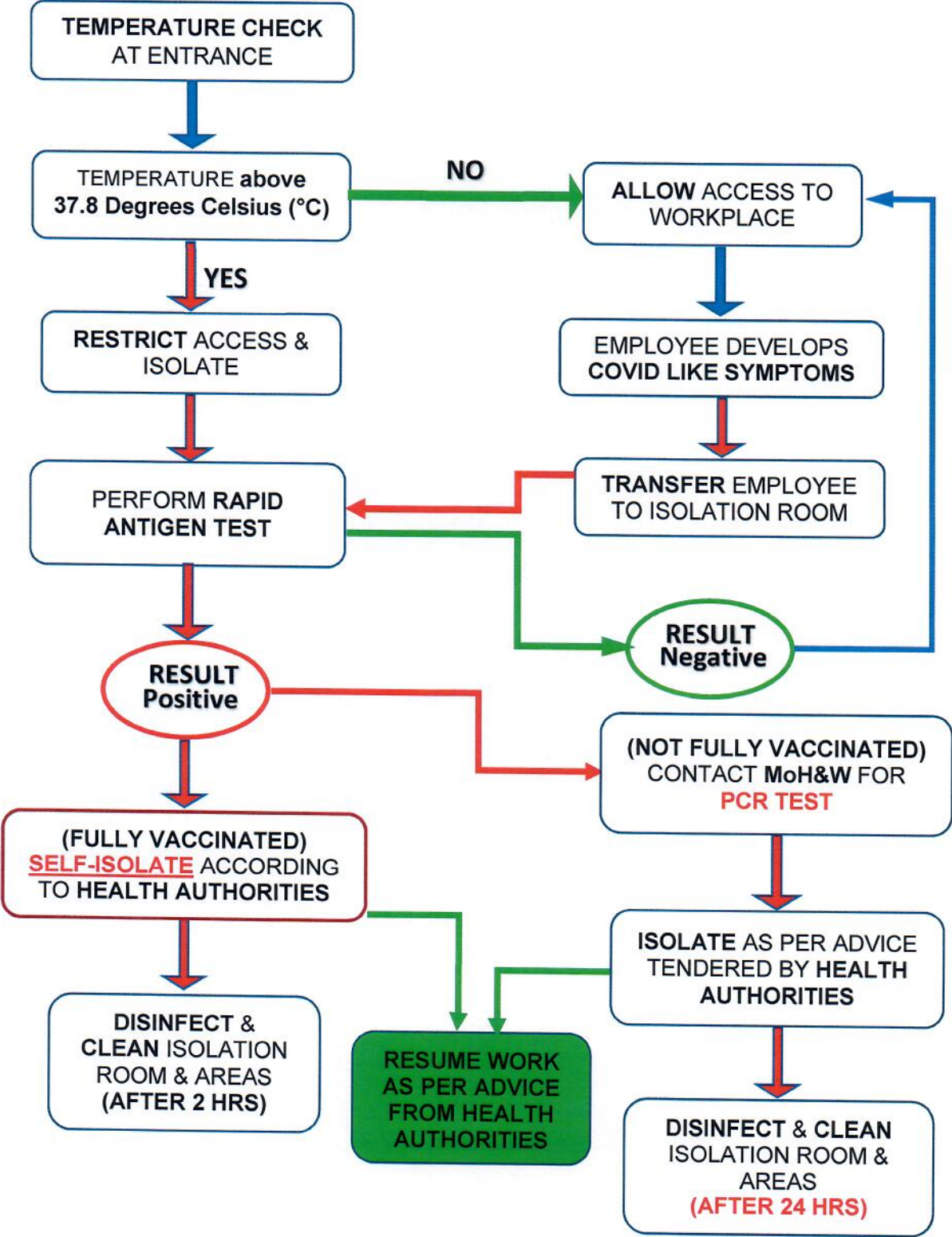
- ✓ *Prior to disinfecting the buildings, all electronic equipment should be covered with plastic sheets.*
- ✓ *For disinfecting buildings sodium hypochlorite (bleach / chlorine) may be used at a recommended concentration of **0.5% (5000 ppm)**.*
- ✓ *Alcohol at 70-90 % can also be used for surface disinfection.*

Step 5. Once area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be **re-opened** for use on the next day.

References:

- (1) WHO | World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int>
- (2) CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov>

SCENARIO 1



SCENARIO 2

