



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

26 April 2021

Circular Letter No.17 of 2021

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From : Secretary for Public Service

To : Supervising Officers in charge of Ministries/Departments

Protocol on Measures to be taken when exposed to Coronavirus

Government is taking all necessary measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus and protect the health of the population. There is, therefore, a need to strengthen all sanitary measures at the workplace to protect public officers from any risk of infection.

2. In this context, this Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, has come up with a protocol on measures to be taken by Ministries and Departments whenever there is a suspected case of Covid-19 infection and the procedures to be followed for cleaning and disinfecting of premises. The protocol also sets out the Standard Operating Procedures to access buildings and other premises. A copy of the protocol is attached.
3. Supervising Officers are kindly requested to stand guided by the protocol whenever a suspected case of infection is reported.
4. I should be grateful if the content of this Circular Letter could be disseminated to the Local Authorities, Parastatal Bodies and State-Owned Enterprises falling under the aegis of your Ministry.
5. I rely on your usual collaboration.


S. Ragen
Secretary for Public Service

Encl.

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



As COVID-19 continues to spread, the chances that you will be exposed and get sick continue to increase. If you've been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or begin to experience symptoms of the disease, you may be asked to self-quarantine or self-isolate.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms. When the virus does cause 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 24 hours, 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. A close face to face contact (under 1 metre) for any length of time – including talking to them or coughing on them.*

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

People with COVID-19 can pass the COVID-19 virus to their close contacts starting from 2 days before they became sick (or 2 days before they tested positive if they never had symptoms).

People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 need to **self-isolate** (stay home).

If you have been vaccinated for COVID-19 and then you test positive for COVID-19, you still need to stay home.

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



- *Prior to resuming work, inform your organization, your direct supervisor and/or 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 lined trash can. Wash your hands right after.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together for at least 30 seconds until they feel dry.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

Get tested. Contact the Ministry of Health & Wellness on 8924 during working hours or 8928 after working hours for necessary advice.

- *Get tested immediately.*
- *If you develop symptoms, you should get tested immediately, even if you already had a negative test.*
- *Even if you do not have symptoms and your COVID-19 test is negative, you will still need to monitor your symptoms for the full 14 days and stay home for at least 7 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 work premises.
- 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, 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.
- Arrange for the employee to be safely transferred from the office to a health facility or to home whichever is more convenient.
- An employee with suspected Covid-19 infection (sometimes fever, sore throat, dry cough) should be:
 - ✓ *Informed not to go to the hospital directly but rather to proceed as per the advice of the Health Authority through the Hotline 8924.*
 - ✓ *Encouraged to isolate himself/herself immediately so as not to infect others around him/her while waiting to be conveyed as per the instruction of the Health Authority.*
 - ✓ *Advised to request a COVID-19 test and inform the organization of the result.*
 - ✓ *Requested to contact the Contact Tracing Team of the Ministry of Health and Wellness*
- 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 suspected infection, and ask them to go home immediately and stay home until advised otherwise
- Retain details 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 as soon as possible, 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.
- Provide clear guidance on when it is safe for someone who has had COVID-19 to return to the workplace.

6. Cleaning and disinfecting the building 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 **24 hours** before cleaning or disinfecting.

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

Step 4. Vacuum the space if needed. Use a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter and bags, if available.

Step 5. 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.

- ✓ *Cleaning should always start from the least soiled (cleanest) area to the most soiled (dirtiest) area in order to not spread the dirty to less soiled areas.*
- ✓ *Prior to disinfecting the buildings, all electronic equipment should be covered with plastic sheets.*
- ✓ *For disinfecting buildings other than health care settings, sodium hypochlorite (bleach/chlorine) may be used at a recommended concentration of **0.1 % (1,000 ppm)**, while in health care settings such as hospitals, Quarantine centers, a recommended concentration of **0.5% (5000 ppm)** may be used.*
- ✓ *Alcohol at 70-90 % can also be used for surface disinfection.*

Step 6. Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use only if the disinfectant used is of 0.1% concentration while for the 0.5% concentration access can be allowed **only after 24 hours**.

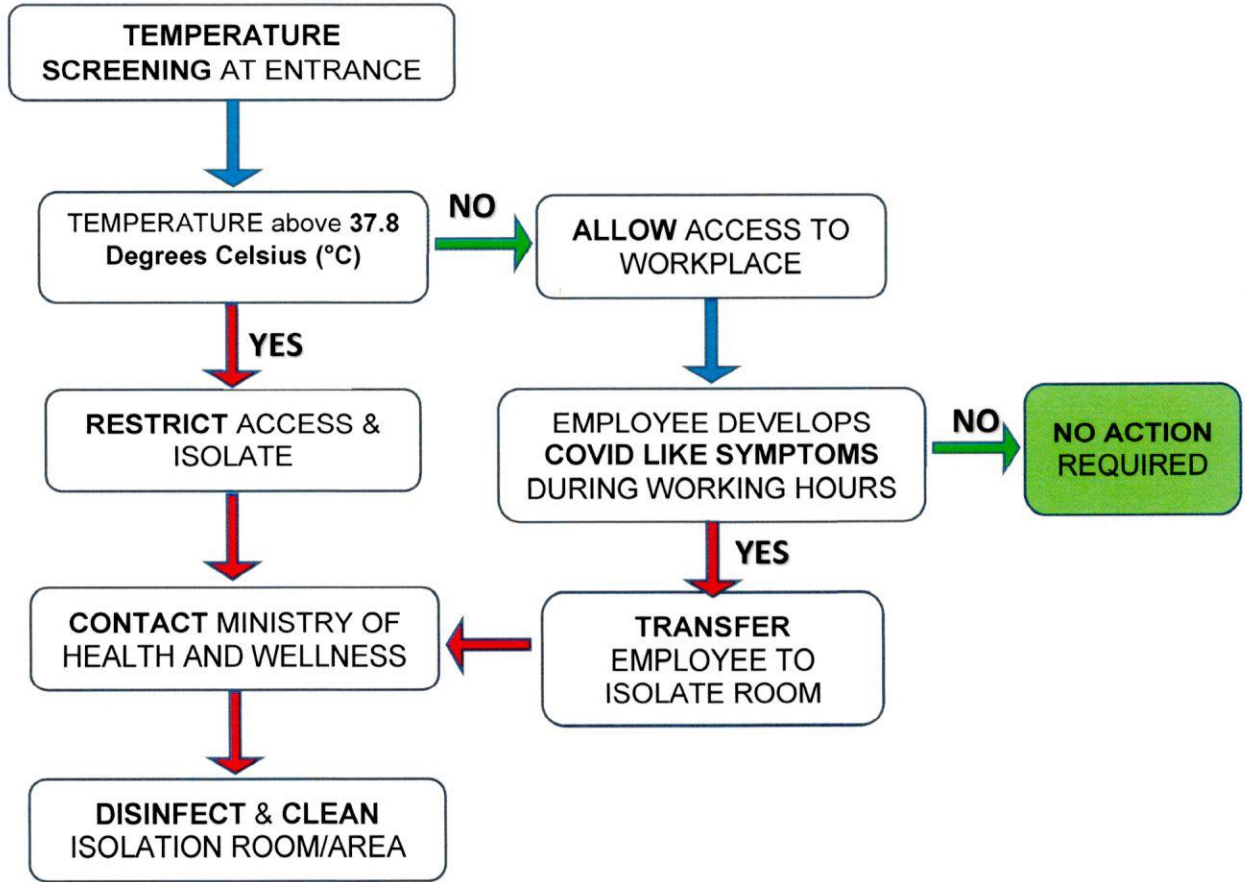
Thematic diagrams of the Protocol are at Annexes 1 and 2.

References:

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

PROTOCOL ON MONITORING OF EMPLOYEES UPON RESUMPTION OF DUTY

SCENARIO 1



SCENARIO 2

