

PROTOCOL ON SUSPECTED COVID-19 CASES AT THE WORKPLACE

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

1. How people can be exposed to COVID-19



It is important to know that if you've been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or begin to experience symptoms of the disease, you may be asked to isolate.

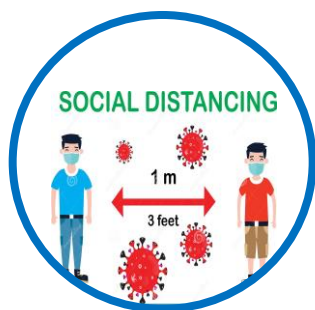
What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms. However, when infected, the common symptoms 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 is often an indication of 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.*

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 against COVID-19 as follows:**

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

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

3. Steps to be taken by Public Officers who had close contact with someone with COVID-19



- *Any Public Officer who has been in contact with a COVID-19 suspected case, should immediately inform his Management/Head of Department. The officer should also communicate any advice tendered to him/her by the Health Authorities in respect of test result/ isolation period.*
- *Do not come to work. Do not take public transportation or taxis.*
- *Stay home and away from others (including family members). Avoid contact with others to avoid spreading COVID-19.*
- *Stay separate from sick members in the household as far as possible.*
- *Avoid sharing the same space within the home, including being in the same room.*
- *The sequential steps to be followed by the Public Officer in the event of close contact, has been set out at Appendices 1 and 2.*

Principles of self-isolation/ home isolation

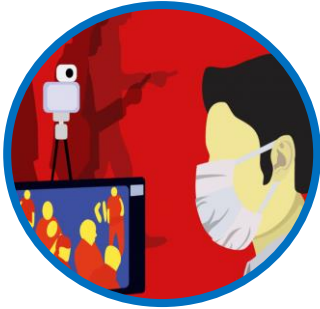
Protect others: Separate yourself at home in a specific room away from other people and animals. Use a separate bathroom if possible.

- 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 proper face mask covering your nose, mouth and chin when you have to be in the same room with other people or animals in your home and keep a distance of at least 2m between yourself and others.
- 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.
- No visitor should be allowed in a house where a self-isolation person resides **except** officers of the Health Authorities.

Contact the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoH&W) on **8924** for necessary advice.

- *If you develop symptoms, you should get tested immediately, even if you already had a negative test previously.*
- *When fully vaccinated, even if you do not have symptoms and your COVID-19 test is **positive**, you will need to follow the instructions from the Health Authorities for self-isolation.*
- *If you are eligible for self-isolation, you will need to follow the COVID-19: Self Isolation Guidelines issued by the Health Authorities, available on the website of the Government Information Service at:
<https://gis.govmu.org/Pages/Newsroom/Covid-19.aspx>*
- *The Public Officer should resume work after isolation period as advised by Health Authorities.*

4. Standard Operating procedures to be followed by Public Organisations for accessing buildings and premises.



Organizations should ensure effective controls at all points of entry before granting access to their premises. This comprises amongst others, arrangements for checking the temperature of their Public Officers as well as for visitors before granting them access to the building. The steps to be followed are detailed at **Appendix 1**.



A Public Officer showing a temperature above **37.8 degrees Celsius (°C)** or displaying certain symptoms of Covid-19 such as runny nose, dry cough, and/or shortness of breath the Public Officer should be isolated and referred to the nearest Flu Clinic for testing.

The organization should make arrangement for the conveyance of the Public Officer to the nearest Flu Clinic if he/she shows COVID-19 like symptoms or to his/her residence if the latter is asymptomatic after being in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

- Vehicles used should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before being used again.
- Any visitor showing a temperature of **37.8 degrees Celsius (°C)** or above should not be allowed access to the work premises.

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



- Isolate immediately from the workplace to an Isolation room or area any Public Officer who is feeling unwell or showing Covid-19 symptoms.
- Organisations should convey **ONLY** Public Officers showing COVID-19 like symptoms to the nearest Flu-Clinic for **COVID-19 Test** and these Public Officers should follow the advice of the Health Authorities.
 - The HR Section of the organization should issue a letter to the officer, addressed to the Regional Health Director to facilitate the test.
- All other Public Officers should be requested to maintain/strengthen sanitary precautions in the office and in the event anyone develops flu-like symptoms, they should inform Management/Head of Department.

- The areas where the affected person has been in, should be closed off, cleaned and disinfected, giving particular attention to equipment, frequently touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, button for lifts) and common areas.
- Ensure that those Public Officers performing the cleaning or disinfection of affected areas are using appropriate PPE and are following agreed safe working operating practices.
- All Public Officers working in the affected area but who have not been in close contact with the suspected case, as defined at Paragraph 2, should as far as possible be relocated and continue to work.

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



Step 1. Close off areas used by the person for **2 hours** before cleaning and disinfecting.

Step 2. Prior to disinfection, open outside doors and windows and use fans or other engineering controls to increase air circulation in the area.

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

surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, sinks, etc.

- ✓ *Prior to disinfection, all electronic equipment should be covered with plastic sheets.*
- ✓ *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 4. Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be **re-opened** for use on the next day.

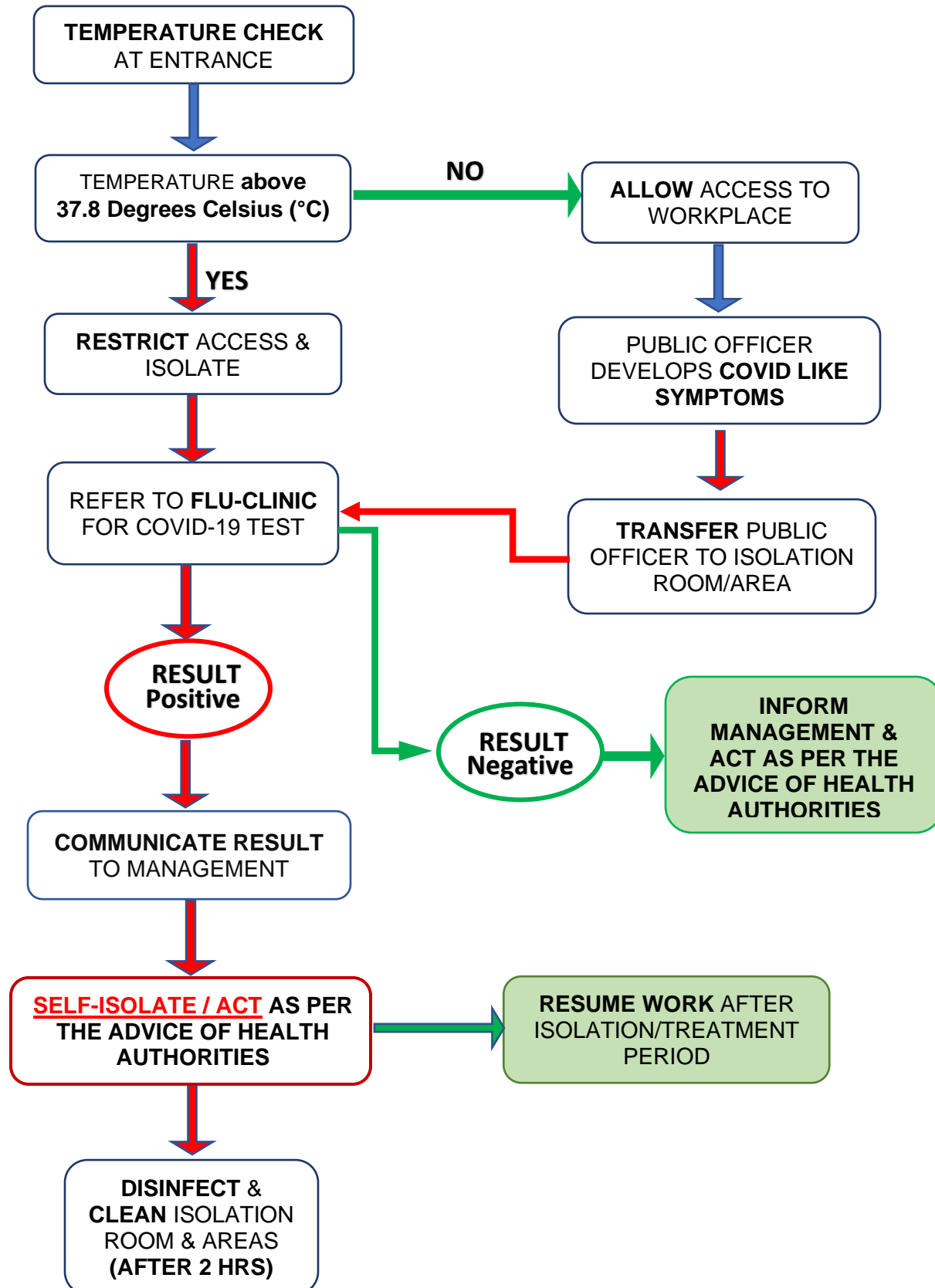
Note:

- Prior to cleaning and disinfection, the immediate workspace/area should be closed for 2 hours.
- Cleaning and disinfection are not required for the area if the person diagnosed with COVID-19 was not physically present at the workplace over the past 24 hours.
- Cleaning and disinfection should as far as possible be carried out after office hours to avoid disruption in service and activities of other Divisions/Sections/Units.

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

