



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

30 August 2021

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From: Secretary for Public Service

To : Supervising Officers in charge of Ministries/Departments

SUSPECTED COVID-19 CASES AT THE WORKPLACE

The COVID-19 pandemic is fast evolving and compelling Health Authorities around the world to regularly review their strategies and sanitary protocols to curb the spread of the disease. In Mauritius, also, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has drastically reviewed the existing protocols to respond to the highly volatile and evolving situation and minimise disruption in economic activities and public service delivery.

2. Consequently, the previous protocol on measures to be taken in the event of suspected cases of Coronavirus issued on 16 August 2021 by this Ministry has been repealed and is being replaced by a new one which sets out the procedures and steps that should, henceforth, be followed in any suspected case of COVID-19 infection at work. A copy of the new protocol is at **Annex I**.

Salient Features

3. The salient features of the new protocol, which has been crafted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, are highlighted hereunder:

(i) Close contact with someone with COVID-19

- A person is considered to be in close contact with another one when he/she has been within 2 metres from the person for a period of 15 minutes or having direct exposure to respiratory secretions (e.g. being coughed or sneezed on, sharing a drinking glass or utensils, kissing).
- More details on close contact, isolation and vaccination have been given at paragraph 2 of the protocol.

(ii) Responsibility of 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 the 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.
- When self-isolation has been advised by the Health Authorities, the public officer should strictly follow the self-isolation guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, which can be accessed on the following website:
<https://gis.govmu.org/Pages/Newsroom/Covid-19.aspx>
- The public officer should resume work after isolation period as advised by Health Authorities.
- The sequential steps to be followed by a public officer in the event of close contact with a suspected case of Covid-19 are at paragraph 3 of the protocol.

(iii) Standard Operating Procedures to be followed by public organisations for accessing buildings and premises.

- Organisations should ensure effective controls at all points of entry before granting access to the premises.
- Any public officer showing a temperature of **37.8 °C or above** or displaying certain Covid-19 symptoms such as runny nose, dry cough, and/or shortness of breath should be immediately 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.
- Any visitor showing a temperature of **37.8 °C or above** should **not** be allowed access to the work premises.

(iv) **What to do in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 infection at the work place?**

- 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 organisation should issue a letter to the officer addressed to the Regional Health Director of the nearest hospital so as to facilitate the test.
- All other public officers should be requested to maintain/strengthen sanitary precautions in the office environment.
- Areas where the affected person has been in should be closed off, cleaned and disinfected.
- All public officers working in the affected area but who have not been in close contact with the suspected case as defined in the protocol should, as far as possible, be relocated and continue to work.

(v) **Cleaning/Disinfection of the immediate work space/area when someone has a COVID-19 diagnosis**

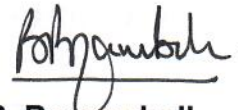
- Prior to cleaning and disinfection, the immediate work space/area should be **closed for 2 hours**.
- **Cleaning and disinfection is not required for the area if the person diagnosed with COVID-19 was not physically present at the workplace over the past 24 hours.**
- Cleaning and disinfection should,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

Self-Isolation

4. Government has adopted the COVID-19 self-isolation guidelines drawn up by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and all public officers will have to stand guided by these guidelines whenever a home isolation period is being recommended by the Health Authorities. A copy of the guidelines is at **Annex II**.

Reporting of Covid-19 Cases

5. The HR Section of each Ministry and Department has to report, **on a daily basis** as per the template at **Annex III**, to the Director, Safety and Health Division of this Ministry, through the Safety and Health Officer assigned to your Ministry/Department, all cases of COVID-19 infections for record purposes.
6. Supervising Officers are hereby requested to disseminate the new protocol to all their officers and make appropriate arrangements for the enforcement of the protocol at their workplace. They are also requested to communicate the protocol to the Local Authorities, Parastatal Bodies and State-Owned Enterprises falling under the purview of their Ministry.
7. I rely on your usual collaboration.



B. Boyramboli
Secretary for Public Service

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