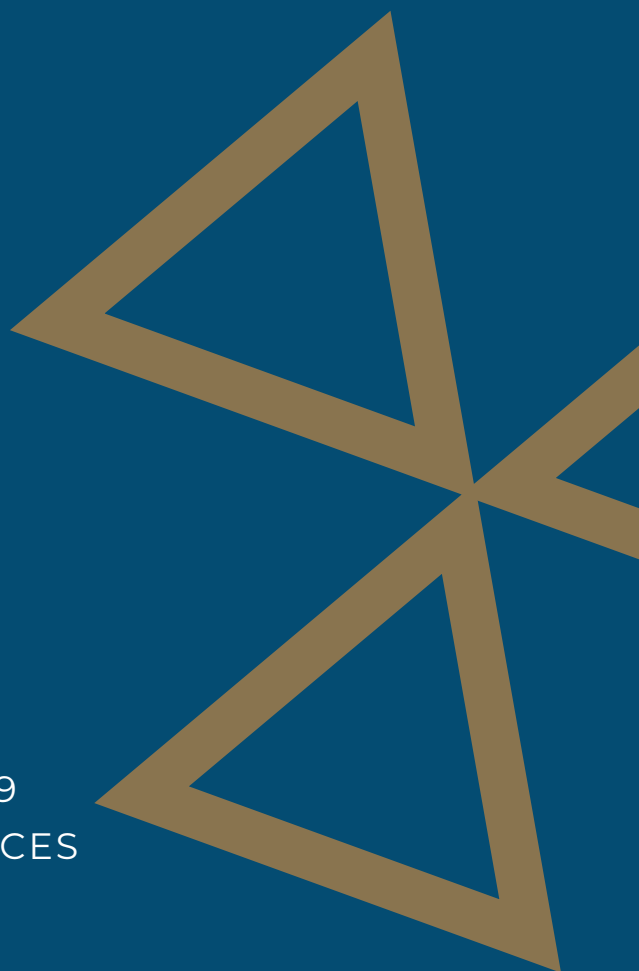


TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19
IN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND OFFICES

v 1.0 - 21/05/2020





PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE

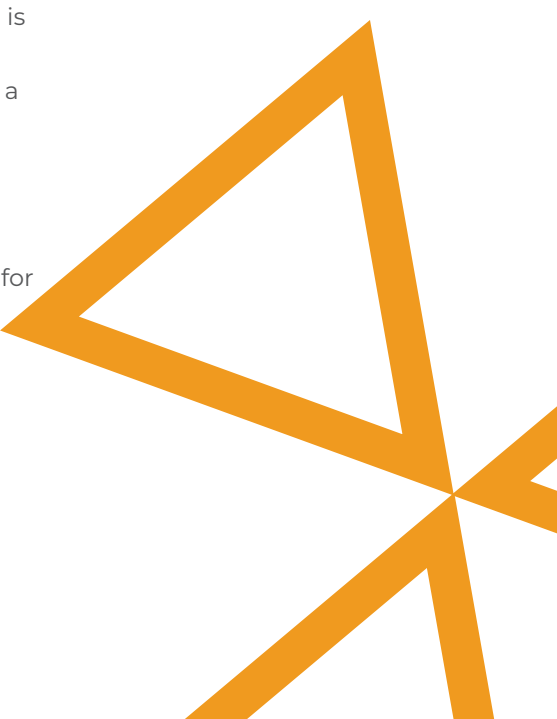
The purpose of these COVID-19 guidelines are to highlight additional control measures that must be taken by Building Owners or Facilities Management to promote the safety of its occupants, employees, visitors and contractors by adopting suitable prevention and protection measures.

With the rapid spread of COVID-19, it is important to ensure workplaces are safe enough to enter and continue business operations without posing a health risk to its occupants. If the virus is found to be spreading inside the premises, the consequences could be very serious.

OBJECTIVE

The Government including the Ministry of Health and the National Operation Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 are drafting and implementing various strategies to reduce the rapid spread of COVID-19. The recent lockdown and partial release/exemptions may bring immediate relaxation to business and domestic requirements. However, stopping the potential spread of COVID-19 is of paramount importance, and calls for strategic control in the prevention of such a spread inside the building or office.

The basic objectives include;

- Providing operational planning guidance for Building Management or Facility Management in managing the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - Providing appropriate guidelines on infection prevention and control of the building users including occupants, employees, visitors and contractors.
- 

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The only way to prevent people from getting infected with COVID-19 is to control its spread from one person to another. That can be done by following proper personal hygiene, social distancing and by disinfecting surfaces and touchpoints.

In addition to this, everyone must follow the instructions listed below. These instructions are based on globally accepted pandemic prevention methodologies.

- Management should form a COVID-19 response team to implement these guidelines and the government advice or guidelines as released from time to time.
- Training schedules and Orientation should be scheduled and conducted to educate people about the prevention of COVID-19. Related posters should be prepared, printed and displayed elsewhere suitably.
- Management should revisit the medical insurance of the employees and should be made mandatory.
- This team should be responsible for identifying key areas, key physical touchpoints where cleaning and disinfection are to be carried out, identify locations of sanitizers such as hand wash with soap, alcohol disinfectants etc., maintain inventory with sufficient safety stock on PPE, disinfectant etc., provide information to workforce, contractors, visitors etc.
- The employees should not leave home if flu-like symptoms, such as cold, fever, cough are present and should be in self-quarantine while seeking medical attention immediately.
- If anyone staying at home is suspected of contracting the virus, they must strictly follow social distancing and self-quarantine. Make sure to call healthcare authorities on 1390/1990.
- Hand wash facility with soap and sanitizer, preferably with a touch-free mechanism should be made available at all entry, exit and common places. Should ensure re-filling of the container at frequent intervals.
- The hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol. Apply the sanitizer and rub it thoroughly on the front and rear of the palm until they feel dry. However, if the hands are dirty, it is recommended to wash the hands with soap first and then use hand sanitizer, if required.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for about 20 seconds especially after blowing your nose, coughing and sneezing.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid shaking hands with people. Instead say Ayubowan, Wanakkam or As-salamu Alaykum.
- Do not touch anyone's belongings.
- Spitting in public spaces is prohibited.



THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT OF BUILDING OR OFFICE TO FIGHT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

The Management should comply with the below requirements in order to maintain a safe facility. The occupants should be adequately made aware on these.

Management of the office or the building.

- Adequate handwashing facilities with water & soap to be made available. Alcohol-based sanitizers should be made available, however this should not be used as a substitute for handwashing. This facility should be provided at all entry points, at the entrance of different buildings or sections, cafeteria, washrooms and utility areas etc.
- Entry should be denied for anyone displaying flu-like symptoms or has a temperature above 37C. Thermal scanning should also be carried out at the exit as well.
- Appropriate internet/network facilities should be provided for those who will be working from home.
- Facilities to work from home will be granted to those who have pre-existing respiratory illnesses, heart diseases and pregnant women.
- The number of staff coming to office should brought down to a minimum as specified by the government regulations or by the management while considering social distancing for every shift.
- Permission for visitor entry should be granted only by section heads.
- Everyone has to sanitize their hands before entering the reception. A sanitizer bottle should be made available at the reception.
- Gathering of staff members or visitors in common areas, such as corridors, entry gate, reception, cafeteria should be prohibited. Suitable guidance posters should be displayed at such places.
- Group discussions should be discouraged. No such discussion should be allowed for more than 5 people. In any gathering, a distance of 1m is mandatory.
- Non-essential travel should be prohibited. All previously said sequences should be applied if anybody goes out and returns to office.
- Please follow proper respiratory hygiene. Never sneeze onto the palm of your hand. A personal handkerchief or your elbow should be used for this purpose. Posters relating to hygiene should be displayed wherever appropriate.
- Workstation set up should be redesigned in such a way that there is a 1m distance between two employees every time.
- In the cafeteria, arrangements for individual sitting with a 1m gap should be made. Group lunch or luncheon meetings should be prohibited.
- Lift floor (Inside) should be marked to indicate where people have to stand. Display posters to remind people of social distancing.
- At places where the formation of a queue is unavoidable, for example food counter, security entry gate or at the elevator lobbies, the floor should be marked to indicate where to stand in order to maintain a safe distance.



Managing the risk of contracting COVID-19 while employees commute from home to office.

Commute through company-provided vehicle:

- One attendant should be dedicated for each vehicle to ensure the practice of social distancing and monitor the health of others travelling.
- The attendant should be provided with protective equipment, such as surgical masks and disposable gloves.
- Attendant should take the reading of the temperature of staff prior to getting in the vehicle.

- In case anyone shows flu-like symptoms (fever, cold and cough) and has a temperature exceeding 37C, they should be denied entry into the vehicle. Commuting employees are kindly requested to cooperate in this regard and not to partake in arguments.
- A seating chart should be displayed inside the vehicle indicating how many are allowed inside the vehicle and which seats should be occupied.
- All people should maintain a safe distance of 1m from one another while getting in/out of vehicle.

- During the journey, the travellers should be continuously reminded not to touch their face, eyes or mouth.
- After getting down, all should be reminded to sanitize their hands.

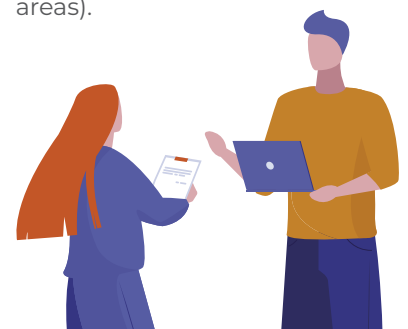
Other transport methods:

- Should adhere to guidelines given by the government on utilizing public transport.
- Should not forget to wear a suitable face mask and refrain from touching their face, nose or mouth.

Entry to the Building – for occupants, visitors and contractors

- Clear instructions and facilities should be made available to clean hands, shoes or vehicle tires at the entrance.
- COVID-19 self-screening checklist (to be made available at the reception) to be filled by all visitors and contractors. The declaration should also include family members' health statuses.
- The forms should be prepared, printed and placed with the receptionist.
- Forbid entry of visitors and contractors (also workmen) who have had known exposure to persons with COVID-19 within the past 14 days, or who are exhibiting symptoms of an illness consistent with COVID-19.

- All should be instructed to maintain social distancing of 1m at all times. (Site meeting, tea time, lunch time, gate entry time and drinking water or in service areas).



While in office

- Everyone has to disinfect his/her desk, keyboard, chair handle, drawer with disinfectant solution provided. Disinfection should be done every 4 hours or as frequent as possible and if potential droplet dispersion occurs upon cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands frequently. Make it a habit.
- Do not touch your face or eyes.
- Avoid group gatherings in office (more than 5 people). Always try to do tele/video-conferencing.
- For any meeting, ensure a distance of 1m.
- Group lunch should be prohibited in the cafeteria. Take your place in individual sitting arrangements to have your food.

When the staff is ready to leave

- Their work-station should be disinfected.
- They should wear their mask.
- They should not touch their face or eyes during the return journey.
- They should sanitize their hands after getting down from the vehicle.
- Before entering their home, they need to wash/sanitize their hands again.

Using Common Areas – Restrooms, parking etc.

- Encourage social distancing in these places and display more posters relevant to COVID-19 safety in this area.
- Consider having adequate alcohol-based hand sanitizers in restrooms to encourage hand hygiene among building occupants. Put up posters about hand washing in bathrooms and other common areas as appropriate.
- Engage authorized waste contractors to remove refuse daily.
- Encourage replacing of mops and cleaning wipes frequently.
- Cleaning and Disinfection should be done as frequent as possible and records of the same should be maintained in a chart.
- Consider closing common food court, gym and other indoor recreation or game areas until the pandemic is over.
- Avoid group gatherings at the veranda, balcony, parking and other common places.

Use of Lifts

- Lifts should be cleaned and sanitized frequently and record the same in a chart.
- Hand sanitizers should be kept in the lift as well.
- Limit the number of people (maximum of four) getting into the elevator at the same time to avoid crowding.

At the Cafeteria

- Reduce seating capacity to 50% of its size. This is basically to allow social distancing of 1m gap.
- Consider closing self-service food counters to avoid cross-contamination.
- Ensure food preparers and handlers are wearing all necessary PPE without any compromise.
- Consider posting a guideline on how to maintain hygiene in the lunch area.

Use of Staircase

- Staircase and handrails should be cleaned and sanitized and records should be maintained in the form of a chart.
- Consider posting "a guide to staying safe in common areas" near staircase landing.

Use of the Pantry

- Water dispensers/Pantry machines should be cleaned and sanitized frequently and records should be maintained in charts.
- Disinfect dispensing handles hourly or provide sanitizing facility at due touchpoints after each use.
- Limit the number of people getting into the pantry at a particular time to avoid crowding.
- Consider posting suitable posters on avoiding contamination, near the pantry.

Use of Toilets/Washrooms

- While entering the restroom, open the door using your elbow or arm (do not use palm or fingers).
- While using urinals, use alternative urinals to maintain social distance.
- While waiting for urinals, maintain social distance. Do not enter inside if it is crowded.
- While using commodes, wash commodes seat with water before and after using it. Remove the water by using tissue papers.
- Toilets should be flushed with the lid closed in order to minimize the release of droplets and droplet residue from entering the air.
- After using urinals and toilets, wash your hands as per the guidelines, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Maintain social distance while waiting to wash.
- While coming out from the toilet, open the door using your leg, elbow or arm (do not use your palm). If this is not possible, use clean paper towels to open doorknobs.

THE SUPPORT OF CLEANING WORKERS

The Cleaning and Maintenance staff should be briefed on the following guidelines which will be an addition to their current job role. This is done to ensure they safeguard themselves as well.

- Encourage the use of appropriate PPE (face masks, gloves, goggles) when carrying out cleaning works and handling waste. Brief them to never share their PPE with others.
- Supervise cleaning and disinfection and there should be records of their work.
- Orient them on personal hygiene and advise them not to touch their exposed body parts such as eyes, nose, face and arms with soiled gloves or unwashed hands.
- Ensure refuse bins are covered at all times and cleared daily. Tie refuse contained in plastic bags properly before disposal.
- Should clean up any refuse spillage immediately.
- Wash and disinfect all refuse bins or the containers.
- Discard the disposable cleaning materials (gloves, mop and wiping cloth) in appropriate bags after cleaning and disinfecting. Wear a new pair of gloves and fasten the bag.
- Change and wash clothes regularly.
- Toilets should be flushed with the lid closed in order to minimize the release of droplets and droplet residues from entering the air.
- Keep toilet ventilation 24/7 in operation.
- Avoid opening windows in toilets to assure the right direction of ventilation.



UTILITY SERVICING

Ventilation and AC systems

- As far as possible, air conditioning should be avoided, and natural ventilation should be used.
- Facility management should make sure building ventilation systems are working correctly and maintained as per standard requirements for optimal indoor air quality.
- If feasible, enhance ventilation in common areas and increase the amount of outdoor air that is coming into the building.
- A relative humidity level of 40% to 70% to be maintained, which is considered to be the most suitable environment for humans as this decreases chances of pathogens surviving.
- Evaporative coolers must draw fresh air from outside to ensure good ventilation.



Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) and Water Treatment Plant (WTP)

- Facility management should make sure building water treatment systems are maintained with appropriate biocide dosing as per standards. Additional attention should be paid on improving the treatments to avoid COVID-19 spreading.
- Increase biocide treatment and testing with suitable standards to avoid conditions that could lead to an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease and potential COVID-19, before operating cooling tower circulation and other water main system.
- Bad fume generation from any water source such as in Sewage Treatment Plant should be avoided.
- The team carrying operations and maintenance of STP or WTP should wear personal protective equipment such as N95 masks, goggles, gloves and safety shoes. Each individual should have their own PPE kit.
- The maintenance team carrying operations and preventive maintenance of panel room/pump room should wear personal protective equipment such as nose masks, goggles, gloves and safety shoes. Each individual should have their own PPE kit.
- Sanitize machine parts that require multiple changes of hands. Ensure electrical safety precautions when using disinfectant.

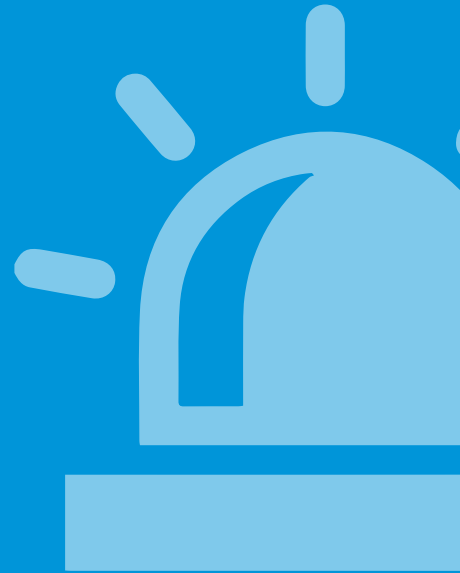
Repair works

Building occupants and workers should follow standard preventive actions such as practising healthy hand hygiene and maintaining physical distancing while work is carried out.



In case of an emergency

- The occupants should follow the building's standard procedures if there is a fire alarm ringing, and fire safety should not be compromised.
- Fire doors should not be kept open always.
- Encourage occupants to practice physical distancing and maintain at least a 1m distance from each other as they evacuate the building during such an incident.
- Maintain physical distance at assembly points too.



Warehouse and Stores - Material in/Material out:

- Building occupants should maintain physical distancing when receiving packages or mail, deliveries and when meeting contractors attending the workplace.
- If any transport driver or accompanying assistant displays flu-like symptoms, the vehicle should not be allowed inside the premises.
- The vehicle tires and body should be disinfected by with a 1% sodium hypochlorite solution spray.
- Material handling equipment such as Hand pallet truck, stacker and forklift should be disinfected on the regularly touched surfaces.
- Deliveries and other contractors who need to attend the workplace should be given clear instructions of social distancing requirements while they are onsite.
- Minimize the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible. Make alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for workers after physically handling deliveries.
- Direct visiting drivers to remain in their vehicles and use contactless methods such as mobile phones to communicate with your workers wherever possible.
- Kindly request delivery-men and contractors to use electronic paperwork wherever possible, to avoid physical interaction. Where ever possible, set up alternatives for requiring signatures. For instance, see whether a confirmation email or a photo of the loaded or unloaded goods can be accepted as proof of delivery or collection (as applicable).



PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM THE SPREAD OF COVID-19



Clean your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



Wear a mask when leaving home.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



Avoid close contact with anyone displaying cold or flu-like symptoms.



If you are sick, stay at home and avoid crowds and contact with others.



Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or use a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissue into a closed bin immediately after use.



Do not shake hands. Greet people with a wave, a nod or bow instead.



If you have a fever, cough and difficulty in breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your healthcare provider.

For more information contact:

Laleendra Wickramasinghe
Senior Manager – Risk Engineering
Mobile: 0777 238 034 | E-mail: laleendraw@fairfirst.lk

Disclaimer: The guidelines outlined in this document are meant to safeguard you and your loved ones from COVID-19. Seek professional advice if you wish to clarify any section of this document or take any action based on this document.

This document has been developed based on the information published by CholaMS Risk Services.