



Date: 27 June 2020
Document Code: 28-03
Version: 03

Guidelines

Guidelines to Implement Preventive Health Measures for Passengers, Conveyances and Cargo at Ground Crossings

Objective

This document aims to provide a Standard Operative Procedure to implement Public Health Measures by Health Authorities at Ground Crossings to combat all infectious diseases/Health hazards that can spread through person, conveyance, cargo, goods and parcels etc.

Rationale

The COVID-19 outbreak is a new public health challenge around the globe, causing acute respiratory illness leading to high mortality and morbidity. The current COVID-19 outbreak has spread across several borders, which has prompted the demand for the detection and management of suspected cases at Points of Entry (PoEs). Lockdowns and other coordinated restrictive measures are necessary to save lives. However, these measures may also severely slow down our economies and can delay the deliveries of essential goods and cargo services. These guidelines have been developed to regulate measures to ensure continued and uninterrupted land crossing for passengers and cargo services.

General preparations at Land crossings/ Border Check Points

It is of utmost importance that necessary preparations are made at land crossing to effectively deal with the challenge, following are to be estimated/ensured: -

- Average number of travellers crossing the borders per day.
- Demarcation of screening premises, temporary Isolation areas, waiting areas and quarantine facilities for suspected or infected travellers
- Availability of necessary equipment such as thermal guns, thermo scanners, PPEs etc.
- Identification and employment of trained staff at health counters.
- Clear guidelines to the staff for their roles and responsibilities
- Establishing coordination with following agencies / Departments: -
 - LEA
 - FIA
 - Relevant Provincial DG Health
 - District Health Officer
 - Availability of ambulances through relevant dept



General Operating Procedures

Immediately after Crossing Zero Line

- On arrival of travellers after crossing the border, proper queuing shall be ensured by LEA keeping them at least 6 feet apart from each other in view to maintain social distancing.
- Hand Sanitizers to be placed at arrival points and travellers are advised to rub and sanitize their hands often
- Masks should be worn by travellers
- Handing over of Health Declaration Forms (HDF) and travel history forms to all the travellers by the Health Check post staff and ensuring that both forms are submitted to Port Health Officials

Health check post reception desk / health declaration counter

- Health counter shall serve as a point of first contact for the travellers with their filled-in HDFs
- Filled HDFs shall be collected at the counter and analyzed as per the questions; helping segregation and preliminary decisions
- The travellers are screened with thermal guns/scanner by health staff and are inquired about symptoms, if any
- Results of screening should be evaluated by the Health Staff
- Travellers with fever shall be marked on HDF and report to this effect is made immediately to In-charge Health Check Post for action
- All travellers with no fever shall be allowed to go home

Disposal of Travellers

Once all travellers have passed through the above said screening process, there will be two classes of travellers:

Symptomatic Travellers:

Either of the following signs/symptoms should initiate the protocols of suspicion of COVID-19:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty in breathing

If either of these symptoms is present, as per the prescribed SOPs, the traveler shall be sent to Isolation Area at Health Check Post. A detailed verification shall be done by medical officer who will take a detailed Travel History from any endemic zone or contact evidence of the traveler with COVID-19.

Following actions will be taken by Health officer:

- Immediately provide PPEs to the traveler if required
- Report to the on-spot immigration /Law enforcement agency (LEA) officials' relevant stakeholders
- In case any relatives/family is accompanying, examine them immediately with provision of surgical/medical masks to them



- MO/psychologist will conduct a brief awareness session and reassure the travellers by counseling session on the disease modality and current protocols for such patients thereby instilling confidence and facilitating evacuation
- The In-charge Health Check post shall then coordinate with: -
 - Rapid Response Team designated by Provincial Govt for evacuation of the suspected patient.
 - Designated hospital focal person
- The LEA shall then escort the suspected patient/traveler to designated ambulance and further to the designated hospital
- In case of more than one traveler with suspicion of the COVID-19, more than one ambulance might be required therefore an assessment based on the need be done to ensure smooth running
- Finally, all staff coming in contact with a suspected case shall ensure full protection and use of PPEs like surgical/medical masks, gloves
- The PCR sampling will be done at Quarantine/Hospital

Asymptomatic Travellers

- All other-than-above travelers will be allowed to go home with written instructions/guideline to STAY HOME.
- CNIC No and contact details of all will be collected health check post
- All such asymptomatic will be sent home after routine formalities
- They would be sent home for Home Quarantine for a period of 14 days to ensure that guidelines for home quarantine are being followed in spirit or appearance of sign and symptoms of COVID-19
- They will be followed /Tracked and Traced by a mobile App. for their location
- Regular follow up of travellers by local administration

Safety Measures for staff

- Clear policy for staff as to when and how quarantine/Isolate may apply, e.g. if a staff member has been in contact with an infected person
- Developing staff training specific to Covid-19 e.g. how to protect themselves, how to deal with the various situations they will face during their work, how to avoid discrimination, learn appropriate measures for taking care of a sick person (e.g. to wear a mask or not), etc.
- All staff should be reminded to wash their hands frequently, ideally with soap and water or alternatively using a hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol
- Vulnerable staff should be protected and not allowed to come in contact with general public

Data Collection

- The Data of symptomatic travellers will be entered on Covid-19 Travellers Surveillance Management Information System-TSMIS and sent to the Directorate of Central Health Establishment (CHE) daily.



- It will contain the traveler screening data and contact tracing details as per template.

Disinfection of Conveyances and Cargo

To date, there is no epidemiological information to suggest that contact with goods or products shipped from countries affected by the COVID-19 outbreak have been the source of COVID-19 disease in humans (this excludes live animals, animal and biological products). WHO is continuing to closely monitor the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak and will update recommendations as needed.

Disinfection of passenger cabin of vehicles

- Disinfection of surfaces (steering wheel, gearshift, dashboard, door, knobs etc.)
- All driver switches, controls, door handles (interior and exterior), and glass from inside and outside
- Surfaces in the sleeper should be wiped off also
- All passenger cabins (Trucks, Buses, Vans, Cars) be disinfected by any of the following chemicals at border crossings:
 - Ethanol wipes: 5 minutes
 - Lysol disinfecting wipes/spray: 10 minutes
 - Lysol disinfecting wipes/spray: 10 minutes

General Preventive Measures for Drivers

- Drivers must wear face/medical masks and head gear while traveling
- Drivers/Loaders must wear gloves when at loading and unloading cargo, gas stations, and terminals
- Disinfect hands with hand sanitizer or wash with liquid soap and water for at least 30 seconds every time on entering or returning to vehicle

Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international recommendations and best practices.

The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of Dr. Irfan Tahir, Dr. Saira Kanwal and HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH team to compile these guidelines.

References

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3. SADC Guidelines on Harmonisation and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the Region During the COVID-19 Pandemic
4. <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/88238>



For more information, please contact:

HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH, PM National Health Complex, Islamabad

<http://covid.gov.pk/>

<http://nhsrc.gov.pk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHSRCOfficial>

<http://www.hsa.edu.pk/>

<https://twitter.com/nhsrcofficial>

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