



Date: 19 May 2020
Document Code: 25
Version: 01

Guidelines

Health and Safety Measures against COVID-19 at Railway Stations/Trains

Objective

To provide guidelines to assist Pakistan Railways and provide reliable information about the specific challenges for rail transportation systems in COVID-19 Pandemic

Rationale

In the framework of prevention and fight against diseases and other crises, continuity of rail operations is key to provide mobility and to guarantee the continuation of critical activities, whilst taking into account the trend of absenteeism and maintaining public health. Rail operators are required to adapt their services to ensure safety for both cargo and passengers transportation. This should consider the operator's resources and general measures put in place by authorities. Hence, this collection of suggested measures is proposed to help Pakistan Railways and stakeholders to provide for safety of passengers and employees.

General Preventive Measures at Railway Station

- Maintain social distancing protocol of 2m (6feet) at all times
- Special cleaning (Refer to disinfection guidelines issued by Mo/NHSR&C) of areas where passengers, public and staff are frequently present (stations, waiting rooms etc)
- Following surfaces present special risks (e.g. toilets, ticketing machines, waiting areas, windows, lockers, magazine racks, try tables, door handles/buttons, soap dispensers, arm rests and should be cleaned regularly
- Ensure that adequate cleaning personnel are available with proper kits and materials
- Provision of disinfectant spray to all the staff without restriction
- Designated places at stations to dispose of biohazards (e.g. used tissues, used masks)
- Cleaning of air conditioning filters at all places
- Availability of surgical/medical masks for all the staff member while ensuring that everyone entering the premises of Railway station is wearing an appropriate mask (Refer to guidelines



issued by Mo/NHSR&C) Availability of sanitizing hand rub dispensers in prominent places. Ensure these dispensers are regularly refilled

- Display posters promoting hand-washing, social distancing and maintaining good respiratory hygiene (cough etiquette advice)
- Ensure screening of all passengers/staff by measuring body temperature through thermal scanner at entry points by MO on duty at entry point . Any passenger suspected of illness will either be sent to isolation room or the hospital as advised by MO.
- Ensure that every passenger entering the railway station is wearing appropriate mask
- Hand sanitizers will be provided at every stopping station by DMOs and one staff member of railways will be deputed at the station entrance by DCOs to assist passengers in sanitizing their hands
- Provision of isolation facilities at the premises for staff/passengers in case anyone is suspected who show respiratory symptoms

General Preventive Measures in Trains

- Social distancing measures (Refer to guidelines issued by Mo/NHSR&C) while allocating seats in trains should be observed
- All passengers and staff should wear appropriate face mask
- Display of posters with preventive measures at prominent places in train and at stations
- All passenger compartments/luggage trains to be disinfected before service and after reaching destination (Refer to guidelines issued by Mo/NHSR&C)
- Night Trains can be especially at risk. Special attention must be paid to disinfecting the compartments as people stay longer
- Using touch-free devices whenever possible (e.g. touch-free thermometers)
- Designing a single-use policy for restaurants on board trains to avoid kitchen contamination - For example, single-use plates, glasses, cutlery, and condiments
- Policies to reduce the likelihood of transmission, for example: - Removing magazines, booklets, menus, blankets, pillows, headphones, etc. from the carriages
- Change the sheets/blankets in night trains after every single use
- Changing toilet paper from rolls to individual ply
- Checking before travel starts that all staff onboard are healthy (via e.g. temperature screening)
- Using disposable rubber or nitrile gloves to unpack deliveries
- Wearing single-use gloves for ticket controlling, or appropriate measures to avoid touch while checking tickets
- Provision of isolation facility in trains for staff/passengers who may develop respiratory symptoms
- Clear policy for staff as to when and how quarantine may apply - For example, 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 in the course of 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.

Provision of PPEs

- Appropriate PPE should be available on trains and at stations for use if an infection is suspected (Refer to guidelines issued by Mo/NHSR&C)
- Continuous monitoring of specific supplies, including a plan covering their distribution and refill
- Defining what protection kits should include surgical/medical masks, single-use disposable rubber or nitrile gloves, alcohol-based gel and/or soap, biohazard bags, disinfectant spray and touch-free (non-contact infrared) thermometers

Management of suspected infected passengers on railway premises in Stations and on-board trains

Clear protocols should be in place and executed by staff for example:

- How to look after staff e.g. one may assign dedicated workers on site designated and trained to support staff in case the encountered suspected cases require urgent medical care
- How to detect ill travelers e.g. via temperature screenings
- How to handle a suspected case e.g. WHO guidelines suggest implementing preventative isolation and to keep ill persons at a distance of 2 meters (6 feet) from others and to disinfect the area straight away
- How the transfer to health care premises will be undertaken
- How staff should get in contact with the health authorities. Most of these protocols could already have been decided upon during the preparedness phase

Supporting staff

- 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

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. Saira Kanwal and HSA/HPSIU/NIH team to compile these guidelines.



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For more information, please contact:

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