

COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control in the accommodation sector

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COVID-19 Overview

COVID-19 virus is transmitted between people by:

- **Respiratory droplets** (particularly when coughing).
- **Direct contact** with an infected person
- **Indirect contact**, (touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions) and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes

Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

Common Symptoms and signs:

- Fever (temperature $>38^{\circ}\text{C}/100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$)
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Cough
- Loss of taste or smell
- Difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Sore throat

Signs and symptoms can vary widely

- Some people have no symptoms and are asymptomatic
- Some people have mild disease
- Some people have more serious disease that can lead to death

Specifics of the tourism accommodation sector

Similar in susceptibility to other sectors where large numbers of people interact

Guests stay temporarily in **close cohabitation** and where there is a **high degree of interaction** among guests and workers.

Interactions specific to these establishments that require attention include:

- guest-guest
- guest-staff
- staff-staff

Recommendations for the management team

- **Develop an action plan** in accordance with the recommendations of public health authorities with the aim to prevent cases, effectively manage cases, and mitigate impact among clients and staff
- Make sufficient **human and economic resources** available to implement the action plan rapidly and effectively
- Set up a **Team** involving members of each relevant department to support implementation of the action plan

Communication

- Communication should be maintained between Management and staff
 - to **pre-define an information policy for guests**
 - to **rapidly provide and obtain information on incidents** that may arise in the establishment
 - ensure **consistency** of information for guests and other stakeholders.
- Short documents or informative **posters** can amplify key messages among guests and staff, including the promotion of hand-washing, respiratory hygiene, and coughing etiquette
- Management should:
 - **inform all staffs of the measures** to be adopted and the measures that could protect their health and that of others,
 - **organize information briefings** that should cover all the basic protective measures against COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease

Reception and concierge Staff

- Should be sufficiently **informed** about COVID-19
- Should be capable of informing guests who inquire about the **establishment's policy** in terms of the preventive measures
- Should also be able to **advise guests** with respiratory symptoms to stay in their rooms until they are seen by a doctor (and make arrangements for same)
- **Must take all necessary precautions**, including physical distancing.
- Official, up-to-date information should be available about travel to and from countries or areas where COVID-19 is spreading
- **Should have immediately available the telephone numbers of the health authorities**, medical centres, public and private hospitals, and assistance centres for use whenever there is the possibility that a guest may be ill.
- If possible, should not be older (> 65 years) or with underlying health conditions

Medical kit at the reception desk

The reception desk should have a medical kit that includes the following items:

- **Germicidal disinfectant/wipes** for surface cleaning tissues.
- **Face/eye masks** (separate or combined, face shield, goggles). Note that disposable face masks can only be used once.
- **Gloves** (disposable)
- **Protective apron** (disposable)
- **Full-length long-sleeved gown**
- **Biohazard disposable waste bag**

General preventive measures

Guests and staff should be reminded of the following:

- **Physical/Social distancing** includes refraining from hugging, kissing, or shaking hands with guests as well as among staff. It involves maintaining a distance of at least 1 m (3 ft) and avoiding anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- **Hand hygiene** means regularly and thoroughly cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water. Also avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth. Hand disinfection is indicated after exchanging objects (money, credit cards) with guests.
- **Respiratory etiquette** means covering mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing. The used tissue should be disposed of immediately in a bin with a lid.

Monitoring of guests who are possibly ill

- Monitor potentially ill guests in the establishment.
- Reception staff should note all relevant incidents that come to their knowledge, such as requests for doctor's visits.
- Reception staff must treat all this information with discretion

Technical and maintenance services

- **Water disinfection:** The concentration of disinfectant in water for consumption and in pools or spas should be maintained within the limits recommended according to international norms and standards, preferably at the upper limits of the range.
- **Dishwashing and laundry equipment:** Should be checked for proper functioning
- **Air-conditioning:** monitor the condition of filters and maintain the proper replacement rate of indoor air
- **Dispensers:** Regular checks should be carried out to ensure the proper functioning of soap and disinfectant solution dispensers, hand dryers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar devices. Defective units should be rapidly repaired or replaced.

The hotel action plan should include installing units to dispense disinfectant gel in the different areas of the hotel

Restaurants, breakfast and dining rooms and bars

- **Staff** should perform personal hygiene (frequent regular handwashing, cough hygiene) as strictly as possible
- **Guests** should be reminded when entering and leaving the restaurant, breakfast, or dining room to disinfect their hands with disinfectant gel, preferably located at the entrance to those facilities.
- **At buffets**, guests should avoid handling food. When necessary, change tongs and ladles more frequently, always leaving these items in separate containers
- **Coffee machines, soda machines, and others**, in particular the parts more in contact with the hands of users, should be cleaned and disinfected at least after each service and more often if necessary

Restaurants, breakfast and dining rooms and bars

Washing dishes, silverware, and table linen:

- All dishes, silverware, and glassware should be **washed, disinfected and rinsed** in a **dishwashing machine**, including items that have not been used, as they might have been in contact with the hands of guests or staff.
- If for any reason **manual washing** is required, the usual steps should be followed (**wash, disinfect, rinse**), taking the maximum level of precautions. Drying should be carried out using disposable paper towels.
- **Tablecloths and napkins** should be washed in the usual manner.

Restaurants, breakfast and dining rooms and bars

Table setting:

- Whenever possible, it is recommended to have a maximum of 4 persons for 10 square metres.
- Tables shall be arranged such that the distance from the back of one chair to the back of another chair shall be more than 1 m apart and that **guests face each other from a distance of at least 1 m.**

Recreational areas for children

- **Consideration should be given to closing the recreational areas for children.**
- Special cleaning and disinfection protocols should be applied to these facilities.
- Persons responsible for children should be vigilant for any signs of respiratory disease and should immediately inform the child's parents and the management of such circumstance

Cleaning and housekeeping

- Clean and disinfect common areas (restrooms, halls, corridors, lifts, etc.) as a general preventive measure during the entire COVID-19 epidemic.
- **Special attention should be given to objects that are frequently touched such as handles, elevator buttons, handrails, switches, doorknobs, etc**

Cleaning and housekeeping

The following should be implemented for rooms or specific areas exposed to COVID-19 cases:

- Any surfaces that become soiled with respiratory secretions or other body fluids of the ill person(s), e.g. toilet, hand washing basins, and baths **should be cleaned with a regular household disinfectant solution containing 0.5% sodium hypochlorite**. Surfaces should be rinsed with clean water after 10 minutes contact time for chlorine.
- **When use of bleach is not suitable**, e.g. telephone, remote control equipment, door handlings, buttons in the elevator, etc. then **alcohol 70%** could be used

Cleaning and housekeeping

- **Whenever possible, use only disposable cleaning materials.** Discard any cleaning equipment made of cloths and absorbent materials, e.g. mophead and wiping cloths.
- When pertinent, **disinfect properly non-porous cleaning materials** with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution or according to manufacturer's instructions **before using for other rooms.**
- **Textiles, linens, and clothes** should be put in special, marked laundry bags and handled carefully to prevent raising dust. They should be washed in hot cycles (70°C or more) with the usual detergents.

Cleaning and housekeeping

- **Disposable items** (hand towels, gloves, masks, tissues) should be **placed in a container with a lid** and disposed of according to the hotel action plan and national regulations for waste management
- **All rooms and common areas should be ventilated daily**

Cleaning and housekeeping

Materials:

Cleaning staff should be trained on the use of and provided with personal protection equipment as listed below:

- Gloves
- Disposable gowns
- Closed shoes
- Facial protection with a face shield and impermeable aprons if doing procedures that generate splashes (e.g. while washing surfaces).

They should also have access to sufficient disinfectant solutions and other supplies.

Handling COVID-19 cases in hotels

- **Minimize contact** of the ill person with all guests and staff immediately
- **Separate the ill person** from the other persons by at least 2 m (6 ft).
- **Designate of one member of the staff**, who is sufficiently trained in infection prevention and control, and the policies and measures for the staff should the staff develop symptoms.
- If possible, **designate one bathroom for use only by the ill person.**
- **Request the ill person to wear a medical mask and practice respiratory hygiene** when coughing and sneezing.
- When attending to an ill guest who displays fever, persistent cough, or difficulty breathing, **always use additional protective equipment** (provided in the Universal Precaution Kit), including mask, eye protection, gloves, and a gown

Handling COVID-19 cases in hotels

Case of an affected guest:

- Continued stay of the sick person in the establishment is not generally recommended
- The person can be **isolated in a room** on a temporary basis until the intervention of local health authorities, and provided the room is not shared with other guests.
- **No visitors** should be permitted to enter the room occupied by the affected guest.
- **Accompanying persons, if any, should be moved to a different room**

Handling COVID-19 cases in hotels

- If there is no other option but to keep a sick guest suspected of COVID-19, with mild symptoms, **self-isolation in the room** should be done.
- Doctor's visits should be carried out in the sick person's room whenever possible, avoiding the need for the patient to go to the doctor's office.
- **A sick guest who is suspected of COVID-19 should stay in an individual room, except in the case of children or persons requiring caretakers**
- **The guest should receive food in the room.**
- Sick persons should not share a bathroom with other persons, and neither should they share towels, blankets, or any type of clothing with their caretakers
- Only one person should be in charge of caring for the sick person

Handling COVID-19 cases in hotels

The clothing of the sick patient, as well as the linen of the room he or she occupies, should be washed following the usual procedures. As a precautionary measure, these items should be stored and transported in sealed bags.

Handling COVID-19 cases in hotels

Remove PPE carefully to avoid contaminating yourself:

- Remove first gloves and gown,
- do hand hygiene;
- next remove the mask and eye protection, and
- immediately wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.

Properly dispose of gloves and other disposable items that had contact with the ill person's body fluids in biohazard bag or a secured plastic bag (double bag), which will be considered as "biohazard" waste.

Staff taking part in the evacuation of a suspected case:

- Staff involved in the transportation of the suspected case should apply infection prevention and control practices
 - Hand hygiene and wear a medical mask, eye protection, gloves, and gown when loading suspected COVID-19 patients for transport in the ambulance
- **Ambulance or transport vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected** with special attention to the areas in contact with the suspected case with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite (i.e. equivalent 5.000 ppm chlorine or 1 part of household bleach containing 5% of sodium hypochlorite to 9 parts of water).

Case of an affected worker

- worker must **immediately stop work** and **seek medical assistance**. The staff should **stay isolated in a suitable room** while the medical services are being notified.
- symptomatic worker should be provided with disposable tissues and a **mask**.
- **Staff who report from home** that they are ill with respiratory symptoms should be advised to **stay at home** and seek medical attention
- Staff who report from home that they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 should **follow the instructions received from the doctor**, including the recommendation of self-isolation at home until the symptoms have completely disappeared (Note: **For a COVID-19 patient to go through a mild form of the disease and fully recover takes about one month**).

Identification and management of contacts

In the context of a hotel and tourism accommodation establishment, a contact could be considered as:

- **Guest companions or persons providing care who had close contact with the suspected case;**
- The **staff** member designated to look after the ill persons, and other staff members who may have been in close contact with the ill persons or the facilities they use (e.g. bathroom) or their usual articles (e.g. used linen and clothes).

All contacts of COVID-19 patients should be quarantined for 14 days from the last time they were exposed to the patient

Non-affected guests

- These are persons considered to have had a **low-risk exposure**.
- They **should be provided with information** about the disease, its transmission, and preventive measures.
- They should be asked to **self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms**, including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing **for 14 days** from the date of departure of the confirmed case from the establishment.

References

Operational considerations for COVID-19 management in the accommodation sector. WHO Interim guidance. 30 April 2020