

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
Parivar Kalyan Bhawan, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh

No. COVID-19/NHM/Pb/20/1730-34

Date 21 July 2020 Chandigarh

To

1. Principal Secretary, Finance, Punjab.
2. Director, Institutional Finance and Banking, Punjab.
3. All Deputy Commissioners, Punjab.
4. Convener, State level Bankers Committee O/o Punjab National Bank, Chandigarh.
5. All the Civil Surgeons of Punjab.

Subject: Updated advisory on maintaining the hygiene and sanitization of bank spaces and the staff working therein during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID -19) is a systemic disease caused by a novel Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2), transmitted in most instances through respiratory droplets, direct contact with cases and also through contaminated surfaces/objects. Timely and correct information and knowledge about the corona virus is the key to control the pandemic. Advisory regarding banks was issued vide letter No. 3103 (R) - 3106 (R) Dated, Chandigarh the 23rd April, 2020 which is now updated as this advisory. With the phased reopening (Unlock-2) to be implemented, following recommendations are given with regard to banks and the staff working therein.

Specific Advisory:

1. The bank should ensure proper social distancing of at least 1 metre amongst its customers waiting outside the branch premises.
2. Banks should ensure that the customers are wearing a mask before entering the bank branch.
3. Banks should ensure that customer sanitizes his/her hands in the manner prescribed from the sanitizers mounted at the entrance of the bank's branches.
4. Banks should ensure a proper decorum inside the bank premises.

5. Banks should ensure proper social distancing of the customers visiting their branches in a manner that at least 1 metre gap exists not only among the customers but also the bank dealing officials and the customers.
6. Bank branches with a low footfall may provide sitting chairs for their customers by parking them at a distance of minimum 1 metre from each other.
7. The sanitizers shall be available in sufficient quantities at all the dealings points in the bank other than being mounted at the available open spaces inside the bank premises.

General Advisory:

1. Banks should be encouraged to have massive awareness campaigns for promoting digital transactions in its service area, use of electronic media to redress the grievances/queries of its customers, use of mobile based apps for quick information on available balances/loans etc. and minimal human interface in the physical bank branches.
2. The banks should also display the information mentioned in the above point outside its branches for the visiting customer as also in its ATMs.
3. The comprehensive plan with regard to staff be drawn up which shall include the sitting arrangement by keeping a minimum distance of 1 metre amongst the employees, flexible timings of reporting for duty, flexible timing of leaving the office, flexible timings of lunch and tea breaks in between with an objective to avoid clustering and cluttering of the staff.
4. The staff shall be advised not to indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other.
5. The staff shall further be advised not to roam unnecessarily in the banks and to work from their allotted space only. Use of intercoms/electronic media for interpersonal communication of the staff should be encouraged.
6. Staff should be advised to wear masks at all times immediately from leaving the house till the entry back into the house.
7. The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth.

8. The mask, if cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. If using surgical mask it should be discarded as per procedure. In case an N-95 masks is being worn, it must be used as per maker guidelines/instructions.
9. Face shields, in addition to the face mask, may be used where the workspace is crowded and maintaining a physical distance of 1 meter at all times may not be feasible.
10. Installation of thermal scanners at the entry gate of the bank space is advisable as also after to screen the staff suffering from high fever. The normal human body temperature is 97.7 to 99.5-degree Fahrenheit or 36.5 to 37.5-degree centigrade. The temperature must be checked for every person while entering and leaving the premises and a daily record of the readings be maintained in a designated register with name and contact number of the person. Anyone with higher temperature should not be allowed to enter the premises.
11. The bank manager should encourage the staff to stay at home in case of any fever or other symptoms related to the COVID-19 and seek medical advice.
12. Staff detected with high fever during the office hours does not mandatorily mean that he/she is suffering from COVID-19. It is advised to get the staff suffering from high fever medically examined by the bank manager only by temporarily isolating him/her from the rest of the bank space before drawing any conclusion/inferences and before sending him/her back to home.
13. Alcohol-based sanitizer (minimum 70% ethyl alcohol v/v) should be mounted at the entrance wall of the banks for the staff to sanitize their hands before entering the premises further. The sanitizers are to be refilled/replaced frequently. Use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.
14. Wash the hands with soap for at least 40 seconds applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger and the thumb and the wrist.
15. In case of multi-storied banks where the elevators (commonly called lifts) are to be used, sanitizers shall be mounted near the entry door of the elevator at each and every floor. The staff may be advised to apply the sanitizer on the hands immediately after pressing the elevator's button before touching any other surface/body part. In case of self-driven lifts, the sanitizer should also be made available inside the lifts for the usage of the staff.

16. Banks should ensure proper ventilation inside the premises. Exhaust fans may be installed for the ventilation. Doors/ windows must be kept open in Air-conditioned rooms for proper ventilation of air. Please refer to the advisory on Air-conditioning for its safe usage during COVID-19.

17. Disinfection of the bank's spaces

- a. **Indoor Areas:** Indoor areas including banks spaces and conference rooms should be cleaned every evening after banks hours or early in the morning before rooms are occupied. If the contact surface is visibly dirty, it should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Prior to cleaning, the worker should wear disposable rubber boots, gloves (heavy duty), and a cloth mask.
- Start cleaning from cleaner areas and proceed towards dirtier areas.
 - All indoor areas such as entrance lobbies, corridors and staircases, escalators, elevators, security guard booths, banks rooms, meeting rooms, cafeteria should be mopped with a disinfectant with 1% sodium hypochlorite or equivalent disinfectants available commercially.
 - High contact surfaces such elevator buttons, handrails / handles and call buttons, escalator handrails, public counters, intercom systems, equipment like telephone, printers/scanners, and other banks machines should be cleaned twice daily by mopping with a linen/absorbable cloth soaked in 1% sodium hypochlorite. Frequently touched areas like table tops, chair handles, pens, diary files, keyboards, mouse, mouse pad, tea/coffee dispensing machines etc. should specially be cleaned.
 - For metallic surfaces like door handles, security locks, keys etc. 70% alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach is not suitable.
 - Hand sanitizing stations should be installed in banks premises wherever open space is available and near high contact surfaces.
 - Carefully clean the equipment used in cleaning at the end of the cleaning process.
 - Protective gear used during sanitation process should be discarded as per the requirements.

