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சனாதிபதி அலுவலகம்
PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT



Circular No: PS/GPA/Circular/20/2020

18.04.2020

Secretaries to Ministries
Chief Secretaries of Provinces
District Secretaries
Heads of Department
Divisional Secretaries
Chairpersons of State Corporations / Statutory Boards / General Managers

**Guidelines to be adhered to by Government Offices during the
opening of districts for resumption of normal day to day activities
during COVID-19**

The Government has decided to ease COVID-19 related restrictions currently imposed in the country on a gradual basis to enable Government offices to resume normal day-to-day activities. Therefore, all Government offices which resume work in geographical areas where such restrictions are eased shall adhere to the following guidelines:

1.0 Take all necessary healthcare measures to ensure the prevention of COVID-19 in the workplace.

- Ensure strict compliance with regard to social distancing, wearing of face masks, hand washing and other measures in all Government offices in all districts.
- Maintain all workplaces in clean and sanitary condition, in particular, public spaces, countertops, workstations, lunch rooms and tea rooms, office cafeterias, toilets and other shared spaces at all times.
- Workplaces that have frequent visits by the general public in particular should provide access to hand washing with soap and water and/or to sanitizing hand rub dispensers placed in prominent locations in workplace premises.
- Display notices prominently in the workplace, both for employees and the general public, providing information on healthcare and sanitation guidelines that need to be followed.

- e. Worksite and Office Premises Healthcare Guidelines which have already been developed by the Ministry of Roads and Highways shall be enforced during the implementation of construction projects.
- f. Manage workplace meetings with only essential participants in attendance, or scale down the meeting so that fewer people attend.
- g. Encourage teleworking wherever feasible and as much as possible to minimize crowding the workplace (See also Para 4.0 below).
- h. Schools, higher education institutions and vocational education institutions in all districts will remain closed but operate on distance learning mode and remote working arrangements (See also Para 4.0 b below).
- i. No religious activities, meetings with large gatherings etc should be organized during this period.
- j. Suspend work related travel that is non-essential. Advise employees who have to undertake essential travel to comply with prevailing regulations in the particular geographical areas.
- k. Instruct employees that anyone with even mild symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home.
- l. Maintain names and contact details of all employees, participants at meetings and others providing various services at the workplace.
- m. Comply further with COVID-19 preparedness for workplaces guidelines issued by the Directorate of Environmental health, Occupational health and Food safety of the Ministry of Health, accessible via link:
http://www.epid.gov.lk/web/images/pdf/Circulars/Corona_virus/workplac_e-covid-guideline02042020.pdf
- n. Assign an officer to regularly monitor workplace conditions for compliance with health and sanitation safeguards and take immediate mitigation action where required.

2.0 Plan and implement a mechanism for employees to return to work in phases.

- a. Government offices shall resume normal office functions initially with a limited staff. Each Head of Institution shall issue specific instructions on the mode of work during this period.
- b. Government offices in Districts, except Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Puttlam and any other vulnerable districts as declared on the advice of the Director General of Health Services, shall operate initially with only 50% of employees reporting to work on a rotational basis. The selection of employees may be on the basis of employee category, service requirement, skill capacity, proximity to workplace or similar criteria.
- c. Government offices in Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Puttlam and any other vulnerable districts as declared on the advice of the Director General of Health Services, shall operate initially with only 20% of employees reporting to work on a rotational basis. As above, Heads of Institutions may adopt suitable criteria for selection of employees.

- d. Deployment of staff in each institution shall be determined by the respective Head of Institution. Flexible working hours, such as working in 02 separate time sessions during the day to reduce overcrowding in workplaces and public transport, may be arranged at the discretion of the Head of Institution.
- e. Make arrangements to ensure that Government services are delivered continuously even if a certain proportion of employees is not reporting to work.

3.0 Introduce special measures to ensure that the general public seeking public services do not overcrowd workplaces or public transport systems.

- a. Government offices that routinely cater to public requirements should introduce special mechanisms for the general public to obtain services during this period when limited employees are reporting for work.
- b. Heads of Institutions may offer different categories of public services on designated dates and times to prevent high numbers of people visiting workplaces. Such mechanisms should be adequately communicated to the public via mass media and other communication methods.
- c. Innovative solutions such as informing the general public to visit Government offices on particular days based on the National Identity Card numbering system may be introduced by Heads of Institutions and communicated to the public via mass media.
- d. Existing remote service delivery mechanisms to provide services to the public and businesses through digital means should be strengthened, while new digital mechanisms should be introduced in consultation with the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA).
- e. Employ the use of SMS, mobile applications, and email to the extent possible during the gradual migration towards providing government services through digital means.

4.0 Continue performance of routine work with Work from Home (WFH) Arrangements

- a. Each Head of Institution shall determine the type of work to be carried out via WFH arrangements, the specific employees to attend to such work, the frequency of employees reporting to work during the week, arrangements in place for urgent recall of employees on WFH to workplace etc. In doing so, attention may be paid to:
 - Decide which employees may work from home, which employees need to report to work and the frequency with which they are required to report to workplace during the week.
 - Consider offering work to employees who need to report to workplace in 02 separate time sessions during normal work hours in order to prevent crowding of public transport systems and workplaces.
 - Continue the use of on-line arrangements as much as possible for performance of work by employees.

- Set daily deadlines for all routine tasks to be completed via WFH.
 - Convert all possible work to assignments with specific deadlines.
 - Require all employees who are on WFH to maintain call-up diaries as well as a record of their official work, carried out on a daily basis.
- b. All employees are advised to ensure that their children have uninterrupted access to education by directing them towards on-line learning resources and TV educational programmes. *Channel Eye* and *Nethra* TV stations will commence telecast of educational programmes from April 20th, 2020 dedicated for general education (4.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.) and higher education and vocational education (9.30 p.m. to 12.00 a.m.) under the guidance of Ministries in charge of Education, Higher Education and Skills Development.
- c. All employees on WFH are advised to allocate time to engage in home gardening during this period which can serve to supplement food requirements at home as well.
- d. Attention is drawn to paragraph (2.I) of the President's Secretary's circular, PS/CSA/Circular/18/2020, dated 30.03.2020. Each Head of Institution is to consider suggestions made by employees on systems re-engineering (to simplify procedures) and obtain approval of Secretaries to the relevant line Ministries to implement those.



P B Jayasundera
Secretary to the President

CC: Secretary to the Prime Minister
Secretary to the Cabinet of Ministers
Auditor General
Secretaries to Independent Commissions