



EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES AUTHORITY

COVID-19 WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

(JULY, 2020)

FOREWORD

The Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) is a State Corporation responsible for the promotion and facilitation of export-oriented investments and the development of an enabling environment for investment in the export sector.

The Authority has developed COVID-19 Workplace Guidelines in response to the new Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). COVID -19 is a serious respiratory viral infection caused by a novel coronavirus recently named SARS-COV2. The outbreak started in Wuhan City, Hubei Province in mainland China and has since spread globally, infecting millions of people resulting in numerous deaths all over the world.

To contain the spread of the virus within the Authority, measures have been put in place in accordance with the Government of Kenya (GoK) Workplace Guidelines on Covid-19 Pandemic. These measures are expected to contain and decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in our workplace by preventing and reducing the transmission among employees, maintaining a healthy work environment and maintaining healthy and sustainable business operations.

I expect every employee to adhere to these guidelines to effectively manage the Coronavirus epidemic. With these guidelines, we expect to contain the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its effect in the workplace.

As experience and knowledge on COVID-19 is rapidly evolving, these guidelines will be updated periodically.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the registration of the first COVID-19 case in March 2020 in the country, EPZA has been committed to adhering to Government's guidelines on Safety and Health requirements that include provision of resources and development of guidelines to be followed by employees and workplace users in order to promote healthy employees and users.

The Authority though being faced with COVID-19 challenges, has the will to ensure the return to full operations/business to implement economic recovery and sustainability programs. It is therefore prudent that employees adopt new ways of behavioural change in the fight against COVID-19 both in the working environment and at home to reduce the level of self-contamination and infection with the virus.

In Kenya, the Ministry of Health and Public Health Authorities are taking actions to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. However, long term success cannot be taken for granted. All sections of our society – including businesses and employers – must play a role if we are to stop the spread of this disease. It is for this reason that the Authority has developed the following guidelines to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The Guidelines are aimed at ensuring continuity of Authority's operations while at same time strictly observing containment measures. The guidelines, though not exhaustive provide a framework within which individual operations can be safely run. The guidelines have been developed through adopting and customizing the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and will be updated as and when new information arise.

2.0 ABOUT COVID-19

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It has spread from China to many other countries around the world, including Kenya. Depending on the severity of COVID-19's international impacts, outbreak conditions-including those rising to the level of a pandemic-can affect all aspects of daily life, including travel, trade, tourism, food supplies, and financial markets.

To reduce the impact of COVID-19 outbreak conditions on businesses, workers, customers, and the public, it is important for all employers to plan now for COVID-19. Lack of continuity planning can result in a cascade of failures as employers attempt to address challenges of COVID-19 with

insufficient resources and workers who might not be adequately trained for jobs they may have to perform under pandemic conditions.

2.1 Symptoms of COVID-19

The following symptoms may develop after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- i. Infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can cause illness ranging from mild to severe and, in some cases, can be fatal. Symptoms typically include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- ii. Some people infected with the virus have reported experiencing other non-respiratory symptoms.
- iii. Other people, referred to as asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.
- iv. According to the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

2.2 How COVID-19 Spreads

The spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (2 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus are the main means of transmission.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, including:

- a) Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet);
- b) Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs;

- c) It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has SARS-CoV-2 on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes;
- d) People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (i.e., experiencing fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this type of asymptomatic transmission with this new coronavirus;

2.3 How long the virus can survive

How long any respiratory virus survives will depend on a number of factors, for example:

- a. What surface the virus is on
- b. Whether it is exposed to sunlight
- c. Differences in temperature and humidity
- d. Exposure to cleaning products

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to decrease significantly over 72 hours.

We know that similar viruses are transferred to and by people's hands. Therefore, regular hand hygiene and cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will help to reduce the risk of infection.

2.4 How a COVID-19 Outbreak Could Affect Workplace

Similar to influenza viruses, SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has the potential to cause extensive outbreaks. In the absence of a vaccine, an outbreak may also be an extended event. As a result, workplaces may experience:

- a) **Absenteeism**-Workers could be absent because they are sick, are caregivers for sick family members, are caregivers for children if schools or day care centres are closed, have at-risk people at home, such as immunocompromised family members or are afraid to come to work because of fear of possible exposure.
- b) **Change in patterns of commerce**- Consumers may also change shopping patterns because of a COVID-19 outbreak. Consumers may try to shop at off-peak hours to reduce contact with other people, show increased interest in home delivery services, or prefer other options, such as drive-through service, to reduce person-to-person contact.
- c) **Interrupted supply / delivery**- Shipments of items from geographic areas severely affected by COVID-19 may be delayed or cancelled with or without notification.

3.0 MEASURES TO MITIGATE SPREAD OF COVID-19

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Prevention measures such as those described below should be taken now, even if COVID-19 there are no known cases of the virus. These measures should be included in the workplace risk assessment that covers all risks.

3.1 GoK Workplace Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic

The following prevention and control measures have been prepared in order to prepare the Authority for the possibility of an outbreak of COVID-19 in its workplaces. Table 1 outlines Workplace Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic as issued by the Executive Office of the President vide circular Ref No. OP/CAB.26/1/3A dated 20th July,2020.

S/NO	CONTROL MEASURES	DESCRIPTION
1.	Promotion of Social and Physical distancing	In order to promote social and physical distancing at the Authority, employees are required to: a) Avoid any form of congregation except as provided in Government directives on COVID-19 pandemic; b) Re-arrange work places to not less than 1.5 meters between staff sharing an office; and c) Minimize walk-in visitors except by prior appointment, maintain social and physical distance and record the details of such visitors.
2.	State and Public Officers with pre-existing medical conditions	a) All Authority's employees with pre-existing medical conditions and/or aged 58 years and above serving in CSG5 (Job Group "S") and below or their equivalents should forthwith work from home; and b) This excludes personnel in the security services and other critical essential services.
3.	Work Place Hygiene and Safety	The most effective way to limit the spread of the virus is through the basic changes in individual behaviour and hygiene. In this regard, the following precautionary measures should be adhered to by the Authority and staff; a) Provide face masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to staff; b) Provide alcohol-based sanitizers and access to washing facilities with soap and clean water for staff and citizens accessing services; c) Carry out temperature checks for all staff and clients entering the Authority's premises;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Ensure work places are clean and hygienic by regularly wiping surfaces such as door handles, desks, tables, telephones and keyboards among others with disinfectant; e) Undertake regular fumigation of office premises, vehicles, washrooms in line with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health from time to time; f) Sanitize all incoming mail and documents prior to opening, encourage use of electronic mail and scanned documents; g) Staff and clients to wash hands frequently with soap and water or sanitize hands with alcohol-based sanitizers; h) Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow; i) Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms; and j) Wear face masks properly to cover nose and mouth while in public places at all times.
4.	Working from Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where the concept of working from home has been successfully implemented, such arrangements should continue to apply with clear targets and deliverables from the officers; b) Prepare a weekly duty rota covering minimum personnel numbers to ensure business continuity indicating the officers who will be in-charge of operations; and c) Where an officer is permitted in writing to work from home, there should be clear assignments and targets tasked for the period designated and a clear reporting line to monitor and review work done.
5.	Return to work after Quarantine and Isolation	<p>At the end of the Quarantine or Isolation period, the employee shall be required to satisfy the following conditions before returning to work;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Obtain the requisite Clearance from the Quarantine or Isolation facility certified by the designated persons indicating that the employee is free and safe from the COVID-19. The employee will present these documents to the his/her supervisor at the point of returning to work; b) Stay away from the duty station for a period of seven (7) days after the date of medical certification; c) Comply with the Government guidelines on prevention of COVID-19 including wearing of masks, social distancing, maintaining of clean surfaces and wearing of other personal protective equipment.

		<p>d) Employees on Self-Quarantine will be required to report to their duty station after the expiry of the fourteen (14) day requirements;</p> <p>e) The period the employee spends in Quarantine or Isolation due to COVID-19 shall be treated as sick leave and shall be subject o the provisions of the EPZA Human Resource Policy and Procedures Manual (July,2017).</p> <p>f) No employee shall be allowed to return to work without fulfilling the above requirements.</p>
6.	Stigma and Discrimination	<p>a) Employees shall have access to adequate mental health and psychosocial support being offered by the Authority's Medical Scheme.</p> <p>b) Employees returning to work from COVID-19 Quarantine and/or Isolation shall not be discriminated or stigmatized; and</p> <p>c) It is an offense to discriminate any person on grounds of actual, perceived or suspected COVID -19 status in the work place.</p>
7.	Conduct of Meetings	<p>Where meetings are necessary, the following measures should be observed;</p> <p>a) All meetings of more than four (4) persons should be conducted through available online platforms such as Webex and Zoom;</p> <p>b) Ensure that participants are seated at least 1.5 metres apart and windows and doors are kept open whenever possible to make sure the venue is well ventilated;</p> <p>c) Ensure that participants wear face masks at all times during the meeting; and</p> <p>d) Ensure that all participants in physical meetings provide their contact details; mobile telephone numbers, email and physical address.</p>

4.0 ADDITIONAL WORKPLACE GUIDELINES/MEASURES

Further to the GoK Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic, the Authority has developed additional measures to complement GoK Guidelines. These additional guidelines/measure do not in all material aspects substitute GoK Guidelines and are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist the Authority in having a safe and healthful workplace.

4.1 Quarantine

Quarantine is the separation and restricted movement of well persons presumed exposed to COVID-19. It keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine can either be self-quarantine or carried out at a designated facility.

In case of Quarantine, all employees shall be required to adhere to the MoH guidelines. This measures such as;

- i. If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19;
- ii. Continue to observe respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette and hand hygiene;
- iii. Observe body temperature twice daily and watch for symptoms of COVID-19;

4.2 Isolation

Isolation keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home. This helps stop the virus spreading to other people.

4.3 Handling of suspected/confirmed COVID-19 cases at work

If an employee becomes unwell at work and there is reason to suspect they may have come into contact with COVID-19, the Authority shall ensure adherence to the instructions as given by Health Authorities. Further,

- e) The employee will be isolated to a well-ventilated room or area which is at least 2 metres away from other people;
- f) If it is an emergency, the Authority's Authority's COVID Response Team will contact Health Services for medical advice and further action;
- g) Contact with the affected will be restricted, and surfaces/equipment used by the affected employee will be cleaned as per guidance from public health officials;
- h) The Authority's COVID Response Team will liaise/inform the Public health officials to commence contact tracing of the affected person as well as Identify close contacts among employees and family members (up to 2 days prior to the symptoms onset.);
- i) Suspected contacts will maintain self – isolation for at least 14 days after illness reporting by the Authority's employee. They should too confirm that they have not had fever for at least 72 hours, without use of fever reducing medications;
- j) Staff who have recovered from COVID -19 will be allowed to work from home unless if it would adversely affect service delivery;

- k) All employees are further to follow instructions as given by Health Authorities from time to time.

4.4 Cleaning offices and public spaces where there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19

COVID-19 symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include dry cough, sore throat, fever, tiredness or shortness of breath.

- a) Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned including:
 - i. All surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids;
 - ii. All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones
- b) Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.
- c) If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these should be cleaned using disposable cloths and the usual detergents, according to current recommended workplace legislation and practice. Precautionary measures should be taken to protect cleaners.
- d) All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the result is available. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste. Should the individual test positive, you will be instructed what to do with the waste by public health authorities.

4.5 Travelling and Staff Transport

Staff are urged to observe the Covid-19 preventive measures while traveling regardless of whether they are travelling by Authority's vehicles or Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) as follows;

4.5.1 Travel Measures

- a) The Authority will minimize non-essential travel and will resume resuming non-essential travel in accordance with travel regulations and guidance as issued by the health authorities from time to time;

- b) Staff who have returned from areas where COVID-19 countermeasures are in effect in the last 14 days will be required to abide with prevailing MoH guidelines. The Authority's COVID Response Committee shall communicate as appropriate measures to the staff returning from specified countries or areas;
- c) Staff returning from travel anywhere else within the last 14 days may be allowed continue to attend work unless they have been informed that they have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- d) If individual staff are aware that they have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should contact their employer and the designated public health services for further advice;

4.5.2 Authority's Vehicles

The Authority shall;

- a) Ensure that you maintain a social distance of 1.5 meters while traveling in Authority's vehicles;
- b) Sanitize the vehicles including seats and rails after dropping and before picking employees;
- c) To protect employees and limit congestion; entry/exit points will not allow vehicles carrying more than the required number of vehicles;
- d) Masks MUST be worn throughout the journey;
- e) Provide Alcohol-based hand sanitizers in the vehicles;

4.5.3 Public Transport (PSVs)

The Authority has no control over PSVs, thus;

- a) If feasible, staff should use forms of transportation that minimize close contact with others (e.g., biking, walking, driving or riding by car either alone or with household members);
- b) The staff are reminded to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene during and after the travel;
- c) Staff commuting by public means are urged to strictly follow public transport protocols issued by Ministry of Health i.e. ensure they wear face masks, keep distance of 1.5 meters and sanitize themselves before boarding and after disembarking the vehicle.

4.6 Measures on Organizing meetings/events

Where meetings are necessary, organizers of meeting should adhere to the measures (Conduct of meetings) provided by the MOH Workplace Guidelines on Covid-19 pandemic.

Notwithstanding above, organisers of meetings and events need to think about the potential risk from COVID-19 because:

- a) There is a risk that people attending the meeting or event might be unwittingly bringing the COVID-19 virus to the meeting.
- b) Others might be unknowingly exposed to COVID-19.

4.6.1 Before the meeting or event

The Authority will;

- a) Consider whether the meeting or event is necessary or whether it could be postponed or replaced with a tele or video conference or can be scaled down so that fewer people attend;
- b) Check and follow the latest advice from MOH Guidelines in the area/region where you plan to hold the meeting or event.
- c) Develop and agree a preparedness plan to prevent infection at your meeting or event
 - i. Ensure and verify information and communication channels in advance with key partners such as public health care authorities;
 - ii. Pre-order sufficient supplies and materials, including tissues and hand sanitizer for all participants;
 - iii. Actively monitor where COVID-19 is circulating. Advise participants in advance that if they have any symptoms or feel unwell, they should not attend;
 - iv. Make sure all organisers, participants, caterers and visitors at the event provide contact details: mobile telephone number, email and address where they are staying. State clearly that their details will be shared with local public health authorities if any participant becomes ill with a suspected infectious disease.
- d) Inform the participants they shall be handled as the per Authority's guidelines in case they become unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 at the meeting becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19.

4.6.2 During the meeting or event

The Authority will;

- a) Provide information or a briefing, preferably both orally and in writing, on COVID-19 and the measures that organisers are taking to make this event safe for participants;
 - i. Build trust. For example, as an icebreaker, practice ways to say hello without touching;
 - ii. Encourage regular hand-washing or use of an alcohol rub by all participants at the meeting or event;
 - iii. Encourage participants to cover their face with the crook of their elbow or a tissue if they cough or sneeze. Supply tissues and closed bins to dispose of them in;
 - iv. Provide contact details or a health hotline number that participants can call for advice or to give information;
- b) Provide dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub prominently around the venue;
- c) If there is space, arrange seats so that participants are at least two metres apart;
- d) Open windows and doors whenever possible to make sure the venue is well ventilated;
- e) If anyone starts to feel unwell, Authority will handle the participant as per its guidelines on what to do if an employee or a member of the public becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19).

4.6.3 After the meeting

The following will apply;

- a) The Authority will Retain the names and contact details of all participants for at least one month. This will help health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 if one or more participants become ill shortly after the event;
- b) If someone at the meeting or event was isolated as a suspected COVID-19 case, the Authority will let all participants know this. They should be advised to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days. If they start to feel unwell, they should stay at home and contact the relevant public health authority

4.7 Normal Sickness Sick-off and Health Monitoring

The following will apply;

- a) Employees who fall sick for whatever cause will be required to seek for treatment as provided for in the current medical scheme;

- b) If it turns that the sickness exhibits symptoms associated or related to COVID-19, the employee will be required to signal the supervisor and isolate himself/herself so as not to expose colleagues;
- c) If the dependent of an employee exhibits the symptoms of COVID-19, the employee should notify his/her supervisor immediately for further guidance;
- d) The Authority through COVID Response Committee will/ has made arrangements for treatment and isolation of Covid-19 related sickness under the current medical cover;
- e) Staff exhibiting symptoms from other regions other than Nairobi are advised to consult the respective HR Managers at their stations.

4.8 Management of COVID-19 Related Wastes

- a) Corona virus can survive for long in surfaces, the used masks, gloves and other items may become a new source of infection.
- b) If the waste masks, gloves and sanitizer bottles are tossed in a confined space such as an office, they may contaminate the environment, posing a potential threat to people within it.
- c) The management of waste shall be in accordance to the regulations 37- 43 of the Environmental Management and Coordination (Waste Management) Regulations of 2006 as well as the regular guidelines issued by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA).
- d) The Authority will provide waste pedal bins that will have biohazard bin liners at various points for waste collection.
- e) In case of suspected biomedical waste, the waste will be in yellow bags and handed over to NEMA licensed Waste Collectors.
 - i. All biomedical waste shall be handled with care to avoid spillage of the same on the road/Highways during transportation;
 - ii. workers involved in the handling and collection of biomedical waste will be required sanitize regularly;
 - iii. Workers shall be provided with adequate PPEs, including three (3) layer masks, splash proof aprons, gowns, nitrite gloves, gumboots and safety goggles;
 - iv. There will be a dedicated vehicle for collection of COVID-19 related waste;
 - v. Vehicle will be sanitized with sodium hypochlorite or any appropriate chemical disinfectant after every trip.

4.9 COVID-19 Awareness Creation, Psycho-Social Support and Training

COVID-19 pandemic calls for increased awareness of the importance of caring for our mental health wellbeing.

- a) In terms of awareness creation, the Authority will erect COVID-19/coronavirus signs/posters and markings at various installations of the Authority;
- b) The Authority will/has an existing framework with our medical service providers on how employees can receive professional help and support;
- c) Employees are encouraged to contact Human Resource Department/ COVID Response Committee for assistance if faced with any challenge while seeking treatment;
- d) The authority will endeavor to provide Covid-19 related training under medical service providers or any approved institutions. The scope of the training shall include among other things:
 - i. Policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19;
 - ii. General hygiene;
 - iii. Symptoms, what to do if sick;
 - iv. Cleaning and disinfection;
 - v. Cloth face covers;
 - vi. Social distancing;
 - vii. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
 - viii. Safe work practices;
 - ix. Stress management.

