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सचिव

**PREETI SUDAN, IAS**  
Secretary



भारत सरकार  
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग  
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय  
Government of India  
Department of Health and Family Welfare  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

D.O.No.Z-21020/14/2020-PH  
17-3-2020

Dear Colleagues,

A number of measures have been taken both by Govt of India and by the States to contain nCoronavirus/COVID-19. These include dissemination of Do's & Don'ts, guidelines on wearing of masks, action on various travel advisories, implementation of protocols on surveillance, prevention of hospital infection, discharge policy, clinical management, etc. Kindly visit our website <https://mohfw.gov.in> for details.

Extensive consultations have been held with public health experts who have suggested to focus on social distancing measures as a preventive strategy to contain transmission of Covid-19. It was brought out that implementation of social distancing measures would have a major impact in limiting the spread and will also provide us with time to strengthen our response framework.

Accordingly, advisory/guidelines are drawn up for further action. While implementing these measures, it is important to educate the community so as to ensure their cooperation and avoid any panic. It is reiterated that these are preventive measures so as to lessen the impact of COVID-19 in the country and are temporary.

I shall be grateful if the enclosed advisory/guidelines are implemented as applicable to your particular Ministry/Department and organizations under you. You may also like to issue your own orders/advisory in this regard. Please direct States implement these effectively.

With collective effort, we will succeed in containing Covid-19.

*Warm regards,*  
Yours sincerely,

*Preeti Sudan*  
(Preeti Sudan)

Secretaries to GoI of all Ministries/Departments

Encl.: as above

### Advisory on Social Distancing Measure in view of spread of COVID-19 disease

Social distancing is a non-pharmaceutical infection prevention and control intervention implemented to avoid/decrease contact between those who are infected with a disease causing pathogen and those who are not, so as to stop or slow down the rate and extent of disease transmission in a community. This eventually leads to decrease in spread, morbidity and mortality due to the disease.

In addition to the proposed interventions, the State/UT Governments may prescribe such other measures as they consider necessary.

All these proposed interventions shall be in force till 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2020. They will be reviewed as per the evolving situation.

#### **The following interventions are proposed:**

1. Closure of all educational establishments (schools, universities etc), gyms, museums, cultural and social centres, swimming pools and theatres. Students should be advised to stay at home. Online education to be promoted.
2. Possibility of postponing exams may be explored. Ongoing exams to be conducted only after ensuring physical distance of one meter amongst students.
3. Encourage private sector organizations/employers to allow employees to work from home wherever feasible.
4. Meetings, as far as feasible, shall be done through video conferences. Minimize or reschedule meetings involving large number of people unless necessary.
5. Restaurants to ensure handwashing protocol and proper cleanliness of frequently touched surfaces. Ensure physical distancing (minimum: 1metre) between tables; encourage open air seating where practical with adequate distancing.
6. Keep already planned weddings to a limited gathering, postpone all non-essential social and cultural gatherings.
7. Local authorities to have a dialogue with organizers of sporting events and competitions involving large gatherings and they may be advised to postpone such events.
8. Local authorities to have a dialogue with opinion leaders and religious leaders to regulate mass gatherings and should ensure no overcrowding/at least one metre distance between people.

9. Local authorities to have meeting with traders associations and other stakeholders to regulate hours, exhibit Do's and Don'ts and take up a communication drive in market places like sabzi mandi, anaj mandi, bus depots, railway stations, post-offices etc., where essential services are provided.
10. All commercial activities must keep a distance of one meter between customers. Measures to reduce peak hour crowding in markets.
11. Non-essential travel should be avoided. Buses, Trains and aeroplanes to maximize social distancing in public transport besides ensuring regular and proper disinfection of surfaces.
12. Hospitals to follow necessary protocol related with COVID-19 management as prescribed and restrict family/friends/children visiting patients in hospitals.
13. Hygiene and physical distancing has to be maintained. Shaking hands and hugging as a matter of greeting to be avoided.
14. Special protective measures for delivery men/ women working in online ordering services.
15. Keep communities informed consistently and constantly.

**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**