

Annexure 13: Interim Guidelines to Ensure Adequate Preventive Measures for COVID-19 in Prisons

**MOST URGENT / TOP PRIORITY**



No.PA/AS/Misc.2020  
**GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB  
PRIMARY & SECONDARY HEALTHCARE  
DEPARTMENT**

Dated: 24.03.2020

To,

1. Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Government of Punjab
2. Inspector General of Police, Punjab
3. Inspector General of Prisons, Government of Punjab
4. All Commissioners in Punjab
5. Director General, Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Punjab
6. All Deputy Commissioners in Punjab
7. All Chief Executive Officers, District Health Authorities in Punjab
8. All Medical Superintendents, DHQ/THQ Hospitals in Punjab

SUBJECT: **INTERIM GUIDELINES TO ENSURE ADEQUATE PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR COVID-19 IN PRISONS**

Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department has prepared 'Guidelines to Control Spread of COVID-19 in Prisons'. The guidelines provide for the prevention of COVID-19, controlling its outbreak and protecting the health and well-being of all prisoners, staff including cleaning workers, visitors and families of jail staff. These guidelines are, hereby, issued as follows: -

<b>1. SCOPE</b>	In order to contain likely exponential spread of COVID-19 in the prisons and respective lock-ups established within the premises of Police Stations and different Courts, the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD), hereby, issues 'Guidelines to Control Spread of COVID-19 in Prisons'.
<b>2. HOW THIS GUIDE WILL HELP?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ This guideline is intended to assist healthcare and prison staff working in prisons to coordinate Public Health Preventive Measures as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Provide immediate information about COVID-19 to the prisoners and staff deputed at the jail;</li><li>○ Explain about precautionary measures to help prevent spread of COVID-19;</li><li>○ Educate about SOPs for identifying, coordinating with Health Department and contact tracing in case a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified;</li></ul></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Provide information to visitors including family members</li> <li>□ Staff should work together with health-care teams in prisons following provincial COVID-19 Guidelines (copy attached) and SOPs to enable identification of suspected cases among prisoners and jail staff for their subsequent management.</li> </ul>
<b>3.</b>	<b>SCREENING PROTOCOLS IN THE PRISONS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ COVID-19 screening is advised to be included in general screening of prisoners at the time of entry.</li> <li>□ For existing jail inmates, healthcare and public health teams should undertake a risk assessment of all people and environment in which they are interacting;</li> <li>□ Screening of existing jail inmates will be scheduled and undertaken by the trained health staff;</li> <li>□ Information should be collected for prisoners/detainees, visitors and prison staff on any history of cough and/or shortness of breath, patients' recent travel history and possible contact with confirmed COVID-19 cases in last 14 days in jail environment, by the visitors or in Court etc.</li> <li>□ Restrict visitors or make arrangements for distributing visitors on calendar days to minimize the chances of infection transmission.</li> <li>□ The symptoms screening of visitors should be arranged on the visitor's day.</li> <li>□ For asymptomatic visitors with recent travel history or history of coming from areas of sustained community transmission, this criterion should also be included in the screening protocols.</li> <li>□ A detailed daily registry of people moving in and out of the prison should be maintained and while every entry or re-entry into jail premises, mandatory medical screening be ensured.</li> <li>□ The staff and their family members residing within prison premises should also be screened.</li> <li>□ Any new appointee, transferee or reliever of prison staff should be screened for COVID-19 before joining or relieving the prison duties;</li> <li>□ Any prisoner suspects with symptoms of COVID-19 shall be separated from others and shifted to Isolation Unit.</li> <li>□ The prisoners sharing space with such patient should be 'quarantined' in designated area and will be screened again subject to the satisfaction of health staff.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT PREPARATION AND IMPROVEMENT IN JAIL</b>
	<b>(A) ASSESSMENT OF SITE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Assessment of the prison site is conducted to ensure:</li> <li>b) Protection of health and well-being of people detained in prisons and others in closed settings (Administrative Units, Prison Cells, Visitors Area,</li> </ul>

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	<p>Jail Transport Bus, etc.</p> <p>c) Reduce the risk of outbreaks which could place a considerable demand on health-care services in prisons;</p> <p>d) Reduce the likelihood that COVID-19 will spread within prisons and other places of detention;</p> <p>e) Ensure the needs of prisons and other detention settings are considered in local health and emergency planning;</p> <p>f) Support the continued safe operation of prisons;</p> <p>g) Consider special needs of prisoners like wheelchair bound pregnant lactating mothers and children etc.</p> <p>h) Established coordination mechanism between Prison Authorities and local public health officials.</p>
	<b>(B) SIGN POSTING</b>
	The areas and cells identified for different purposes for COVID-19 patients/suspects must be properly labeled e.g., Isolation Ward, Quarantine Block etc.
	<b>(C) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRISON AUTHORITIES</b>
	<p><b>PLACEMENT</b></p> <p>The prisoners should be placed in well-ventilated cell or barrack in the jail.</p> <p><b>RESTRICTED MOVEMENT AND GATHERING</b></p> <p>a) Limit the movement of the prisoners and staff in the corridors and minimize the existing shared space.</p> <p>b) Preferably prisoners be kept in a different cells, or, in case of barracks ensure to maintain a distance of at least <b>1-METER</b> among the prisoners.</p> <p><b>INFECTION PREVENTION PRACTICES</b></p> <p>a) Toilet and washing facilities should be regularly cleaned and disinfected;</p> <p>b) Availability of soap shall be ensured in all toilet and washing facilities;</p> <p>c) Educate and advise prisoners to perform hand-hygiene (washing their hand for at least 20 Seconds quite often);</p> <p>d) Hand hygiene should also be performed before and after preparing food, before eating, after using the toilet, and whenever hands look dirty;</p> <p>e) Sanitizers should be made available in the prisoner's cells and barracks and prisoners should be educated on use of sanitizers;</p> <p>f) The waste from cells and barracks shall be collected in hazard bags and to be disposed-off observing SOPs.</p>

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### **EDUCATION ON RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTES**

- a) Prisoners must be educated on cough and respiratory etiquettes.

### **USE OF PROTECTIVE MASK**

- b) To contain spread by droplets, a medical mask should be provided to the prisoners sharing space in same cell and should be educated on proper use and disposal of masks.
- c) Enough IPC supplies (mask, gloves, tissues, sanitizers etc.) should be provided at Quarantine cell of the prison.
- d) Staff members and ill prisoners should also wear a medical mask that covers their mouth and nose when visiting any quarantine cell.
- e) Health staff should use PPEs to protect from contact and droplet transmission while dealing with COVID-19 suspect and confirmed patients.
- f) If samples are required to be collected, trained staff in full PPEs (Level III) will collect, pack and transport the sample to designated lab.
- g) Isolation Unit staff will observe Level-III IPC Protocols.

### **DISINFECTION OF ENVIRONMENT**

- a) Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the prison cells and prisoners areas (e.g. bed frames, iron bars, tables, door handles, knobs, switches etc.) daily with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite Solution;
- b) Advise prisoners and jail staff not to touch the iron bars;
- c) Clean floor often with solutions available for floor cleaning or prepare 1% Sodium Hypochlorite Solution.

### **DISINFECTION OF TOILETS**

- a) Clean and disinfect surfaces of toilets and washing facilities at least once daily;
- d) Regular household soap or detergent should be used first for cleaning, and then, after rinsing, disinfect with regular household bleach solution/phenolic disinfectants.

### **UTENSILS AND LINEN**

- a) Clean the used clothes, bed linen, and bath and hand towels using regular laundry soap and water or machine wash at 60–90 °C (140–194 °F) with common household detergent, and dry thoroughly.
- b) Place used linen in separate laundry containers.
- c) Do not shake soiled laundry.

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The waste from cells/barracks will be collected in hazard bags and to be

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	disposed-off observing SOPs.
<b>5.</b>	<b>SOPs OF PRISONER OR STAFF WHO DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS</b>
	<p>a) Promptly inform the concerned Health Authorities, in case the prisoner or staff becomes symptomatic. He/She will be shifted to Isolation Unit for further management;</p> <p>b) All his/her close contacts will be identified, listed, quarantined (for 14 days) in the site especially prepared in the prison premises and followed up for an additional 14 days or till the report of that person turns out negative on lab testing.</p>

*Asim*  
24/3/20

**(DR. ASIM ALTAF)**  
Additional Secretary (Tech.)  
Primary & Secondary Healthcare  
Department

**No. & Date Even:**

A copy is forwarded for information and further necessary action to:

1. Secretary Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department, Government of Punjab
2. Secretary, Prosecution Department, Government of the Punjab
3. Additional Secretary (Staff) to Chief Secretary, Government of the Punjab
4. Director General Health Services, Punjab, Lahore
5. PSO to Secretary, Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department, Government of the Punjab.