Infection Control Branch

Health Advice on Prevention of
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Workplace
(Interim)

I. Disease information

Please visit the following website for disease information, affected areas and updated information related to COVID-19: https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html

2. The Department of Health advises staff and office management should take the following precautionary measures at their workplaces to minimize the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.

II. Preventive measures

A. Maintain Good Personal Hygiene and Immunity

(a) Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose.
(b) Maintain hand hygiene

i. Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching mouth, nose or eyes; after using the toilet; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing.

Last reviewed: 1 April 2021
ii. Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds, then dry with a disposable paper towel. When the hands are cleaned, do not touch the water tap directly again (for example, using a paper towel to wrap the faucet before turning it off). If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, hand hygiene with 70-80% alcohol-based hand rub as an effective alternative.

(c) **Check body temperature** regularly. Those with fever or respiratory symptoms or sudden loss of taste/smell should refrain from work, wear a surgical mask, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

(d) Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose the soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

(e) All must wear mask at all times. For safety reasons, mask-wearing is not recommended for:

i. children below age of 2 without supervision.
ii. people with difficulty breathing.
iii. people need assistance to remove the mask.

(f) N95 respirators are generally not recommended for use by the general public in community settings as surgical mask can protect against COVID-19 which is mainly transmitted by droplet and contact route. Special training is required for proper wearing and removal of N95 respirator. Otherwise the infective risk due to inadequate protection and contamination may be increased.

(g) Staff must wear mask at all times and keep appropriate social distance with others when in common facilities (e.g. resting room, changing room, conference room, pantry etc.) of the workplace. In case wearing mask is not feasible, for example when having meal or shower or performing heavy manual work, staff should keep at least 1.5 metres with others.

(h) **Complete the vaccination course.** The Government is implementing a territory-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for all Hong Kong residents. Please visit https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/ and https://booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp

(i) Special attention when having meals:

i. Staff are advised to stagger their meal time.
ii. Keep distancing of at least 1.5 metre and avoid sitting direct face-to-
face with others when having meals or having meals at designated areas with effective partitions.

iii. Perform hand hygiene before meal, removing or putting on mask.

iv. Avoid talking without mask while having meals as far as possible. Talk only after finishing meals and after putting on masks.

v. Perform environmental cleaning and disinfection after meal time.

vi. The dining place should be well-ventilated with adequate fresh air supply.

(j) Special attention when having breaks:

i. Keep appropriate social distancing.

ii. Wear mask properly.

iii. If wearing mask is not feasible, a social distancing of at least 1.5 metre needs to be kept. Avoid talking face-to-face without mask.

(k) Special attention for staff common room / room with storage cabinets / rooms for changing:

i. Keep appropriate social distancing.

ii. Wear mask properly. If mask has to be taken off temporarily during changing, do not talk without the mask on and put on the mask as soon as possible after changing.

iii. Avoid sharing of personal items such as towel.

iv. Avoid sharing of the same storage cabinet by different staff at the same time. Clean and disinfect after use especially if the storage cabinet needs to be shared with other staff.

v. Carry out regular environmental cleaning and disinfection of the place including storage cabinet at least daily.

(l) Special attention to shower facilities:

i. Keep social distancing between users of at least 1.5 metres. If necessary, use alternate shower heads or cubicles if they are not within enclosed individual cubicles.

ii. Carry out cleaning and disinfection of the shower cubicles at least once every 4 hours.

iii. Avoid sharing of personal items such as towel.

iv. Carry out regular environmental cleaning and disinfection on the facilities including storage cabinet at least daily.
(m) Special attention if staff needs to stay in overnight room:

   i. Single room is preferred.
   ii. If needs to share room, rooms should not be overcrowded and beds
       should be at least 1.5 metres apart. Beds should be arranged in a way
       that staff do not sleep face-to-face.
   iii. Staff needs to keep adequate social distance from others while using
        these facilities.
   iv. Keep rooms well-ventilated.

(n) Special attention to construction sites:

   If cargo containers are used for workers to have meals, changing or taking
   rest, need to ensure the following practices:

   i. Keep adequate social distancing
      - Limit the number of workers in each container at the same time
   ii. Keep adequate ventilation
      - Open windows if feasible
      - Maximize fresh air intake of the air conditioner and open exhaust
        fan to facilitate air circulation inside the cargo container
      - Air conditioner needs to be properly maintained: change filter
        regularly and clean / disinfect the air conditioner regularly

(o) Build up good body immunity by having a balanced diet, regular
    exercise and adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid alcohol
    consumption.

(p) Smoking is prohibited in most workplaces and is always discouraged from
    health perspective. Adequate social distancing of at least 1.5 metres needs
    to be kept during smoking. Do not pull down the mask to the chin and no
    talking during smoking. Wear mask and practice hand hygiene
    immediately after smoking.

(q) Staff are encouraged to join the Government’s “COVID-19 Targeted
    Group Testing Scheme”.

(r) The employer should put in place a mechanism to monitor compliance
    of preventive and control measures applicable to the site.

(s) Post up health education materials on hand hygiene, cough etiquette and
    COVID-19 in conspicuous sites to alert the staff and visitors. Relevant
    health education materials can be downloaded from the CHP website:
B. Visitors

(a) Visitors should check their temperature before visiting. Those with fever should cancel their visit, wear surgical mask and seek medical attention promptly.

(b) Facility owner should consider checking temperature for visitors and deny entry of those with fever.

(c) All visitors must wear mask and perform hand hygiene before entering the premises; keep vigilant and maintain good personal hygiene.

(d) To facilitate contact tracing when necessary, all visitors are encouraged to use the “LeaveHomeSafe” or to register their particulars (name, contact number, date, time of the visit). The list needs to be kept for 31 days following governments’ advice.

(e) Take a shower or bath and wash your hair when you return home, and wash your clothes properly.

C. Maintain Environment Hygiene of Workplace

(a) Maintain good ventilation
   i. Keep windows open as appropriate and where possible to increase fresh air supply.
   ii. Use of fans (e.g. wall, circulating or exhaust fan) in indoor spaces should be accompanied by means to increase outdoor air changes (e.g. opening windows or maximizing fresh air intake of air conditioners) at the same time. Minimize air blowing directly from one person (or group of people) to another.
   iii. Ensure the air-conditioning system is functioning well with sufficient fresh air supply, clean the air filter and ducting regularly.

(b) Keep environment clean
   i. Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, commonly shared items and floor with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15-30 minutes, and then rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.
   ii. If places are contaminated by respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, use absorbent disposable towels to wipe them away. Then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1 in 49 diluted
household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15-30 minutes and then rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.

iii. Spraying disinfectants is not recommended as this practice could be harmful and would not reduce the risk of viral transmission.

iv. Rubbish should be properly wrapped up and discarded into garbage bins with lids. Empty garbage bins at least once a day.

(c) Special attention to following areas

i. Areas with frequent access by members of the public (e.g. lifts, escalators, lobby entrance, waiting areas, corridors and information counter and lounges): Clean and wipe at least twice daily.

ii. Frequently touched surfaces (e.g. buttons, handrails, handle, chairs and mailboxes): Clean and wipe at least twice daily and when visibly soiled.

iii. Garbage room: Properly clean up rubbish and waste stored in the garbage room every day. Clean and wipe related facilities at least twice daily.

iv. Clean the exhaust fan inside the lift regularly and keep it in good condition.

D. Maintain Toilet Hygiene

(a) Keep toilets clean and dry.

(b) Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection.

(c) Provide liquid soap and disposable paper towels for hand washing.

(d) Ensure the flushing system of the toilet, and hands drying machines are in proper function at all times.

(e) After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.

(f) Ensure the water traps must be filled with water (including U-shaped water trap, bottled trap or anti-syphonage trap) to prevent foul odour and insects in the soil pipe from entering the premises. Pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet once a week.

(g) Do not alter the drain and pipes without prior authorization.

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/make_sure_the_trap_is_not_dry.pdf
E. Maintain hygiene of overnight rooms

(a) Keep a list of staff residing in overnight rooms with their bed and room to facilitate contact tracing when necessary.

(b) The overnight rooms need to have adequate hand hygiene facilities, including hand washing facilities and alcohol-based hand rubs

(c) Keep the place clean and hygienic.

III. When a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 is Encountered

A. Cleaning and Disinfection of Environment

(a) Cleaning staff would wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including:

i. Surgical mask

ii. Latex gloves

iii. Disposable gown

iv. Eye protection (goggles/face shield) and

v. Cap (optional)

(b) Staff training

i. Ensure the frontline cleaning staff received training with environmental disinfection procedures and supervising staff should have read and familiar with the disinfection guidelines.

(c) Enhanced Environmental Disinfection

i. Disinfect all potentially contaminated surfaces or items by using 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water).

(d) If There is Blood, Secretions, Vomitus or Excreta Spillage, Take Enhanced Measures:

i. Cleaning staff should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) including surgical mask, gloves, disposable gown, eye protection (goggles/face shield) and cap (optional).
ii. Use forceps to hold the strong absorbent disposable towels to wipe away the blood, secretions, vomitus or excreta during a preliminary clean up.

iii. Then put the forceps and used absorbent disposable towels in a garbage bag carefully without contaminating oneself/the environment.

iv. Disinfect with 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 4 parts of water), wipe from the outside inward, leave for 10 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry afterwards.

v. After the procedure, put all the wastes and cleaning tools (e.g. forceps, cloth, mop head) in the garbage bag.

vi. Carefully remove PPE, put them in the garbage bag, and then perform hand hygiene.
   (When hands are not visibly soiled, use 70-80% alcohol-based handrub. Wash hands with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or visible soiled with blood, body fluid).

vii. Wear a pair of new gloves, seal the waste bag tight and dispose it properly in covered rubbish bin. Then, label the rubbish bin and put it in a safe undisturbed place until collection.

viii. Remove gloves carefully. Wash hands with liquid soap and water.
IV. Guidelines and Educational Material for Workplace

A. Proper Use of Bleach

B. Proper Use of Mask
   https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/460/19731.html

First edition: 7 January 2020
Last updated: 1 April 2021
Last reviewed: 1 April 2021

The copyright of this paper belongs to the Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Contents of the paper may be freely quoted for educational, training and non-commercial uses provided that acknowledgement be made to the Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. No part of this paper may be used, modified or reproduced for purposes other than those stated above without prior permission obtained from the Centre.