

Safety & Hygiene Protocols and Operational Recommendations for Tourism Service Providers



Ministry of Tourism
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1. Introduction

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the world to a standstill. This is an unprecedented global health emergency with tremendous impact on societies and livelihoods. Travel and Tourism is among the sectors most affected by this crisis but at the same time, Tourism can also be an integral part of the global recovery efforts.

In the COVID 19 aftermath, countries will need to realise a new reality of the tourism and travel industry and make all efforts to shape the sector accordingly. Tourism Businesses will require a re-thinking of how they will operate in terms of hygiene, health and safety to ensure safety of their clients and staff.

The Ministry of Tourism proposes to recommend Protocols covering all service providers and their related activities to tourism and hospitality sectors, to ensure a safe and prepared approach for a post-COVID 19 revival.



The protocols/guidelines are applicable to service providers engaged in management of both international and domestic tourists. These include, the following in the tourism supply chain:

1. Travel Agents
2. Tour Operators (Inbound, Domestic & Adventure)
3. Tourist Transport Operators

They have been prepared with primary focus on identifying and mitigating risks for the service provider and for ensuring necessary safety and hygiene practices in interaction with travelers. Minimizing all possible touch points by use of digital technology has been one of the guiding principles for the guidelines. This would not only help in reducing the risk but also make traceability of the guest easier in case a situation in future warrants so.

The protocols would include the requirements that each sub-sector or tourist activity would need to comply with in terms of health and hygiene. The same could be adapted by States/UTs based on their tourism products and service capacity.

2. All Tourism Service Providers who have a functional workplace with staff/employees under payroll

For Office Premises

- (i) Office premises must be sanitized regularly, it is recommended that deep cleaning may be conducted twice a week



- All touch points in public areas like door handles, elevator buttons, counter tops, tabletops, railings, etc. are cleaned continuously using a sanitizer/disinfectant.

- (ii) Ensure availability of hygiene and sanitation equipment at pro-active replenishment

- Germicidal disinfectant/hand sanitizers / wipes for surface cleaning
- Tissues
- Face/eye masks (separate or combined, face shield, goggles)
- Gloves (disposable)
- Biohazard disposable waste bag

- (iii) Ensure necessary association with medical practitioner/hospital for effective response to emergencies



- (iv) Emergency numbers should be displayed at all office rooms, vehicles and made available with all employees

- (v) Separate area to be earmarked to accommodate in case of sudden illness of any employee/visitor

- (vi) Ensure that masks, gloves etc. are disposed carefully based on usage guidelines



- (vii) Ensure the premises has fully functional CCTV cameras to ease tracking and tracing of infected personnel movement

For Office Staff

- (i) Ensure all staff wear masks and practice social distancing and hygiene within the office premises.
- (ii) Ensure that all employees have downloaded Aarogya Setu mobile application



- (iii) Ensure daily temperature check via thermal gun thermometer

- (iv) Ensure that proper attendance logs of entry and exit are maintained
- (v) Ensure all employees have undergone medical screening and have active medical insurance
- (vi) Ensure training of employees in hygiene and sanitation practices and troubleshooting risks (log of the training/ video record of session to be kept)
- (vii) Ensure updates on the health condition of staff and upkeep of vehicle/facilities etc is done on a regular basis

3. All Tourism Service Providers who undertake bookings for different services

- (i) Booking and travels plans are to be accepted for tourists with no medical history of the virus especially in case of inbound travelers



- (ii) Necessary medical proof or declaration may be sought for inbound travelers



- (iii) Bookings required to be made online or via an online platform with cashless transactions only

- (iv) Proper record and logs are to be maintained for each traveler



- (v) Information on age, medical history, allergies etc. are recommended to be captured for each traveler

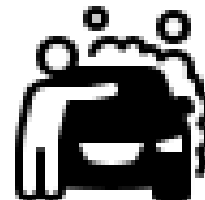
- (vi) Ensure that detailed itinerary is provided to each tourist with details on vehicle, stay, layovers, activities etc.

- (vii) All information to the tourists should be disseminated digitally

- (viii) Small group tours recommended with maximum of 10 to 15 people for ease of implementing social distancing

4. Tourism Service Providers who provide transport facilities for different services

- (i) All vehicles must be thoroughly disinfected prior to boarding of tourists.
- (ii) High touch areas (door handles, seats, seat backs, steering wheel, power window buttons, door locks, windows, screens, small portable TV screens etc.) should be sprayed with disinfectant surface cleaner regularly
- (iii) Hand sanitizer dispenser and masks must be kept available in every vehicle
- (iv) AC buses – cleaning of interiors of air ducts on weekly basis



- (v) Use of disposable seat covers, head rest covers are recommended for all vehicles
- (vi) Use of fiberglass partition between the driver and passenger's seat in buses and cars is recommended
- (vii) Emergency numbers should be displayed on all vehicles and made available with all employees and tourists
- (viii) Ensure all information provided to tourist is strictly through digital means (this may include tour itinerary; safety precautions for hygiene and disinfection)
- (ix) Strictly follow pre-planned itineraries with minimum layover at pre-determined stops only
- (x) Limited use of public transport for large tour groups of more than 10 pax is recommended
- (xi) Health certificate should be mandatory for all drivers



- (xii) Drivers/helpers should always wear masks and gloves and should undergo thermal screening before every new assignment

5. Tourism Service providers who receive the tourists at the port of entry

- (i) Greet the tourists saying “Namaste”. No shaking of hands is recommended

- (ii) Tourism personnel should carry sanitation equipment and wear mask for protection



- (iii) Ensure temperature check and mask usage before boarding of vehicle




- (iv) For large groups ensure at least one personnel is available for coordination with every 10 tourists.

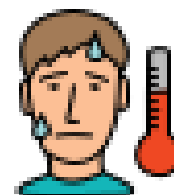
- (v) Ensure gloves are used while handling of luggage. Spray and wipe luggage handles



- (vi) Ensure sanitizers are used before boarding the vehicle by tourist and service provider

- (vii) Aarogya Setu  mobile application to be downloaded by tourist and survey questionnaire to be completed

- (viii) Sick or unwell tourist to be immediately taken for checkup to nearest hospital in separate vehicle



6. Tourist Facilitators & Guides providing offline guide facilities involving interaction with tourists

(i) Greet the tourists saying “Namaste”. No shaking of hands is recommended

(ii) Ensure tourists are always accompanied.



(iii) Small group tours recommended with maximum 10 to 15 people for ease of implementing social distancing

(iv) Limitation of passengers and social distancing to be maintained on shuttle rides, boat rides, jeep safaris, ropeways, etc.

(v) Ensure temperature check and face mask before entering a destination

(vi) Ensure that tickets are bought online for destination if available to avoid queuing and long halts



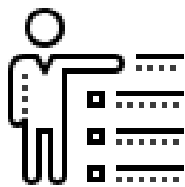
(vii) At Monuments / Museums, ensure gloves are worn by employees and tourists

(viii) Microphones and headsets by guides and tourists is recommended so that physical distancing can be maintained during the tour sightseeing



(ix) Audio guides/ audio system should be provided to tourists wherever available

7. Tourism service providers engaged in providing adventure tourism services



- (i) Booking of tours and allocation of slots should be adequately done to avoid large gathering
- (ii) Regular temperature checks of employees and tourists/guests
- (iii) At the park/site ensure gloves and masks are worn by employees and tourists
- (iv) Ensure that guests are taken in small groups
- (v) Visitor numbers should be tightly controlled in activities to maintain adequate distancing between guests
- (vi) Ensure queue markers with enough distancing at public attractions, such as zip line
- (vii) Ensure all equipment and safari vehicles are adequately disinfected before and after every use

