

**GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE**  
**Parivar Kalyan Bhawan, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh**

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No. COVID-19/NHM/Pb/20/1714-24

Date 21 July 2020 Chandigarh

To

1. Additional Chief Secretary (Cooperatives), Punjab.
2. Additional Chief Secretary (Development), Punjab.
3. Principal Secretary, Food & Civil Supplies, Punjab.
4. Director, Food and Civil Supplies, Punjab.
5. Managing Director Markfed.
6. Managing Director PUNSUP.
7. Managing Director PSWC.
8. Managing Director PUNGRAIN.
9. Secretary, Mandi Board Punjab.
10. All Deputy Commissioners, Punjab.
11. All the Civil Surgeons of Punjab.

**Subject: Updated advisory on Safe Farming operations (Procurement and Marketing) in wake of COVID-19 pandemic.**

Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID -19) is a systemic disease caused by a novel Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2), transmitted in most instances through respiratory droplets, direct contact with cases and also through contaminated surfaces/objects.. Timely and correct information and knowledge about the corona virus is the key to control the pandemic.

Advisory regarding safe farming operations was issued vide letter No. 3081 (R) - 3084 (R) Dated, Chandigarh the 22nd April, 2020 which is now updated as this advisory. The summarized and consolidated guidelines for the various stakeholders involved in the operations- Farmers, Combine operators, Labour, Arhtiyas/Shopkeepers, Transporters, Staff of the Market Committees/State Procurement Agencies (SPAs)/ District Administration are hereby issued as follows:

**A. FARMERS:**

- i. Farmers should prefer mechanized operations over the manual, wherever feasible. Only the essential numbers of persons should be allowed to accompany the machine.
- ii. All machines should be sanitized at the entry point and at regular intervals.

- iii. All the persons engaged in the operations should use masks at all the times and ensure hand washing with soap at reasonable intervals.
- iv. The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth.
- v. The mask, if cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. If using surgical mask it should be discarded as per procedure. In case an N-95 masks is being worn, it must be used as per maker guidelines/instructions.
- vi. Face shields, in addition to the face mask, may be used where the workspace is crowded and maintaining a physical distance of 1 meter at all times may not be feasible.
- vii. Farmers should always maintain and ensure that social distancing of at least 1 metre is maintained by all the engaged labour during rest, taking of meals, transfer of produce at collection point, loading/unloading etc.
- viii. In case of manual field operations of harvesting/ picking, the farmer should accomplish the operation in 4-5 feet spaced strips assigning one strip to one person so as to ensure an adequate spacing between the engaged labours.
- ix. Stagger the field operations wherever possible and avoid engaging more number of persons on the same day.
- x. Engage only familiar persons to the extent possible and after reasonable enquiry as to avoid the entry of any suspect or likely carrier of COVID-19 during field activity.
- xi. The collection of the produce should be done in small heaps spaced at 3-4 feet and field level cleaning/processing, should be assigned to 1-2 persons/heap to avoid crowding.
- xii. All transport vehicles, gunny bags or other packaging material should also be sanitized.
- xiii. All persons engaged in operations should wash the hands with soap for at least 40 seconds by applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger and the thumb and the wrist immediately before the start and after the end of operations.
- xiv. In case a Sanitizer is being used, use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.
- xv. Do not indulge in gossip/rumours with regard to COVID-19 without verifying the facts while carrying the operations. All are encouraged to download "COVA APP" developed by the Government of Punjab for the correct, timely and authentic information.
- xvi. In case someone is diagnosed as COVID-19 with whom one had a contact during operations or otherwise, there is no need to panic. One should report to the Helpline

No. 104/State Control Room No. 01722920074/08872090029, detailing the exact nature of exposure.

- xvii. Farmer while transacting a paper/cash with labour/combine operator etc. should immediately sanitize his hands before as well as often any such transactions. He should also encourage the other person to sanitize his/her hands before and often during the transactions. The farmer is advised to use online transactions wherever possible.

**B. COMBINE OPERATORS:**

- i. The combine operator and his workers should always bear in mind that the appropriate social distancing and not the time is the key factor during the pandemic in determining his income.
- ii. The transporter and his workers shall be advised not to indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other.
- iii. The operator and his workers should be advised to wear mask at all times immediately from leaving the house till the entry back into the house/place of stay.
- iv. The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth.
- v. The mask, if cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. If using surgical mask it should be discarded as per procedure. In case an N-95 masks is being worn, it must be used as per maker guidelines/instructions.
- vi. Face shields, in addition to the face mask, may be used where the workspace is crowded and maintaining a physical distance of 1 meter at all times may not be feasible.
- vii. All should always maintain and ensure that social distancing of at least 1 meter is maintained while interacting with the farmer/engaged labour during operations, rest, taking of meals, transfer of produce at collection point, loading/unloading.
- viii. All persons engaged in operations should wash the hands with soap for at least 40 seconds by applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger and the thumb and the wrist immediately before the start and after the end of operations.
- ix. In case a Sanitizer is being used, use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.

- x. Do not indulge in gossip/rumours with regard to COVID-19 without verifying the facts while carrying the operations. All are encouraged to download "COVA APP" developed by the Government of Punjab for the correct, timely and authentic information.
- xi. In case someone is diagnosed as COVID-19 with whom one had a contact during operations or otherwise, there is no need to panic. One should report to the Helpline No. 104/State Control Room No. 01722920074/08872090029, detailing the exact nature of exposure.
- xii. The operator should avoid eating inside the vehicle.
- xiii. The operator should always keep an alcohol-based sanitizer inside the vehicle and frequently use the same as prescribed during the journey also.
- xiv. The operator while mounting/dismounting the vehicle should use disposable gloves and should immediately wash the hands after the completion of the mounting/dismounting exercise.
- xv. The operator should ensure a minimum distance of 1 metre amongst himself and his workers, if any, while driving the goods vehicle.
- xvi. The operator should avoid the unnecessary halts and contacts during the journey.
- xvii. The operator while transacting a paper/cash should immediately sanitize his hands before as well as after any such transactions. He should also encourage the other person to sanitize his/her hands before and after during the transactions. The operator is advised to use online transactions wherever possible.

xviii. **Disinfection of the Combine**

- a) **Indoor Areas:** Indoor areas including the inside of the combine, seats, gears etc. should be cleaned every evening and early in the morning before the combine is occupied. Prior to cleaning, the worker should wear disposable rubber boots, gloves (heavy duty), and a cloth mask.  
The combine should be cleaned from outside on daily basis with soap/detergent and water or Sodium Hypochlorite (1%) before entering the same.
  - High contact surfaces such as door handles, steering wheel, window knobs, gears, and other buttons should be cleaned twice daily by mopping with a linen/absorbable cloth soaked in 1% sodium hypochlorite.
  - Carefully clean the equipment used in cleaning at the end of the cleaning process.
- xix. The Combines entering the State from other States shall be compulsorily cleaned/sanitized at the entry barriers as per the procedure prescribed.

**c. MARKET COMMITTEES/SPAs:** The Market Committee/SPA shall ensure:

**i. Maintenance and Sanitization of Office Spaces:** The meticulous compliance of the detailed guidelines in this regard should be ensured. (Copy attached at Annexure-1)

**ii. At the Mandis/Storage facility:**

- (a) Availability of hand washing stations (with soap and water) at sufficient locations needs to be ensured after assessment of its daily footfall.
- (b) Announcements at regular intervals/ display of banners to instil the practice of hand washing.
- (c) Availability of adequate clean drinking water.
- (d) Removal from the common areas any unnecessary touch points like tables/clothes/covers etc
- (e) All shall be advised not to indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other.
- (f) All, including Arhtiyas/Farmers/Labour/Staff etc. should wear mask at all times immediately before entering the mandi till their returns to house.
- (g) The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth.
- (h) The mask, if cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. If using surgical mask it should be discarded as per procedure. In case an N-95 masks is being worn, it must be used as per maker guidelines/instructions.
- (i) Face shields, in addition to the face mask, may be used where the workspace is crowded and maintaining a physical distance of 1 meter at all times may not be feasible.
- (j) All the farmers/workers/labour/staff should avoid going into the communities during the free time.
- (k) All stake holders must always maintain and ensure the social distancing of at least 1 meter while interacting with the farmer/engaged labour during operations, rest, taking of meals, transfer of produce at collection point, loading/unloading etc.
- (l) Signage of physical distancing should be placed at various locations all throughout the mandi area.
- (m) All persons engaged in operations should wash the hands with soap for at least 40 seconds by applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger and the thumb and the wrist immediately before the start and after the end of operations.
- (n) In case a Sanitizer is being used, use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.

- (o) If possible, thermal scanners should be installed at all the entry points in the mandis so as to check the temperature of all the people entering the premises.
- (p) No-one should indulge in gossip/rumours with regard to COVID-19 without verifying the facts while carrying the operations. All are encouraged to download "COVA APP" developed by the Government of Punjab for the correct, timely and authentic information.
- (q) In case someone develops Coughing/sneezing/fever/ difficulty in breathing/or is diagnosed as COVID-19 with whom one had a contact during operations or otherwise, there is no need to panic. One should report to the Helpline No. 104/ State Control Room No. 01722920074/08872090029, detailing the exact nature of exposure.

**D. Mandi Board Licensees (Arthiyas, Tolas, Direct Purchaser etc) :** During the procurement, the Licensees(as the case may be) shall ensure:

**i. At their shop/premises:**

- a) Availability of hand washing stations (with soap and water) or Alcohol-based sanitizer (minimum 70% ethyl alcohol v/v) are mounted or kept for themselves and their workers to sanitize their hands before entering the shop/initiation of work and at the end of days work, apart from using them in between. The sanitizers are to be refilled/replaced frequently.
- b) Use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.
- c) Wash the hands with soap for at least 40 seconds applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space between the finger and the thumb and the wrist.
- d) Arhtiyas should not indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other. Similarly, their labour should not indulge in any such practice.
- e) All should wear mask at all times immediately before entering the mandis to till their returns to house.
- f) The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth.
- g) The mask, if cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. If using surgical mask it should be discarded as per procedure. In case an N-95 masks is being worn, it must be used as per maker guidelines/instructions.
- h) Face shields, in addition to the face mask, may be used where the workspace is crowded and maintaining a physical distance of 1 meter at all times may not be feasible.

- i) That all stakeholders always maintain and ensure the social distancing of at least 1 meter is maintained while interacting with the farmer/engaged labour during operations, rest, taking of meals, transfer of produce at collection point, loading/unloading.
- j) No-one should indulge in gossip/rumours with regard to COVID-19 without verifying the facts while carrying the operations. All are encouraged to download "COVA APP" developed by the Government of Punjab for the correct, timely and authentic information.
- k) In case someone develops Coughing/sneezing/Fever/ difficulty in breathing/or is diagnosed as COVID-19 with whom one had a contact during operations or otherwise, there is no need to panic. One should report to the Helpline No. 104 or the State Control Room No. 01722920074/08872090029, detailing the exact nature of exposure.
- l) Arhtiya should ensure the regular cleaning of the toilet, if any, at his shop/premises or if provided to its labour by his sanitary workers who use a separate set of cleaning equipment for toilets (mops, nylon scrubber). The workers should always wear disposable protective gloves while cleaning a toilet.
- m) Arhtiya should ensure that the sleeping area/place for his labour is well ventilated and of adequate area so that the requirement of social distancing of at least 1 metre is met. The Licensee will ensure that such place is regularly cleaned and disinfected with soap/detergent and water.
- n) Proper ventilation at the shops and sleeping areas of the labour must be maintained. Exhaust fans can be used for the ventilation purpose.

  
**Director Health and Family Welfare, Punjab**

**NO. COVID-19/NHM/Pb/20/1725-29**  
**Copy for information:**

**Date 21 July 2020 Chandigarh**

1. OSD to Chief Secretary for kind information of Chief Secretary Govt. of Punjab.
2. PS to Additional Chief Secretary Health and Family Welfare Punjab.
3. PA to Secretary Health and Family Welfare Punjab.
4. PA to MD PHSC.
5. State Control Room for COVID-19.

  
**Director Health and Family Welfare, Punjab**