

A Guide for Respiratory Infection Prevention and Control for Employees Working in Saudi Ports

Preface:

Respiratory infections such as influenza, the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), which appeared in the Arabian Peninsula in 2012, and the novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), which appeared in the People's Republic of China, all share similar modes of transmission and prevention. The following preventive measures contribute to minimizing the risk of infection transmission in the Kingdom's ports.

The Target Population for this Guide:

Persons working in the Kingdom's ports include those in passport control and customs, transportation and ground services operating companies, shipping companies, and those whose work requires direct interaction with travelers, their luggage, or imported shipments.

The Recommended Preventive Measures to be Followed in the Kingdom's Ports:

1) **Raise awareness among all workers and educate them about the nature of the disease, its transmission modes and the preventive measures that should be followed**

- Create Communication Plans to be used internally for all relevant parties. This will enable the rapid sharing of awareness messages through internal channels of communication relying mainly on official and credible sources of information (Ministry of Health and the Saudi Center for Disease Prevention and Control).
- Disseminate awareness and educational materials (posters, awareness clips, etc.) on advertisement screens and gathering areas in the ports that encourage workers and travelers to regularly and appropriately wash their hands and follow the etiquette of coughing and sneezing.
- Holding seminars and training courses provided by specialists from the health control centers in the ports or the health directorates in the region/governorate.
- Raise the workers' awareness on how to properly interact with travelers and passengers at air, land and sea ports:
 - Avoid direct contact with people. When inspection of travelers coming from abroad is needed, wearing a regular facemask is recommended for those whose duties include touching travelers or their personal items. On concluding such tasks, thoroughly wash hands preferably with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol-based gel after removing the gloves and facemask.
 - Use the facemask in case of direct contact with travelers, such as talking with them without a barrier.
 - Replace the facemask if it becomes wet.
 - Avoid eating or drinking while working.
- Educate workers on how to handle shipments in air, land and sea ports and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling shipments of various kinds. They should:
 - Wear gloves while handling them.
 - Avoid touching the mouth, nose and eyes while wearing gloves.

- Remove gloves properly without contaminating their hands and ensure appropriate disposal in covered bins.
- After removing gloves, carry out hand hygiene by washing hands with regular soap and water. In the absence of soap and water, use disinfectant gel.
- Avoid opening shipments suspected of containing liquids, volatile substances or powder; use other means to inspect them.
- Educate workers on how to handle agricultural materials, food, live and dead animals:
 - Avoid direct physical contact with live and dead animals; refer to the specialists from the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA) or the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) according to the jurisdiction and regulations governing the entry of such materials.

2- Provide hand sanitizers and soap in all areas of the port:

- Hand sanitizers are to be made available and replenished regularly. Ensure availability of hand soap in bathrooms used by travelers and others used by port employees under the supervision of the port's health control center.

3- Routinely disinfect surfaces with disinfectants approved by the Ministry of Health:

- Ensure regular and proper disinfection (with approved disinfectants) of all public places and bathrooms frequently used by travelers with a focus on frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, dining tables, seat rests and elevator buttons.

4- Staff Training:

- Provide appropriate training for employees working in the different agencies in the ports on how to properly use PPE including gloves and facemasks with emphasis on those whose role involves direct contact with travelers.
- Continued education for workers in the ports to keep abreast of updates and developments related to the health conditions.
- Train personnel on how to properly disinfect the means of transportation of the suspected patients, and also on how to disinfect the tools, equipment and places that were used by suspected cases in the port.

5- Safe handling of food, agricultural and animal products:

- Avoid handling live and dead animals and refer this to specialists from the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture or the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, according to the jurisdiction and regulations governing the port.

Your health and safety is our concern. If you develop any symptoms, immediately seek appropriate medical care. Or contact 937 for more guidelines.