

Dated the 1st March 2021

**Government of India
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

**SOP on preventive measures in shopping malls to contain spread of COVID-19
(In supersession of guidelines issued earlier on 04.06.2020)**

1. Background

Shopping malls get frequented by large number of people for shopping, entertainment and food. To prevent spread of COVID-19 infection, it is important that required physical distancing and other preventive measures are followed.

2. Scope

This document outlines various generic precautionary measures to be adopted in addition to specific measures to be ensured at particular places to prevent spread of COVID-19.

Shopping malls in containment zones shall remain closed. Only those outside containment zones will be allowed to open up.

3. Generic preventive measures

Persons above 65 years of age, persons with comorbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years are advised to take necessary precautions in terms of maintaining physical distancing, wearing mask properly etc. Shopping mall management to advise accordingly.

The generic measures include simple public health measures that are to be followed to reduce the risk of COVID-19. These measures need to be observed by all (workers and visitors) in these places at all times.

These include:

- i. Physical distancing of at least 6 feet (2 gaj ki doori) to be followed as far as feasible.
- ii. Use of face covers/masks at all times. They must be worn properly to cover nose and mouth. Touching the front portion of mask/face covers to be avoided.
- iii. Practice frequent hand washing with soap (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (for at least 20 seconds) can be made wherever feasible.
- iv. Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing off used tissues properly.
- v. Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest to state and district helpline.
- vi. Spitting shall be strictly prohibited.
- vii. Installation & use of Aarogya Setu App shall be advised to all.

4. All shopping malls shall ensure the following arrangements:

- i. Entrance to have mandatory hand hygiene (sanitizer dispenser) and thermal screening provisions.
- ii. Only asymptomatic customers/visitors shall be allowed.
- iii. All workers/customers/visitors to be allowed entry only if using face cover/masks. The face cover/masks has to be worn at all times inside the shopping mall.
- iv. Posters/standees/AV media on preventive measures about COVID-19 to be displayed prominently.
- v. Staggering of visitors to be done, if possible.
- vi. Adequate manpower shall be deployed by mall management for ensuring physical distancing norms.
- vii. All employees who are at higher risk i.e. older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions, to take extra precautions. They should preferably not be exposed to any front-line work requiring direct contact with the public.
- viii. Proper crowd management in the parking lots and outside the premises – duly following physical distancing norms shall be ensured by the management/ any out-sourced agencies.
- ix. Valet parking, if available, shall be operational with operating staff wearing face covers/ masks and gloves as appropriate. A proper disinfection of steering, door handles, keys, etc. of the vehicles should be taken up.
- x. Any shops, stalls, cafeteria etc., outside and within the premises shall follow physical distancing norms at all times.
- xi. Specific markings may be made with sufficient distance to manage the queue and ensure physical distancing in the premises.
- xii. Preferably separate entry and exits for visitors, workers and goods/supplies shall be organized.
- xiii. The staff for home deliveries shall be screened thermally by the shopping mall authorities prior to allowing home deliveries.
- xiv. Required precautions while handling supplies, inventories and goods in the shopping mall shall be ensured. Proper queue management and disinfection shall be organized.
- xv. Maintaining physical distancing of a minimum of 6 feet, when queuing up for entry and inside the shopping mall as far as feasible.
- xvi. Number of customers inside the shop to be kept at a minimum, so as to maintain the physical distancing norms.
- xvii. Seating arrangement, if any, to be made in such a way that adequate physical distancing is maintained.
- xviii. Number of people in the elevators shall be restricted, duly maintaining physical distancing norms.
- xix. Use of escalators with one person on alternate steps may be encouraged.
- xx. For air-conditioning/ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which mentions that the temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30°C, relative humidity should be in the range of 40-

70%, intake of fresh air should be as much as possible and cross ventilation should be adequate.

- xxi. Large gatherings/congregations should be in accordance with the SOPs of the State/UT concerned.
- xxii. Effective and frequent sanitation within the premises shall be maintained with particular focus on lavatories, drinking and hand washing stations/areas.
- xxiii. Cleaning and regular disinfection (using 1% sodium hypochlorite) of frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, elevator buttons, handrails, benches, washroom fixtures, etc.) to be made mandatory in all malls in common areas as well as inside shops, elevators, escalators etc.
- xxiv. Proper disposal of face covers / masks / gloves left over by visitors and/or employees in covered bins should be ensured.
- xxv. Deep cleaning of all washrooms shall be ensured at regular intervals.
- xxvi. In the food-courts:
 - a. Adequate crowd and queue management to be ensured to ensure physical distancing norms.
 - b. In food courts and restaurants, physical distancing norms amongst patrons shall be followed while organizing seating arrangements.
 - c. Food court staff / waiters should wear mask and hand gloves and take other required precautionary measures.
 - d. The seating arrangement should ensure adequate physical distancing between patrons as far as feasible.
 - e. Contactless mode of ordering and digital mode of payment (using e-wallets) to be encouraged.
 - f. Tables to be sanitized each time customer leaves.
 - g. In the kitchen, the staff should follow physical distancing norms at work place.
- xxvii. Gaming Arcades/Children play areas (wherever applicable) shall function in accordance with the SOPs of the State/UT concerned.
- xxviii. Cinema halls inside shopping malls shall function in accordance with the SOPs issued by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Ministry of Home Affairs.
- xxix. In case of a suspect or confirmed case in the premises:
 - a. Place the ill person in a room or area where they are isolated from others.
 - b. Provide a mask/face cover till such time he/she is examined by a doctor.
 - c. Immediately inform the nearest medical facility (hospital/clinic) or call the state or district helpline.
 - d. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the designated public health authority (district RRT/treating physician) and accordingly further action be initiated regarding management of case, his/her contacts and need for disinfection.
 - e. Disinfection of the premises to be taken up if the person is found positive.