

COVID-19



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH



NIGERIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL

Guidelines for Employers and Businesses in Nigeria



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Introduction

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 is caused by a virus that spreads through droplets released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A person can become infected with the virus by being in close contact (within 2 metres) of an infected person. Infection can also spread by touching a surface or object that an infected person coughed or sneezed on. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) launched the #TakeResponsibility campaign in March 2020 to encourage Nigerians and residents to take individual and collective responsibility to reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease.

Given the role of businesses in driving economic activity, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCDC is updating the previously published guidelines to assist businesses and employers to effectively put in place measures, to safely restart their businesses as the country continues to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. These guidelines will assist businesses as the easing of the lockdown is implemented in a phased manner. The purpose of the lockdown was to;

- Limit the spread of the coronavirus, by keeping people physically apart
- Enable the relevant health authorities in Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory to trace contacts, test and isolate people
- Enable the health sector to improve its preparedness

Businesses re-opening will be faced with the challenge of restarting their operations while many sections of the economy remain on lockdown and restrictions remain in place. In addition, businesses will need to be conscious of changes in their employees, paying closer attention to their mental health and employees may feel anxious. Deliberate efforts would need to be made to ensure the well-being and safety of employees, minimising the impact on them as office premises re-open.



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The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control offers the following guidance to employers and business owners in Nigeria.

What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are normally transmitted between animals and people. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by a new strain of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that has not been previously identified in humans. It was first reported to WHO on the 31st of December 2019 in Wuhan, China.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The following symptoms may develop within 14 days after exposure to COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing
- Fever
- Sore throat

How is COVID-19 spread?

Droplets (respiratory secretions) produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes can cause transmission of the virus particularly when there is close contact (less than 2 metres) with an infected person. The risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

There are two routes by which people could become infected:

- Secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (less than **2 metres**)
- By touching a surface or object such as a doorknob that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching own mouth, nose, or eyes.

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What do you need to know?

Employers must stay abreast of guidelines and recommendations from the Federal and State Governments, regarding changes in national directives as a result of evolving knowledge of COVID-19 locally and nationally.

Effective from the **4th of May 2020**, the following additional preventive measures will be instituted by the Federal Government. These will apply nationwide to individuals as well as businesses, employers and employees;

- Mandatory use of non-medical face mask/covering for all persons.
- Overnight curfew from **8p.m. to 6a.m.** This means all movements will be prohibited during this period except for essential services
- Mandatory provision of handwashing facilities/sanitiser.
- Single use latex gloves are discouraged, except in clinical settings, or if used, they should be disposed of safely after each single use
- Restrictions on interstate travel except for essential services or transportation of agricultural produce and other essential goods
- Extensive temperature checks on entry into the business premises and other public places
- Physical distancing of **2 metres** between people in workplaces and other public places
- No large gatherings of more than **20 people** outside the workplace

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Implementation guidelines for containment of COVID-19 by the Federal Government of Nigeria

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBLIGATION OF OPERATORS
PHASE ONE: MAY 4 -17 2020	
Curfew	Imposition of overnight curfew nationwide from 8p.m. to 6a.m.
General movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. May go out for work, to buy necessary foods and for exercise b. Movement between LGAs (except metropolitan areas) is strongly discouraged unless for critical reasons such as healthcare and work c. Avoid unnecessary contact with people
Inter-state travel	<p>(ACROSS STATE BORDERS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All inter-state travel for supply chain and services allowed, such as: goods, agro-products with a limited capacity of accompanying personnel, petroleum products, relief items, supplies, construction supplies, registered courier services and security services
Intra-state travel (public transport-buses, tricycles, taxis)	<p>(WITHIN STATE BORDERS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure provision of hand sanitisers to all passengers b. Reduce occupancy to half for buses (maximum 50% of usual occupancy) c. Use non-medical face mask/coverings d. Mandatory temperature checks e. Taxis to carry only 4 persons (driver and 3 persons) f. Tricycles to carry only 3 persons (driver and 2 persons) g. Mandatory daily motor park sanitation h. Travel should be between 6a.m. and 6p.m.
Bus stop/motor park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide hand washing facilities b. Maintain social distancing c. Use non-medical face mask /coverings d. Mandatory temperature checks e. Should only open between 6a.m. and 6p.m.

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ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBLIGATION OF OPERATORS
PHASE ONE: MAY 4 -17 2020	
Agriculture and Rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mandatory wearing of face masks and social distancing b. Persons above age of 65 years and those with underlying chronic illness e.g. diabetes advised to remain at home c. Trucks bearing agricultural and animal products to be allowed easy passage d. Companies involved in food processing can commence operation
Construction sites (large and small), public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limit number to maintain social distancing b. Construction of critical roads to resume c. Waivers to be provided by State Governments to enable movement d. Mandatory wearing of face masks e. Open between 6a.m. and 6p.m.
Banks and other financial institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure provision of hand sanitiser to all employees and customers b. Limit staff physically working in the office to between 30% to 50% c. Limit number of customers to allow social distancing d. Use non-medical face mask e. Encourage online banking f. Mandatory temperature checks g. Open between 8a.m. and 2p.m.
Manufacturing and pharmaceutical industries, pharmacy shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure provision of sanitiser and hand washing facilities b. Limit staff working to between 30-50% to maintain social distancing c. Shift work is encouraged d. Pharmacy shops may remain open overnight
Government offices /other corporate offices and entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure provision of hand sanitiser to all employees and customers b. Limit staff physically working in the office to between 30% to 50% c. Government staff limited to essential workers and those from GL 13-17 on Monday/Wednesday/Fridays d. Limit number of customers to allow social distancing e. Use non-medical face mask/coverings f. Encourage work from home policy g. Mandatory temperature checks h. Offices to open between 8a.m. and 2p.m.

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ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBLIGATION OF OPERATORS
PHASE ONE: MAY 4 -17 2020	
Neighbourhood markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure provision of sanitizer and hand washing facilities b. Control entry to reduce number to ensure social distancing c. Use non-medical face masks/coverings d. Mandatory temperature checks e. Local authorities to determine date for opening of shops f. Warehouses to open on neighbourhood market days g. Abattoirs to open three days a week h. Ensure strict sanitation compliance i. Markets to open between 8a.m. to 2p.m.
Supermarkets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure provision of sanitizer and hand washing facilities b. Limit number of customers to allow social distancing c. Use non-medical face mask/covering d. Ensure handwashing e. Mandatory temperature checks f. Supermarkets to open between 8a.m. to 2p.m.
Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Not open to the public, encourage home delivery b. To remain closed to eat-in, until further evaluation c. Allow social distancing always d. Eateries to practice the takeaway system e. Clubs, night bars and lounges to remain closed f. Restaurants to open between 8a.m. to 2p.m.
Academic institutions and social engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The use of recreational parks, communal sports, concerts, social parties and movie theatres are suspended until further notice b. All schools to remain closed till further evaluation c. Schools are encouraged to continue with e-learning and visual teaching

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General hygiene requirements

All employees should observe the following general personal hygiene requirements at work;

- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based sanitiser as soon as they enter office premises. Ensure hands are washed after using the washroom, before eating and regularly throughout the work day, ensuring colleagues follow this advice too.
- Encourage employees to cover their nose and mouth with tissue when coughing or sneezing, followed by washing of hands. Alternatively, sneezing or coughing into their bent elbow if no tissue is available. Used tissues should immediately be disposed of in a covered bin, and not left lying around on any public surfaces
- Ensure provision of covered bins in office and business premises
- Office and business premises should be cleaned and disinfected daily, especially frequently touched surfaces like tables, door handles, countertops, computers, light and air conditioner switches which should be cleaned frequently during the day
- Keep all offices well ventilated, opening windows regularly to enable fresh air

How can employers reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19?

Employers and businesses should take the following measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 in the workplace;

- Provide handwashing facilities/alcohol-based sanitizers - promote thorough and frequent handwashing, with soap and water for at least **20 seconds**



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- Ensure extensive temperature checks on entry into office and business premises
- Mandate the use of non-medical face mask/covering for all staff at all times
- Develop physical distancing strategies within the office or business environment to safeguard the health and safety of employees, in line with guidelines set out by the NCDC
- Where staff members have regular face-to-face contact with customers, ensure they have the necessary protective equipment to keep them safe and their health protected
- Develop an infectious disease preparedness action plan to reduce the risk of exposure in the workplace and communicate it to all staff members. This includes identifying a central person focused on coordinating COVID-19 matters
- Ensure the contact details and emergency contact details of all staff members is kept up to date and is always easily accessible
- Ensure that staff members know how to spot the symptoms of coronavirus and they have a clear understanding what to do if they feel unwell, mandating unwell employees to stay at home
- Display signage in your office or business premises reminding staff and visitors to maintain good and respiratory hygiene
- Discourage the sharing of work equipment, tools, computers, phones and desks

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How can employers adapt business practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19?

- Develop policies and practices that enable employees to work more flexibly and remotely i.e. working from home and leverage technology to arrange virtual meetings with employees and clients
- Ensure adequate space between employees (**minimum 2 metres**), limiting staff to about **30% - 50%** of the normal workspace capacity
- Limit customers in the business premises to about **30% - 50%** capacity at any one time
- Decide on the level of staff required to come to work, as the business re-opens, e.g. support staff, receptionists, catering staff.
- Consider the staggered re-introduction of staff members into the office, using staff rotas and flexible work hours or work shifts
- Where possible, businesses should provide transportation for their employees to limit their use of public transport
- Limit the number of visitors to your office premises and take advantage of enterprise video conferencing tools
- Put into place flexible workplace policies to respond to staff absenteeism, with an efficient process to ensure the smooth handover of work from one staff member to the other when required
- Take advantage of delivery companies to limit staff movement outside the office

What to do if there is a case of suspected COVID-19 in your workplace?

If any employee is showing known symptoms of COVID-19, they should immediately self-isolate in a separate room in the office or business premises and call the state helpline or contact NCDC on **0800 9700 0010** for further guidance. While awaiting laboratory test results, employee should

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be on self-isolation and employers should carry out a risk assessment to ascertain whether there is a need to close the office or business premises.

Employers or businesses may also encourage staff to work from home until the outcome of test results is known. Employers should also continue to ensure basic hygiene advice is followed, work premises are kept clean and waste is disposed of appropriately. Once the results are available, business owners will be advised accordingly.

What to do if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in your workplace?

The State Ministry of Health will contact the workplace to discuss the case, identify people who have been close contacts of the employee and advise on further actions or precautions that should be taken, based on assessment of the work premises which would include shutting down temporarily and disinfecting the premises. Employee who are contacts would be asked to self-isolate for **14 days** from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case. Employees who are living in a household with a confirmed case of COVID-19, should also be asked to self-isolate for 14 days until all members in the household receive a negative test confirmation. If they develop known COVID-19 symptoms during the self-isolation period, they should contact their state helpline or NCDC on **0800 9700 0010**.

The definition of a contact includes:

- Any staff member in close face-to-face or touching contact including those undertaking small group work (**within 2 metres** of the case)



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- Talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the individual is symptomatic
- Anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids of the individual
- Close friendship groups
- Any staff member living in the same household as a confirmed case, or equivalent setting

Where do I get accurate information from?

Be aware that media speculation is rife about COVID-19 and not everything you read in the newspapers or online or hear is accurate or verified. The release of trusted and accurate information will always be through the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, the Federal Ministry of Health or the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control. You can find the latest information and advice through the following;

NCDC Toll-Free Number: **0800 9700 0010**

SMS: **0809 955 5577**

WhatsApp: **0708 711 0839**

Website for COVID-19 resources: **covid19.ncdc.gov.ng**

Twitter/Facebook: **@NCDGgov**