

# Cantonment Boards gear up to COVID-19 challenge

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Sixty two Cantonment Boards spread over 19 States/Union Territories, across the country, with a population of approx. 21 lakh (including military and civil) have geared up to the challenge posed by Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Instructions have been issued to all the Cantonment Boards to identify beds in hospitals/health centres and guest houses for any eventuality.

Presidents and Chief Executive Officers of the Cantonment Boards are in constant touch with civilian authorities in their respective areas and providing required assistance whenever needed. All the advisories issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare are being strictly adhered to by all the Cantt Boards.

All the Cantonment offices buildings, residential areas, school premises, libraries, parks and markets are being sanitised regularly. Residents are being sensitised about the COVID-19 via public announcements through loud speakers, informative notices, hoardings/pamphlets displayed at all prominent places, offices and market areas in cantonments. Residents Medical Officers are organising workshops for all the personnel dealing with essential services and demonstrating precautions to be taken in avoiding transmission of COVID-19 and simultaneously preparing Cantonment General Hospital (CGH) for any emergencies. Action plans have been prepared in the light of directions of Director General Defence Estates (DGDE). All CGH are working full time to provide required medical assistance.

Cantt Boards are providing face masks, hand gloves, sanitizer bottles to the entire staff. All the hotels and restaurants in cantonment areas are directed to strictly follow advisory.

Task forces have been set up consisting of office staff to ensure supply of essential commodities, food items, etc, especially for poor people residing in Cantt areas. All groceries/kirana stores are sensitised against black marketing, avoidance of large gatherings and to follow the lockdown guidelines. Cantt Boards are also ensuring continued and undisrupted water supply arrangements, as well as street light services. Helpline number for residents has been made functional in most of the Cantt.

The overall municipal administration of the Cantt areas comes under Cantonment Boards which are democratic bodies. This unique structure of Cantonment Boards is being maintained successfully keeping in view the fact that the Cantonment areas were and are primarily meant to accommodate the military population and their installations. Cantonments are different from the Military Stations in that the Military Stations are purely meant for the use and accommodation of the armed forces and these are established under an executive order whereas the Cantonments are areas which comprise of both military and civil population.

**ABB/SS/Nampi/KA/DK/Savvy**

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