

MHA issues new Guidelines for Re-opening

Gives flexibility to States UTs for opening of schools

Opens up more activities outside Containment Zones

Strict enforcement of lockdown in Containment Zones till 31st October 2020

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Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued new guidelines today, for opening up of more activities in areas outside the Containment Zones. In these guidelines, which will come into effect from October 1, 2020, the process of re-opening of activities has been extended further. The new guidelines, issued today, are based on feedback received from States and UTs, and extensive consultations held with related Central Ministries and Departments.

Salient features of the new guidelines

Activities permitted from 15th October 2020, in areas outside the Containment Zones

- Cinemas/ theatres/ multiplexes will be permitted to open with upto 50% of their seating capacity, for which, SOP will be issued by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
- Business to Business (B2B) Exhibitions will be permitted to open, for which, SOP will be issued by the Department of Commerce.
- Swimming pools being used for training of sportspersons will be permitted to open, for which the standard operating procedure (SOP) will be issued by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MoYA&S).
- Entertainment parks and similar places will be permitted to open, for which the SOP will be issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW).

Opening of Schools, colleges, education institutions and coaching institutions

- For re-opening of schools and coaching institutions, State/ UT Governments have been given the flexibility to take a decision after 15th October 2020, in a graded manner. The decision shall be taken in consultation with the respective school/ institution management, based on their assessment of the situation, and subject to the following conditions:
 - Online/ distance learning shall continue to be the preferred mode of teaching and shall be encouraged.
 - Where schools are conducting online classes, and some students prefer to attend online classes rather than physically attend school, they may be permitted to do so.
 - Students may attend schools/ institutions only with the written consent of parents.
 - Attendance must not be enforced, and must depend entirely on parental consent.

- States /UTs will prepare their own SOP regarding health and safety precautions for reopening of schools/ institutions based on the SOP to be issued by Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education, Government of India, keeping local requirements in view.
- Schools, which are allowed to open, will have to mandatorily follow the SOP to be issued by Education Departments of States/ UTs.
- Department of Higher Education (DHE), Ministry of Education may take a decision on the timing of the opening of Colleges/ Higher Education Institutions, in consultation with Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), based on the assessment of the situation. Online/ distance learning shall continue to be the preferred mode of teaching and shall be encouraged.
- However, Higher Education Institutions only for research scholars (Ph.D) and post-graduate students in science and technology stream requiring laboratory/ experimental works will be permitted to open from 15th October, 2020, as under: For Centrally Funded Higher Education Institutions, the Head of Institution will satisfy herself/ himself that there is a genuine requirement of research scholars (Ph.D) and post-graduate students in science and technology stream for laboratory/experimental works. For all other Higher Education Institutions e.g. State Universities, Private Universities etc., they may open only for research scholars (Ph.D) and postgraduate students in science and technology stream requiring laboratory/experimental works as per decision to be taken by the respective State/UT Governments.

Regulation of gatherings

- Social/ academic/ sports/ entertainment/ cultural/ religious/ political functions and other congregations have already been permitted with a ceiling of 100 persons, outside Containment Zones only. Now State/ UT Governments have been given the flexibility to permit such gatherings beyond the limit of 100 persons, outside Containment Zones, after 15th October 2020, which will be subject to the following conditions:
 - In closed spaces, a maximum of 50% of the hall capacity will be allowed, with a ceiling of 200 persons. Wearing of face masks, maintaining social distancing, provision for thermal scanning and use of hand wash or sanitizer will be mandatory.
 - In open spaces, keeping the size of the ground/ space in view, and with strict observance of social distancing, mandatory wearing of face masks, provision for thermal scanning and hand wash or sanitizer.
- To ensure that such gatherings do not spread COVID-19, State/ UT Governments will issue detailed SOPs to regulate such gathering, and strictly enforce the same.**
- All activities, except the following, shall be permitted outside containment zones: International air travel of passengers, except as permitted by MHA.
- Lockdown shall continue to be implemented strictly in the Containment Zones till **31st October, 2020**.
- Containment Zones shall be demarcated by the District authorities at micro level after taking into consideration the guidelines of MoHFW with the objective of effectively breaking the chain of transmission. Strict containment measures will be enforced in these containment zones and only essential activities will be allowed.
- Within the containment zones, strict perimeter control shall be maintained and only essential activities allowed.
- These Containment Zones will be notified on the websites of the respective District Collectors and by the States/ UTs and information will also be shared with MOHFW.

States not to impose any local lockdown outside Containment Zones

- State/ UT Governments shall not impose any local lockdown (State/ District/ sub-division/City/ village level), outside the containment zones, without prior consultation with the Central Government.

No restriction on Inter-State and intra-State movement

- There shall be no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons and goods. No separate permission/ approval/ e-permit will be required for such movements.

National Directives for COVID-19 management

- National Directives for COVID-19 management shall continue to be followed throughout the country, with a view to ensure social distancing. Shops will need to maintain adequate physical distancing among customers. MHA will monitor the effective implementation of National Directives.

Protection for vulnerable persons

- Vulnerable persons, i.e., persons above 65 years of age, persons with co-morbidities, pregnant women, and children below the age of 10 years, are advised to stay at home, except for meeting essential requirements and for health purposes.

Use of *Aarogya Setu*

- The use of *Aarogya Setu* mobile application will continue to be encouraged.

NW/RK/PK/DDD

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