

MHA Guidelines for effective control of COVID-19

States/ UTs mandated to strictly enforce Test-Track-Treat protocol, Containment measures, COVID-Appropriate behavior and SOPs on various activities

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- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued an Order today with **Guidelines for effective control of COVID-19**, which will be effective from April 1, 2021, and remain in force upto April 30, 2021.
- The main focus of the Guidelines is to consolidate the substantial gains achieved in containing the spread of COVID-19, which was visible in the sustained decline in the number of active cases, continuously for about 5 months.
- Keeping in view a fresh surge in COVID-19 cases, which is being witnessed in some parts of the country, the guidelines mandate the State/ UT Governments to strictly enforce the **Test- Track-Treat** protocol in all parts of the country; ensure observance of COVID appropriate behaviour by everyone; and, to scale up the vaccination drive, to cover all the target groups.
- It is also emphasised that in order to ensure that the resumption of activities is successful and to fully overcome the pandemic, there is need to strictly follow the prescribed containment strategy, and strictly observe the guidelines/ SOPs issued by MHA and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and other Ministries/ Departments of the Central Government and State/ UT Governments.

Test- Track-Treat protocol

- States and UTs, where the proportion of RT-PCR tests is less, should rapidly increase it, to reach the prescribed level of 70 percent or more.
- The new positive cases, detected as a result of intensive testing, need to be isolated/ quarantined at the earliest and provided timely treatment.
- Further as per the protocol, their contacts have to be traced at the earliest, and similarly isolated/ quarantined.
- Based on the positive cases and tracking of their contacts, Containment Zones shall be carefully demarcated by the district authorities, at the micro level, taking into consideration the guidelines prescribed by the MoHFW in this regard.
- The list of Containment Zones will be notified on the websites by the respective District Collectors and by the States/ UTs. This list will also be shared with MoHFW on a regular basis.
- Within the demarcated Containment Zones, containment measures, as prescribed by MoHFW, shall be scrupulously followed, which include strict perimeter control, intensive house-to-house surveillance, contact tracing, surveillance for ILI/ SARI cases etc.
- Local district, police and municipal authorities shall be responsible to ensure that the prescribed Containment measures are strictly followed and State/ UT Governments shall ensure the accountability of the officers concerned in this regard.

COVID appropriate behavior

- State/ UT Governments shall take all necessary measures to promote COVID-19 appropriate behaviour in work places and in public, especially in crowded places.
- For strict enforcement of wearing of face masks, hand hygiene and social distancing, States and UTs may consider administrative actions, including imposition of appropriate fines.

- **National Directives for COVID-19 Management** shall continue to be followed throughout the country, so as to enforce COVID-19 appropriate behavior.

Local restrictions

- States and UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may impose local restrictions, at district/ sub-district and city/ ward level, with a view to contain the spread of COVID-19.

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 including those for cross land-border trade under Treaties with neighbouring countries. No separate permission/ approval/ e-permit will be required for such movements.

Strict adherence to the prescribed SOPs

- All activities have been permitted outside Containment Zones and SOPs have been prescribed for various activities. These include: movement by passenger trains; air travel; metro trains; schools; higher educational institutions; hotels and restaurants; shopping malls, multiplexes and entertainment parks; yoga centres and gymnasiums; exhibitions, assemblies and congregations, etc.
- The SOPs, as updated from time to time, shall be strictly enforced by the authorities concerned, who shall be responsible for their strict observance.

Vaccination

- Government of India has launched the world's largest vaccination drive against COVID-19.
- While the vaccination drive is proceeding smoothly, the pace is uneven across different States and UTs; and, the slow pace of vaccination in some States/ UTs is a matter of concern. Vaccination against COVID-19, in the present scenario, is critical to break the chain of transmission.
- Therefore, all State/ UT Governments should rapidly step up the pace of vaccination, to cover all priority groups in an expeditious manner.

NDW/RK/PK/AY/DDD

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