



Guidelines on COVID-19 Prevention and Management for Managers and Workers in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The Government of the Republic of Malawi is taking robust measures to strengthen preparedness and readiness to prevent spread of the new coronavirus disease called COVID-19. Screening of international travelers for symptoms of coronavirus infection among travelers who have come from high risk countries is underway 24 hours a day and required to undergo a 14-day self-quarantine. The list of the high risk countries is updated on a daily basis. (Refer to Malawi Tourism /Ministry of Health Facebook pages)

All hotel staff need to be aware of signs & symptoms, the ways Coronavirus spreads, and know how to protect themselves.

The purpose of this information guide is to raise awareness and guide Tourism and Hospitality Managers and workers to prevent themselves and their customers from being exposed to COVID-19.

General Information

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new virus that spread through respiratory droplets, which are liquids that may come out when we cough or sneeze. For this reason, it is very important to avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough or other respiratory symptoms.

Observable Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever (temperature higher than 37)
- Cough & sneeze
- Shortness of breath, difficulty in breathing

Only in severe cases, patients developed pneumonia, kidney failure and deaths

People over the age of 60-70 years and people with underlying diseases such heart diseases, diabetes and other chronic condition are more vulnerable to the disease and have a higher likelihood of becoming very sick or dying. The majority of the population however either have a mild disease or no symptoms at all. They can however carry and spread the virus to other more vulnerable members of the society.

Ways of transmission

The virus can be transmitted from person to person, either through coughing, sneezing, body contact, shaking hands, hugging and kissing. The virus is also transmitted via contaminated hard surfaces such as plastic, metals and soft surfaces such as napkins, tissue papers, sheets and towels. This is usually after close contact with an infected patient, for example, in a household, workplace, or health care center.

Is there a treatment or vaccination?

There is as yet no specific treatment, or vaccine for diseases caused by coronavirus – COVID-19. There is urgent research being carried out for both vaccines and treatment. However, many of the symptoms can be treated.

General Recommendation (for everyone)

- Frequently clean your hands by using an alcohol-based hand rub product – like a gel – or wash your hands with soap and water
- When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or use a tissue – if you use a tissue, discard it immediately into a closed bin
- Avoid close contact with anyone that has fever and cough
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share information about any recent travels with health care provider.

Guidance to protect Accommodation Facilities**For Hotel manager:**

- 1) Make hand sanitizer available and hand-wash basin accessible in public areas (reception counter, restaurant, hotel entrance, hotel staff rest areas).
- 2) In addition to the mandatory first aid kit, provide thermometer, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, gloves and masks
- 3) All COVID-19 information (ie posters and leaflets etc) to be displayed in public places (e.g. elevator, stair cases, restroom) and in guest rooms ensure that a contact number for a medical person is available
- 4) If there is a suspected case at the facility, do the following:
 - Isolate and keep the suspected person in the room and immediately call the nearest Health authorities,
 - Restrict access by other people of the floor where there is suspected case(s)
 - Staff should not have direct physical contact with the suspected case. Food should be delivered to the room
 - thoroughly clean and ventilate the room, cleaning staff must be trained and use gloves to take bedsheet, towels, and materials used by patients to be cleaned and treated separately.
 - train cleaning staff to protect themselves and how to sanitization and sterilization of linens and surfaces that may have droplets of suspected person. Contact the COVID-19 medical team to provide further support and to ensure the room is cleared of possible infection.
 - Any staff that has been in physical contact with a guest who is suspected of being infected with COVID-19 should be reported to the Health authorities and self-isolate.

- Hotel management should ensure that all staff members are trained by health staff to on COVID-19.
- Have a hotel staff practice/drill, in case that there are suspected cases in the hotel and make sure that telephone and contact of medical contact details are functional.

Hotel workers are advised to practice precautionary measures suggested for each function listed below.

Hotel Receptionists

- Practice frequent hand-wash with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with items of the guest such as passport, keys and Bags
- If the guest is coming from a high risk country, Units should ensure that the guest fills in another questionnaire on health, places visited in the last 14 days, insurance details , countries travelled, contacts etc
- please provide information card for guest to list any symptoms to be observed for the COVID-19 and local telephone numbers to contact authorities or at least inform the reception
- Communicate to the guests clearly about the COVID-19 precautions being undertaken in the hotel premises
- All Receptionists should be made aware of the symptoms and to take precautionary measures such as keeping distance, and personal protection as advised as above.
- Receptionists should be trained when and how to use masks correctly, covering nose and mouth and ensure that the mask is readily available to be used and safely discarded.
- List of medical contacts and hotlines for COVID-19 must be available at the reception desk.

Security workers, baggage handlers, and drivers

- Communicate to the guests clearly about the COVID-19 precautions being taken in the hotel premises to maintain hospitality
- Wear safety gloves before touching items that belongs to the guests
- If no safety gloves used, please immediately wash your hands with soap and water after touching luggage and any other items that belong to the guests
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers after touching luggage and any other items belong to the guests, and be cautioned to use mask and glove, if necessary, before touching other guests for security purposes.
- If possible, keep distance from person(s) who display symptoms and use gloves/masks while dealing with the guests.
- Observe signs and symptoms of COVID-19 among the guests and passengers and keep the premises and car ventilate (open doors/windows)
- For drivers, ensure that the car is disinfected every time they handle passengers. This includes door handles, seats, safety belts etc
- Staff should be trained to observe signs & symptoms and how to use and dispose masks and gloves correctly.
- Keep health information and contacts to medical team available and readily accessible

Housekeepers/Cleaners

- Before starting cleaning bed rooms, please Staff need to follow safety and hygiene practices
- Practice regular and thorough sanitization of all rooms and facilities avoid residues of droplets remain in the rooms and facilities.
- Use masks and safety gloves before performing the tasks, and before entering the rooms where suspected cases stayed,
- Wear mask and safety glove
- Open windows and door to let in fresh air come in
- Wash your hands with soap and water after you finish and before you start same work in another room

Restaurant staffs (Food and drinks service workers and cleaners)

These are frontline of customer service in restaurants, cafeteria, etc. with quite frequent contacts with guests to serve. They are advised to

- frequently wash their hands with soap and water after providing services:
- use glove while collecting money, receipt, used plates, forks, towels, etc.
- use glove and/or mask while setting and cleaning tables
- observe signs and symptoms of COVID-19 among staffs and guests
- stay home if they have symptoms and monitor the condition
- contact medical staffs if there is any concern that they may be in contact with COVID-19

All staff:

Any member of staff should contact management and health authorities if they have any signs and symptoms of COVID -19 and self-isolate for 14 days at home.

NB: REPORT ANY SUSPECTED CASE IMMEDIATELY TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH ON THE FOLLOWING CONTACT DETAILS:

COVID-19 TOLL FREE NUMBER: 0887 371 2 88

DHO LILONGWE: 0999 934 523

DHO BLANTYRE: 0999 520 319

SOCIETY OF MEDICAL DOCTORS: 0884 286 991