

R. Subrahmanyam, IAS
Secretary



Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Department of Social Justice & Empowerment
Government of India

D.O. No.Secy(SJE)/SK/2020
Date: 20.4.2020

Subject: Advisory for ensuring Health and Safety of Sanitation Workers during COVID-19

Dear Chief Secretary,

In the war against COVID-19 the role of the sanitation workers working in municipalities and other local bodies is of crucial importance.

Considering that sanitation workers are in the frontline in the fight against COVID-19, it is imperative to ensure their health and safety. Keeping this in view, the Ministry of Social Justice has prepared an advisory to be conveyed to all Municipalities and local bodies for strict implementation. Further, these bodies may be asked to orient all the sanitation workers on ways to protect themselves from infection.

I would request for immediate attention to the above.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Encl: As above

(R. Subrahmanyam)

Chief Secretaries of States/UTs

GUIDELINES FOR SANITATION WORKERS IN VIEW OF COVID -19

Following is expected from departments engaging Sanitation Workers such as Urban Local Bodies/Gram Panchayats/Railways etc to ensure the health and safety of Sanitation Workers/ while performing their sanitation related duties during COVID 19.

A. Putting in Place a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP): A Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for Sanitation Workers and may be prepared and practiced in view of COVID-19 to ensure their health and safety. The SoP may inter alia include following to prevent the infection of COVID-19 to them:

1. Mandatory orientation of Sanitation Workers on COVID-19, Social Distancing norms and key precautionary measures to be taken including frequent hand-washing, avoid touching their face and wearing Personal Protective Equipments/Safety Gears.
2. List of Do's and Don'ts to be practiced while performing their duties and extending necessary support to them in following the same.
3. Providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipments/Safety Gears, which may include masks, gloves, gum boots, jackets etc. along with hand sanitizers, soaps for their safety.
4. Designate a Nodal Officer to lead and monitor the implementation of SoP at the department/ULB level.

B. Specific Measures to be taken by Sanitation Workers: Following good practices are recommended for Sanitation Workers as precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

1. Obtain ID card or permission letter from the ULB and always carry them for movement during the lockdown period.
2. Work clothes must be worn at designated changing areas before starting the day's work. Always use mask, gloves, footwear and appropriate clothing (like long sleeved shirt, long trousers and apron) while at work.
3. Ensure that soaps or hand sanitizers are available while at work place.

4. Avoid putting your gloves in your pocket (better to store them in a designated plastic bag). Never touch your face with gloves.
5. Wash hands with soap and water before and after performing sanitation activities and any time you remove your gloves.
6. Never touch waste/garbage with bare hands. Wash hands and any body-surface accidentally coming in contact with waste material.
7. Workers should maintain at least 1 meter of distance from each other and general public. If workers are in groups, maintain smaller groups and be in the same groups day after day so that if someone falls ill with COVID-19 it will be easier to identify and quarantine others who were exposed.
8. Clean frequently touched surfaces in the work place (door handles, water taps etc.) frequently (once every 2- 4 hours) with disinfectant.
9. After work, wash and clean the work tools and PPE with water and disinfecting cleaner. Keep them for drying under the sun.
10. Remove your work cloth, take a bath using soap and put on your personal clothes at the changing area, before you exit the workplace. Wash the work cloth using disinfectant and get it dried under the sun before next use.
11. In case where there is no bathing facility available at the work place, ensure that you take a bath using soap before entering home.
12. Use speaker phones when using mobile phone to avoid touching face.
13. Encourage co-workers to take leave if they are found to be ill.

C. Personal Protective Equipments (PPE)/Safety Gears for Sanitation Workers and Choice of Disinfectant: Sanitation Workers may be provided appropriate Personal Protective Equipments/Safety Gears to safeguard the health of workers by minimizing the exposure to a biological agent. Following minimum set of safety Gears/PPE to be used by them while carrying out their sanitation related activities.

1. Mask.
2. Gloves.
3. Head band and wrist band.
4. Footwear covering whole foot/ gum boots.
5. Apron/Jacket

Choice of disinfectant

1. Hand wash- preferred option:
 - a. Soap and water
 - b. Alcohol-based hand rub with minimum 60% alcohol (if hands are not visibly dirty)
2. Sodium hypochlorite at 1% (equivalent 10000ppm) for disinfection of surfaces and reusable gloves.
3. Mildly alkaline all-purpose detergent for cleaning surfaces.

