

**GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT**

No.Health.140/2020/15,

Dated Shillong, the 14th July, 2020.

ORDER

In view of the pandemic situation arising out of the COVID-19 the protocol for enforcing the three recommended health practices for prevention of COVID-19 is issued for necessary guidance:-

Protocol for enforcing the three recommended health practices for prevention of COVID-19

In its effort to combat the spread of Covid-19, the Government of Meghalaya has taken a proactive approach of declaring all its residents as Category 'A' cases by default unless they are tested on a continuous basis. As per the health protocol issued by the Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya, on 2nd June 2020, all residents are assumed to be by default asymptomatic persons who potentially have the ability to transmit the virus to others unknowingly. This step has been taken with the intention to effect behavioral change in people, where they consciously and strictly follow the three recommended practices of health to limit their exposure to the virus and thus prevent the spread of Covid-19:

The three recommended health practices to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus are laid down below:

1. Wearing a mask
2. Hand hygiene (washing hands frequently with soap and water OR using a hand sanitizer)
3. Maintaining physical distancing of about 6 feet in public spaces

While the above three recommended health practices are simple and doable. However, it has been observed that these practices are not followed diligently by everyone. Therefore, a gentle approach will be adopted in the coming few days to enforce the above recommended health practices through laws and regulations so as to bring about a change in the behavior of people.

The Executive Magistrates and Police Officers are authorized to impose a penalty of Rs.500/- on first-time offenders who do not follow the recommended health practices.

The imposition of this fine is not to be seen as a punitive measure but as a means to effect a positive behavioral change among people to act responsibly in personal as well as public spaces.

REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO WEARING OF MASKS AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

1. Masks should compulsorily be worn when people come out of their houses. A mask should compulsorily be worn if a person has cough or fever-even while inside the house.
2. All people above 2 years of age should wear a mask in public settings and when they are around people who do not live in their household, especially when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
3. Wearing of masks is compulsory in places where there is mass gathering (eg., meetings, markets).
4. Masks should be worn when in enclosed indoor settings openly accessible to public (eg., public taxis, buses, grocery stores, malls, banquet halls, convention centres, stadiums, common areas in hotels, lobbies, offices, community centres).
5. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Use tissues and throw them away.

However, there are certain instances when wearing masks is not feasible. Also, wearing masks for prolonged hours is not feasible and practically impossible. Following are examples of various cases when masks can be removed temporarily:

Case 1: A person is travelling alone in a vehicle (i.e, he/she is the driver), can remove his/her mask inside the vehicle. However, if he/she stops to talk to someone along the way, or get out of the vehicle, it is mandatory for him/her to put the mask back on.

Case 2: In case people from the same household or office travelling together in a vehicle and some of the members remove their masks inside the vehicle, even though they are in an enclosed space, they are not considered as violators of the rule because they know who their family members have been in contact with.

Case 3: A shopkeeper sitting alone in shop with no customers around can remove his/her mask for a while but he/she should put his/her mask back on as and when customers approach the shop.

Case 4: While walking on an almost empty road with few people around (far off from the others), the mask can be removed. But if the road is crowded and physical distancing cannot be maintained, wearing of mask is compulsory.

Case 5: In case of workplaces, it is mandatory to wear a mask when sitting or working with unknown people. But the mask can be removed while sitting with known colleagues while maintaining safe distance from them.

It is to be noted that wearing mask does not replace the need to maintain physical distancing and maintaining hand hygiene.

REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO PHYSICAL DISTANCING

1. At least 1 to 2 metres physical distance is to be maintained from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.
2. It is important to stay home and away from other people if you are sick with COVID-19, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
3. Maintain physical distance between yourself and delivery service providers during exchanges and wear a mask/cloth face covering.

It may be difficult to maintain physical distancing at all times and hence, masks/cloth face coverings are especially important to be used during such situations.

REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO HAND HYGIENE

1. It is recommended that one carries a hand sanitizer with them at all times. However, if this is not possible, it is imperative that a person sanitizes/washes their hands before entering their home/office space/grocery store/shops. The principle will necessarily apply in case a person uses his hands to touch edibles.
2. Hands should be washed with soap and water when visibly dirty or visibly soiled and after using the toilet.
3. It is recommended to wash hands or use a hand sanitizer every time one touches their mouth or nose.

Community participation in enforcing the recommended health practices can play a huge role in limiting the spread of the highly transmissible novel Corona virus.

Sd/-

(Sampath Kumar, IAS)

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Health&/Family Welfare Department