

RE-OPENING MALTA'S TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

**PROCEDURES TO RE-INTRODUCE OPERATIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL
DISTANCING, ENHANCED HYGIENIC PRACTICES AND MINIMISED INFECTION
RISKS**

5 June 2020

Introduction

These Procedures have been formulated for a number of tourism establishments and other tourism receiving operations to ensure rigid compliance in the fields of social distancing, enhanced hygienic practices and the minimisation of COVID-19 infection risks by establishments and operations re-opening for domestic and foreign tourism use following their closure earlier this year.

The procedures have been formulated bearing the advice made available by the International and Maltese Health Authorities as well as by drawing from best practice from other tourism receiving countries which is being constantly monitored and updated.

The objective of these procedures is to make these establishments assume self-responsibility and accountability for the introduction of additional measures aimed at addressing this extraordinary situation in a way which enshrines them in their routine, day to day management and operational practices. Enforcement of conditions falls within remit of Malta Tourism Authority and the Health Authorities.

The introduction of **sector-specific mandatory conditions and checklists** which need to be completed and signed on a regular basis and the availability of record logs and certificates to complement these checklists will ensure that the highest standards are kept and that a record to assist inspections in checking that commitments which have been signed for by management are being respected and applied.

The available checklists are for:

- **Accommodation Establishments (two separate sections for Collective Accommodation and Holiday Furnished Premises)**
- **Catering Establishments**
- **Outdoor Establishments including Lidos, Swimming Pools and Outside Entertainment Areas**
- **Beaches, Beach Establishments and Beach Concessions**
- **Bars, Clubs and Similar Establishments**

The document also contains an appendix with **Additional Notes and References** for consultation and use by establishments to enable them to keep abreast of developments and guidelines as updated from time to time.

SECTION 2:

HOLIDAY FURNISHED PREMISES

Mandatory conditions for Holiday Furnished Premises

These following obligatory conditions are issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta and the Malta Travel and Tourism Services Act Chapter 409 of the Laws of Malta and require strict adherence. Failure to adhere to these conditions will result in enforcement procedures as provided by these Acts.

Mandatory conditions to be observed in Holiday Furnished Premises

The Superintendent of Public Health hereby orders that all Registered Holiday Furnished Premises shall implement the measures listed in the Checklist appended to these conditions.

Guidelines for the application of COVID-19 mitigation measures in Holiday Furnished Premises

All of the above establishments are being advised to operate in accordance with the conditions for good practice included in this document.

Such establishments usually involve the sale of goods or services to the public. These outlets include both areas where workers interact with customers and closed areas such as warehouses or distribution centres that may involve only minimal face-to-face contact with customers, supply chain delivery persons or fellow workers.

Principles for business continuity

Recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency and that business continuity in respect of COVID-19 should be founded on expert public health advice and on social dialogue, the following principles shall apply:

- ✓ All workers, regardless of their occupation or how they are engaged, have the right to a healthy and safe working environment.
- ✓ The COVID-19 pandemic requires a focused approach to work health and safety as it applies to holiday furnished premises.
- ✓ To keep accommodation healthy and safe, employers must, in consultation with workers and their representatives, assess the way they work to identify, understand and quantify risks and implement and review control measures that address those risks.
- ✓ As COVID-19 restrictions are gradually relaxed, employers and workers must work together to adapt and promote safe work practices consistent with advice from public health authorities and to ensure that holiday furnished premises are ready for the social distancing and exemplary hygiene measures that are critical to the success of the transition.
- ✓ Employers and workers must actively control against the transmission of COVID-19 while at work, consistent with the updated advice from the public health authorities.
- ✓ Employers and workers must prepare for the possibility that there will be cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and be ready to respond immediately,

appropriately, effectively and efficiently, and consistent with specific recommendations from public health authorities.

How COVID-19 spreads

COVID-19 presents with coughing or sneezing which release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets can fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as counters, display items, desks, tables, machinery or telephones. Other frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, trolleys, intercoms, lift buttons are other surfaces which are frequently touched by customers and employees and can become contaminated. People can catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Standing within two metres of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period, one can catch the disease by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age. People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

Duties of the employers and workers

Employers are expected to take care of the health, safety and welfare of workers, including themselves, and all other staff, including contractors and delivery persons, clients and customers to holiday furnished premises. This includes providing and maintaining a work environment that is without risk to health and safety, providing adequate and accessible facilities for the welfare of workers to carry out their work and monitoring the health of workers and the conditions of the workplace for the purpose of preventing illness or injury. Employers must minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 of workers and customers by taking reasonable and practical measures to mitigate risk.

Protection of workers from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 may include, for example:

- ✓ Requiring workers to practice social distancing
- ✓ Requiring workers to practice good hygiene (e.g., through workplace policies and ensuring access to adequate and well stocked hygiene facilities)
- ✓ Requiring workers to stay home when sick
- ✓ Cleaning the workplace regularly and thoroughly

- ✓ Implementing working from home arrangements for those aspects of the business where such arrangements can be applied

Employers must take actions to ensure that holiday furnished premises do not put the health and safety of clients, customers, contractors and delivery persons at risk of contracting COVID-19. Such protection from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 may include, for example:

- ✓ Requiring them to practice social distancing, including through contactless deliveries and payments
- ✓ Requiring them to practice good hygiene, and
- ✓ Requiring others to stay away from the workplace, unless essential, e.g., such as family, friends and visitors.

Employers must maintain a safe work environment in holiday furnished premises by, for example:

- ✓ Cleaning the workplace regularly and thoroughly,
- ✓ Restructuring the layout of the workplace to allow for social distancing,
- ✓ Limiting the number of people inside holiday furnished premises at any given time,
- ✓ Providing adequate facilities to protect workers, as much as possible from contracting COVID-19 such as:
 - Toilet facilities including adequate supply of soap, water and paper towels
 - Hand sanitisers around the workplace, where it is not possible for workers to wash their hands,
 - Staff rooms (where applicable) that are regularly cleaned and that allow for social distancing,
- ✓ Providing workers with regular breaks to use sanitizing facilities, particularly to allow workers to wash their hands, or to access hand sanitiser where this is not possible,
- ✓ Providing information, training, instruction and supervision which may include:
 - guidance on how to properly wash hands
 - training on how to fit and use any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - training on adequate cleaning practices throughout the day
 - instructions on how to set up a safe home workplace for those working from home, and
- ✓ Providing workers with instructions on staying home from work if sick.

Employers have the duty to consult with workers on health and safety matters relating to COVID-19. Employers must give workers the opportunity to express their views and raise their concerns. Workers are most likely to know about the risks of their work. Involving them will help build commitment to any changes that employers need to

implement. Employers must advise workers of the outcome of consultation. Adapting holiday furnished premises to manage and mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 requires a thorough risk assessment. These guidelines provide considerations that employers must make when deciding on control measures such as restrictions within holiday furnished premises to allow for social distancing, the adequacy of facilities for proper personal hygiene, cleaning arrangements, working from home arrangements, and other changes that may affect the health and safety of workers. Consultation does not require consensus or agreement, but employers are strongly advised to allow workers to be part of the decision-making process for COVID-19 related matters.

HOLIDAY FURNISHED PREMISES CHECKLIST

Name of Establishment: _____

Checklist filled by: (Name) _____ (Position) _____

Date: _____

THIS CHECKLIST IS BEING PURPOSELY SUBDIVIDED INTO DIFFERENT AREAS OF ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENT OPERATION DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE NATIONAL TRANSITION STRATEGY MAY DECIDE FOR THE GRADUAL AND PARTIAL RE-INTRODUCTION OF DIFFERENT SERVICES. WHEN COMPLETING THIS CHECKLIST, THE RELEVANT SECTION(S) FOR SERVICES WHICH HAVE YET TO RECEIVE HEALTH AUTHORITIES' CLEARANCE TO OPERATE AS AT THE DATE OF COMPLETION ARE TO BE FILLED AS N/A (NOT APPLICABLE).

IN CASE OF ALL ESTABLISHMENTS: (SEE TECHNICAL NOTE AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT)

	Yes/No	Date Certified
Establishment certified clear of Legionella.		
Test results and certification available.		

1. Availability of Guest Information

	Yes/No	Comments
Guest Information Pack possesses the telephone numbers of the public health authorities, hospitals and medical centres, public and private hospitals for use whenever there is the possibility that a guest may be ill.		
Sanitising wipes for guest luggage for use by guests.		

2. Necessary equipment and medical kit available for Emergency Use in Premises

	Yes/No	Comments
Germicidal disinfectant/wipes for surface cleaning.		
Visiting maintenance and housekeeping staff to wear visors. Visors are to be cleaned regularly with alcohol. Disposable face masks can only be used once.		
Gloves (disposable).		
Protective apron (disposable).		
Full-length long-sleeved gown.		
Biohazard disposable waste bag.		
Alcohol dispenser at public entrance. Automatic dispensers are recommended		

3. Technical and maintenance services

ESTABLISHMENTS WILL NEED TO PRODUCE MAINTENANCE AND TESTING DOCUMENTS RELATING TO MICROBIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WATER ANALYSIS AND PROVIDE RECORDS OF MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION PROCEDURES FOR DISHWASHING AND LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT AND AIR CONDITIONER MAINTENANCE.

	Yes/No	Comments
Water is disinfected: water for consumption and in pools.		
Dishwashing and laundry equipment properly functioning.		
Air-conditioning: Condition of filters monitored weekly and proper replacement rate of indoor air is maintained. The proper functioning of ventilation, air exchange, and dehumidification equipment is checked weekly.		
Normal chlorination regime for outdoor pools.		
Dispensers are checked weekly as a minimum to ensure the proper functioning. Dispensers include soap and disinfectant solution dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers, and similar devices.		
Install units to dispense disinfectant gel in the premises.		

4. The Premises

	Yes/No	Comments
Rooms decluttered of unnecessary items.		
Hand Sanitiser either available as bathroom amenity or for sale in minibar.		
Enhanced weekly disinfection of high contact surfaces.		
Use of soluble plastic bags for laundry for direct placing in washing machines. Soluble plastic bags may not be used if a written agreement exists between the laundry operator and the establishment, whereby the laundry operator declares that the linen arriving from the establishment shall be handled by persons wearing appropriate PPE.		

5. Pool Deck

	Yes/No	Comments
Disinfectant dispensers (preferably automatic), liquid soap and disposable paper towels provided.		
Capacity to be limited to 50% of the maximum bathing load as stipulated in Schedule IV of LN129 of 2005		
Maintenance staff at pools to wear visors.		
Umbrellas, sun beds, chairs and other equipment are disinfected after every visitor leaves.		
Public toilets and changing rooms to be disinfected every hour. Documentation to be kept on site logging disinfection times every hour.		
2 metre distance in each direction between each 1 umbrella/2 sunbed unit in open area around pools. Only one person per sunbed.		

6. Availability of materials in case of infected person

ESTABLISHMENTS ARE TO MAINTAIN AND PROVIDE ATTENDANCE SHEETS SIGNED BY THE STAFF MEMBERS THAT HAVE BEEN BRIEFED ON TRAINED FOR THIS CONTINGENCY

	Yes/No	Comments
Cleaning staff have been trained on the use of and provided with personal protection equipment as listed below: Gloves. Disposable gowns. Closed shoes. Facial protection (face shield and impermeable aprons) for procedures that generate splashes (e.g. while washing surfaces).		
Access to sufficient disinfectant solutions and other supplies.		

TECHNICAL NOTE RE WATER SYSTEMS IN ESTABLISHMENT

The following are the legal requirements to be carried out on the water systems prior re-opening of the premises:

1. Carry out a full system disinfection of the cold-water system, flushing through to all outlets to achieve 50 mg/l free chlorine for at least an hour checking that this level is achieved at the furthest outlets. This may be also achieved by making uses e.g. 5 mg/l for 10 hours (this all depends on the water piping system condition). It is important to top up when required throughout this process;
2. Flush out and refill the system to achieve maximum normal operating target levels of disinfection (equivalent to at least 0.2 mg/l free chlorine);
3. Refill and carry out a thermal shock by raising the temperature of the whole of the contents of the hot water storage heater from 70°C to 80°C then circulating this water throughout the system for up to three days. To be effective, the capacity and temperature of the hot water storage heater should be sufficient to ensure that the temperatures at the taps and appliances do not fall below 65°C. Each tap and appliance should be run sequentially for at least five minutes at the full temperature, taking appropriate precautions to minimise the risk of scalding;
4. Monitor temperatures and biocide levels where applicable, adjust where necessary, for at least 48-72 hours and then take *Legionella* samples from sentinel outlets (microbiological samples taken before 48 hours following disinfection may give false negative results);
5. Ensure you keep all documentation for inspection by the Competent Authority, including the review and update of the risk assessment manual including monitoring data, etc., with evidence of who carried out the monitoring, add time, date and signature;
6. Laboratory results for *Legionella* analysis which have to be carried out at an accredited laboratory, together with all the necessary documentation referred to in point 5 above and a declaration from the private water consultant under whom this water system treatment has been carried out are to be sent to the Water Regulatory and Auditing Unit within the Environmental Health Directorate prior reopening of the establishment;
7. Once it is found that your systems of the hot and cold water are under control then the establishment can reopen.

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND REFERENCES FOR ALL ESTABLISHMENTS

OPERATORS OF ESTABLISHMENTS ARE URGED TO FAMILIARISE THEMSELVES WITH THE FOLLOWING NOTES, GUIDANCE AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AND TO FOLLOW CHANGES AND UPDATES AS MAY BE ANNOUNCED BY THE AUTHORITIES FROM TIME TO TIME.

1. Link to guidance document on masks and visors

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/Documents/Guidance%20on%20the%20Use%20of%20Face%20Masks%20for%20decreasing%20COVID-19%20Transmission%20in%20the%20Community.pdf>

To wear the visor:

Step 1: Clean hands properly

Step 2: With clean hands put on the visor

Step 3: Remove the visor by pulling the string from behind



Step 4: Cleaning

How should one care for a face visor? Your face shield/visor should be cleaned after each use. Disinfect with alcohol wipes, disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray or germicidal wipes. Then clean with soap and water and let dry before using again. Disposable face shields/visors may be used as long as they keep their shape and remain intact.

2. **Control of Legionella regulations LN 5 of 2006**

<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=16567&l=1>

3. **Swimming Pools Regulations, 2006 LN 129 of 2005**

<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=16966&l=1>
as amended by LN 135 of 2008

<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=20584&l=1>

4. Tobacco (Smoking Control) Act

<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8791&l=1>

LN 22 of 2010 Products and smoking devices (simulating cigarettes or tobacco) (Control) Regulations 2010

<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=21128&l=1>

Ln 67 of 2016 Manufacture, Presentation and Sale of Tobacco and Related Products Regulations, 2016

<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=27447&l=1>