

Operational Guidelines on Preparedness and Response for COVID-19 outbreak for Apparel Industry

(First Revision 28th April 2021)



Environmental and Occupational Health and Food Safety Directorate

Ministry of Health

Operational Guidelines on Preparedness and Response for COVID-19 outbreak for Apparel Industry

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Considering the rapid spread of COVID-19 infection in the country following the New Year festive season the ‘Operational Guidelines on preparedness and response for COVID-19 outbreak for Apparel Industry’ circulated in October 2020 has been revised. This document outlines the revisions that have been made.

Summary of revisions

1. COVID-19 infection is now reported to be transmitted through air. Therefore, additional measures mentioned in this document are to be adhered to in addition to the general measures mentioned in the guidelines issued in October 2020, to protect the employees
2. COVID-19 symptomatic screening to be strengthened and carried out strictly, on a daily basis.
3. On detecting an employee with symptoms suspicious of COVID-19 they have to be sent to the nearest Government hospital (District Hospital level and above) for further investigations and management.
4. The checklist to be used for screening of employees/ visitors has been simplified and attached as annex I in this document
5. The ‘Response measures to be taken in detecting a COVID-19 positive employee’ has been modified, due to the introduction of the ‘Revised screening and laboratory testing strategy for COVID-19 for employees in workplaces’(Attached). These response measures are described in detail in this document.
6. The monitoring mechanism has been revised and is described in this document

The instructions mentioned in the rest of the document on ‘Operational guidelines on preparedness and response for COVID-19 outbreak for Apparel Industry’ 25th October 2020, circulated by the Ministry of Health must be Strictly followed in order to prevent and curtail the spread of COVID-19 infection in the apparel industry

Key Messages

1. Air borne transmission of COVID-19 virus has been reported and additional measures have to be taken to safeguard employees
2. Ensure strict adherence to the operational guidelines on preparedness and response for COVID-19 and prepare the apparel industry physically and administratively to prevent COVID-19 infection
3. **Strictly conduct symptom screening of employees on a daily basis, as one of the most important strategies for early detection of COVID-19 suspected employees**
4. Ensure referral of these COVID-19 suspected employees to the nearest Government Hospital (District Hospital and above) for testing and further management
5. Follow instructions in relevant sections of the 'Revised screening and laboratory testing strategy for COVID-19 for employees in workplaces' (First revision 14th March 2021) for screening and testing of symptomatic employees, testing during outbreak situation and in routine asymptomatic testing for surveillance
6. Monitoring mechanism has been modified to 'COVID-19 daily alert for apparel industry' google form to be submitted on a daily basis
7. In case of detecting a COVID-19 positive employee ensure it is informed to the area MOH and Regional Epidemiologist, immediately

1. Additional general health measures to be followed by the apparel industry

- Please ensure strict adherence to general measures stated in Operational Guidelines on preparedness and response for COVID-19 outbreak for Apparel Industry

- Additionally, the following must be ensured,
 - a. Ensure good air circulation in all work areas. Leave doors and windows open where feasible

Where air conditioners are used, to maintain good air circulation the following are recommended
 1. Proper air filtration
 2. Increasing the air circulation ratePlease seek additional expert advice on air conditioning as per your requirement
 - b. Employees must wear a face mask properly
 - c. Create awareness among employees about the relevant revisions made to the guidelines

- Refrain from organizing parties, trips and other get-togethers where people gather, during this period.

2. Response measures in detecting a COVID-19 positive employee

Step 1: Identification of a COVID-19-positive employee

- As soon as a member of the staff is found to be infected with COVID-19 all relevant precautions should be taken to limit the spread of the disease within the institution.
- Isolate the patient immediately in an isolation room/ space preferably with a dedicated wash room facility.
- He/ She should continue to wear a face mask. Take all relevant precautions to limit the spread of the disease, until transfer to the health facility.
- Inform the area MOH/ area PHI immediately, for further action.

Step 2: Identify all first line contacts (close contacts) of the Covid-19 positive employee

- When a test results is known of a COVID-19 positive patient, he/she may be either attending work (if the sample is taken during routine surveillance) or may be already under quarantine (when identified as a contact of a known patient).
- If an employee was tested positive, determine the first line contacts (close contacts) of the patient. First line contacts (close contacts) will be quarantined as per the prevailing guidelines.

A first line contact (close contact) is defined as someone who was within one meter proximity for at least 15 minutes or had direct physical contact with the person who tested positive during the exposure risk period.

Collect following information about the COVID-19 positive employee:

- 1) The date when symptoms began (if applicable)
- 2) The date of sample collection for the positive test; and
- 3) The last date the patient was present at the workplace

This information should be used by the employer to identify all individuals who may have had close contact with the patient during the exposure period. The exposure period is defined as:

- **Start: In case of a symptomatic employee, 2 days before the employee had symptoms
In case of an asymptomatic employee, 2 days before the date of sample collection
for the positive test**
- **End: Last day the positive person was at the work place.**

The employer should gather the following information for all employees who have been identified as first line contacts (close contacts),

- Name with initials
- Phone number
- Permanent address
- Current address (if different from the permanent address)
- ID number

Provide these details to the area Medical Officer of Health/area Public Health Inspector.

In order to facilitate this process, inform all employees in advance that, if they are confirmed having COVID-19, they need to provide a list of other people with whom they had close contact during the exposure period.

Step 3: Communicate with all employees about quarantine & testing recommendations for first line contacts (close contacts) and others

First line contacts (close contacts)

- All first line contacts (close contacts) identified according to the above-mentioned criteria, should undergo quarantine and return to work on receiving a negative result for PCR test, which is done on day 10 of quarantine.
- Sample collection for COVID-19 testing will be conducted according to the 'Revised screening and laboratory testing strategy for COVID-19 for employees in workplaces' issued by the Ministry of Health on 14.03.2021 (attached).

Others

- All others present at the workplace, but NOT identified as first line contacts (close contacts), may return to work as usual but should be advised to strictly self-monitor for symptoms
- The enterprise should strictly conduct symptom monitoring for all employees attending work.
- If they develop symptoms, further action should be taken as per the 'Revised screening and laboratory testing strategy for COVID-19 for employees in workplaces' issued by the Ministry of Health (attached).
- Further random testing of small groups can be done during an outbreak, according to the instruction in the 'Revised screening and laboratory testing strategy for COVID-19 for employees in workplaces' (attached).

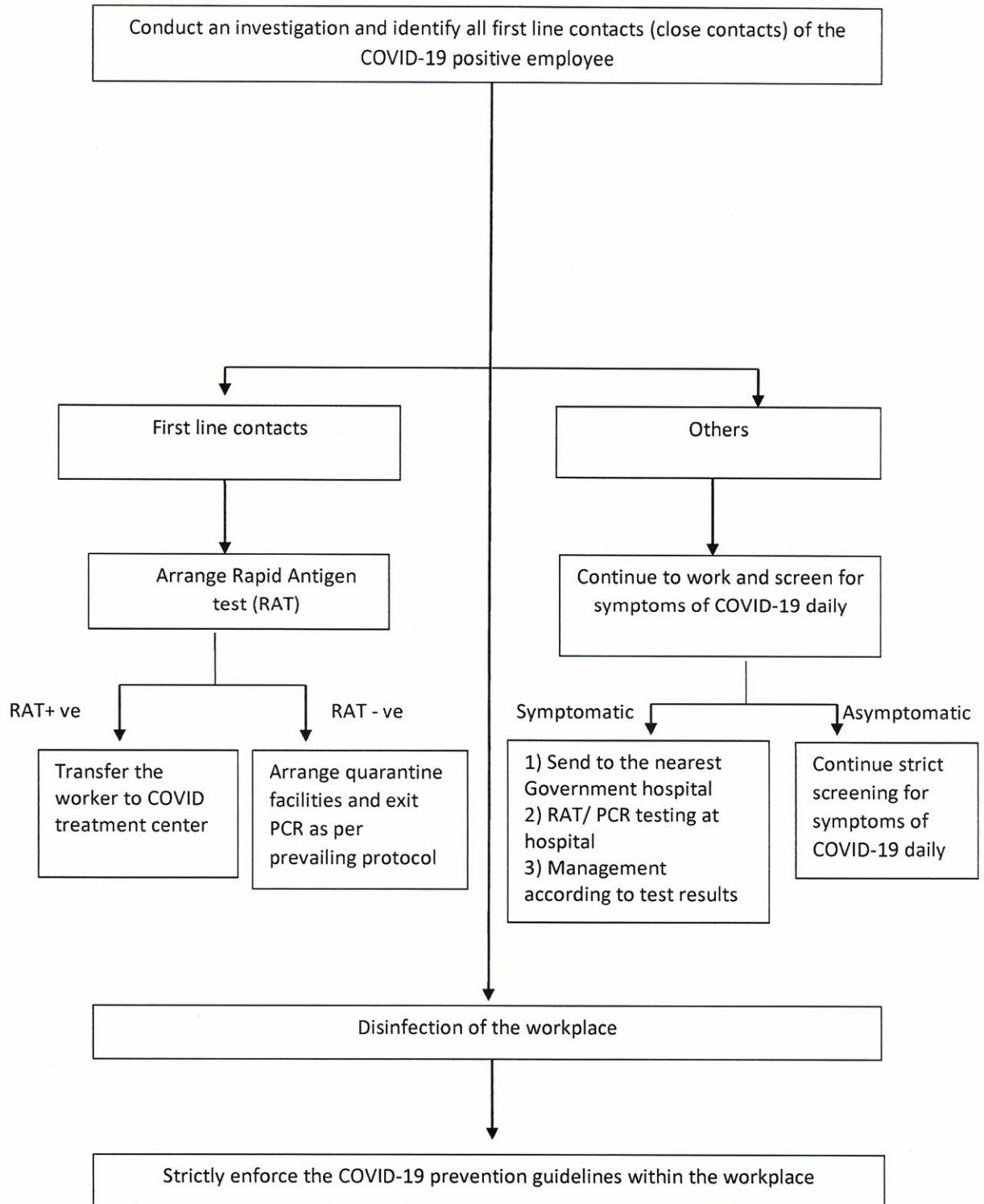
Step 4: Disinfection recommendations after identifying a positive COVID-19 case at the institution

- Identify areas visited by the patient during the past 48 hours. Close these areas for 24 hours
- Thereafter, open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the patient including office rooms, work stations, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment (tablets, touch screens, keyboards and remote controls, etc.), focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Continue routine cleaning and disinfecting all high-touch areas throughout the day.

Step 5: Preventing further transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace


- Strictly enforce the COVID-19 prevention guidelines as stated in ‘Operational Guidelines on preparedness and response for COVID-19 outbreak for apparel industry’ issued on 25.10.2020.
- As appropriate, restructure the institution to better support physical distancing. Ensure that all personnel are properly trained on the above protocol and that the protocol measures are being strictly implemented and followed.

Steps to be followed in case a positive employee is found in a workplace



3. Monitoring mechanism for apparel industry

- The Focal Points in enterprises have to complete the ‘Workplace COVID-19 daily alert’ Google form and submit it (eohunit2020@gmail.com), on a daily basis, considering the current COVID-19 situation in the country.
- The link to the ‘Workplace COVID-19 daily alert’ Google form has been shared with the respective focal points, via email sent by the Environmental and Occupational Health unit of the Ministry of Health.
- In case of detecting a COVID-19 positive employee ensure it is informed to the area MOH and Regional Epidemiologist, immediately.



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28.04.2021

Annex I

Date :

Name :

Contact no. :

For employees of the institution, Employee Number :

1. Do you have any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 today?
(Fever / body ache / cough / runny nose / sore throat / shortness of breath/Loss of smell)

Yes No

2. Has anyone living in the same household / close associate been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days?

Yes No

3. Are you identified as a first line contact (close contact) of a person positive for COVID-19?

Yes No

4. Is anyone living in the same household / close associate being identified as a first line contact (close contact)?

Yes No