TOURISM SECTOR GUIDELINES
in response to COVID 19

TOURISM COMMISSION AGENT

MAY 2020
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Guidelines for Tourism Commission Agent

Definition

A **Tourism Commission Agent** means any person who by way of business transacts or arranges business for any other person in consideration of a commission or other remuneration.

Introduction

In this new normal landscape, new methods of conducting business in the tourism industry which is very customer oriented must be adopted. In Seychelles, we thrive to offer personalized and excellent service to our clients to ensure that they have the best experience of our islands, culture and its people. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that jobs within the tourism industry will not operate as it normally did.

This document provides guidance to the tourism industry for the gradual return to business. It aims at protecting the health and safety of customers and staff in response to the COVID19 pandemic. Special consideration should be given to these general areas.

1. Human resource and administrative requirements
2. Enhanced infection prevention control
3. Communication
4. Situation monitoring and reporting
5. Special cleaning and disinfection plan for situations in which staff or previous occupant is identified as a Covid-19 case

The recommendations are based on Public Health Guidelines and act as an addendum to the minimum requirements already established for the respective business category. These recommendations may be revised as and when required. Adherence to these guidelines remains the responsibility of the Tourism Commission Agent.

1. Human Resource and Administrative Requirements

**Action Plan**

- Further to adopting these guidelines, all Tourism Commission Agents are required to develop their Standard operational procedures based on the specificities of their business.
• The Tourism Commission Agent may seek the assistance of a health, safety or hygiene specialist or advisor which should follow the recommendations of the Public Health Authority in developing their operational procedures.

Administrative Procedures

• Only licensed Tourism Commission Agents are allowed to solicit clients for business.

• Tourism Commission Agents are to be advised to cooperate with health authorities and comply with procedures and checks where applicable.

• Tourism Commission Agents must be aware to adhere to health, safety and hygiene rules.

Staff Training
Staff training in infection prevention control is key to ensuring safety and security of staff and clients. As such appropriate training as per Public Health Authority guidelines in the following areas is required.

• Tourism Commission Agents must ensure that they have undergone coronavirus awareness training and that they are educated on Infection Prevention and Control measures (IPC) to be implemented. This should also include training on use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The Public Health Authority and the Tourism Department will be providing scheduled training.

2. Enhanced Infection Prevention Control

Physical Distancing
• The number of clients accessing the Tourism Commission Agent’s services at any one time should be controlled and physical distancing should be maintained.

• All Tourism Commission Agents must maintain physical distancing when soliciting clients.

• In a bid to further maintain physical distancing, Tourism Commission Agents must ensure that they sell trips/tours to small groups only to avoid crowdedness aboard vessels or during tours.
Hygiene Practices

• Tourism Commission Agents should always have alcohol based hand sanitizers for them to practice regular hand sanitation.

• Good hygiene practices must be observed at all times.

Cleaning and Disinfection

• The necessary PPE must be available for use by the Tourism Commission Agent.

• If not disposable, clean and disinfect any materials according to guidance for environmental cleaning.

Refer to Annex 1 for guidelines on environmental cleaning.

Other measures

• All visual aids used by Tourism Commission Agents (maps, photos, etc.) must be laminated as these can be easily wiped down with alcohol to avoid cross contamination. Promotional materials for the purpose of giveaways need not be laminated.

• The use of technology by providing digital information can be considered.

3. Communication

• The Tourism Commission Agent shall place health and hygiene reminders where applicable to indicate proper hygiene practices including hand sanitizing, physical distancing, and the practice of good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing.

• The health and hygiene reminders must include information on symptoms of COVID 19 and reporting protocols.

• The contact number 141 is available for reporting and advice on COVID 19 matters.

• The Tourism Commission Agent shall inform all potential clients that services is restricted for anyone with known symptoms or who have been exposed to a COVID 19 case in the prior 14 days.

Detailed health and hygiene guidance are available at Annex 2.
4. Situation Monitoring and Reporting

Management
• It is the responsibility of the Tourism Commission Agent to keep abreast of new developments and updated information disseminated by the Health Authorities and other government advisories and to keep staff and clients informed.

Procedures for managing suspect COVID 19 Cases
• The client or the Tourism Commission Agent who becomes symptomatic should wear a mask.
• The Public Health Authority must be notified immediately if the Tourism Commission Agent or client displays any symptoms of COVID 19.

Cover photo credit: SeyVillas
Annex 1

Guidance for Environmental Cleaning in Tourism and Travel facilities in context of COVID-19 pandemic

Joint Interim Guidance; Department of Tourism and Department of Health; 4 May 2020.

The guidance aims to ensure the implementation of adequate environmental cleaning and disinfection in tourism and travel facility.

COVID-19 is spread principally by droplets and through contaminated hands and surfaces. Key individual level measures to take include good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and avoiding touching the face. Evidence to-date suggests the virus can survive on various surfaces for hours to days, and as such, environmental cleaning is a key effective intervention to prevent spread of COVID-19 in all settings, including tourism and travel.

Scope

These guidelines are relevant for full- or part-time cleaning managers and/or cleaning supervisors, or other staff who assure a clean environment, such as supervisors of hotels or departments, procurement staff, facilities management, and any others responsible for WASH and/cleaning services and/or health and safety officer at the tourism and travel facility.

Prerequisites

Mops; Mop buckets (designated for different areas e.g.: toilet/kitchen/general floor); Vacuum for carpet; Appropriate disinfectants; Measuring jug; Cloths for damp dusting (designated for different areas e.g.: toilets, kitchen, office or frequently touched surfaces); Dust pans and brushes; Disposable gloves; Disposable mask; Disposable Plastic aprons; Eye protection or mask (if cases where evidence of splash or aerosol is anticipated); Biohazard disposable waste bag and bin liners (colour coded bags. E.g. yellow or white for biohazard waste and black for general waste).

Terminology

In this document, cleaning refers to wiping or washing an object or surface, to reduce number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface, whereas disinfection refers to measures to kill germs on surfaces being cleaned.

Choice

For Cleaning and disinfection, it is suggest that one of the following be used:

- Diluted sodium hypochlorite (house-hold bleach) solution, at a concentration of 1% (1000ppm).
- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol content (where bleach cannot be used).

Note: most industrial and household cleaning products are bactericidal and viricidal.
**Principles**

Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, rooms and common areas) used by the staffs and clients, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

Frequently touch surfaces include Tables, Light switches, Countertops, Lifts, Railings, Door knobs, Handles, Taps, Phone headsets, Keyboards/Mouse, Desk surfaces Toilets, Sinks, Armrests, Railings, chairs, TV remotes, key cards, keys, vending machines.

**Procedures**

- All cleaning staffs should be trained on appropriate use of cleaning and disinfection chemicals.
- Wear disposable gloves and disposable aprons for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling of trash.
- Additional personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g. mask and face shield, might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products used and whether there is a risk of splash.
- All rooms should be cleaned and disinfected with 0.5% to 1% concentration of diluted household bleach solution at least once a day and for each client before check-in and after check-out.
- Bathrooms and toilets should be cleaned and disinfected with 0.5% to 1% concentration of diluted house-hold bleach solution, at least once daily in hotel rooms (used only by occupying clients) and twice daily in communal areas (e.g. hotel receptions, travel offices).
- All offices, floors and other areas should be cleaned and disinfected with at least 0.5% to 1% concentration of diluted house-hold bleach solution at least once per day.
- Surfaces should be cleaned with detergent first and then mopped/rinsed with clean water after at least 10 minutes contact time with disinfectant.
- When use of bleach is not suitable (e.g. telephone, remote control equipment, door handlings, buttons in the elevator, etc.), use alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol or disinfecting wipes.
- For electronics, please follow manufacturer’s instructions on how to clean them.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces at least four times a day.
- More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required in certain areas if their level of use is very high.
- Create a cleaning schedule and monitoring checklist.
- Whenever possible, use disposable cleaning materials.
- Prior to reusing (e.g. cloth, mops), for other rooms/areas, disinfect properly with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution, or according to manufacturer’s instructions.
- Gloves, apron and/or gowns should be removed carefully and disposed in closed bins, to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- Always wash hands immediately with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing gloves or any additional PPE after each cleaning process and after contact with anyone who is well or sick.
- Hand sanitizer: If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
- All waste containers/bins should be pedal operated and covered.
- All wastes should be tied or sealed in a plastic bag, double-bagged and then disposed in a sanitary fashion.
• Ensure the proper functioning and availability of soap and disinfectant solution dispensers, hand dryers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar devices. Defective units should be rapidly repaired or replaced.

Dilution of household bleach for use

Dilution varies based on the strength of the commercial product being used. The active ingredient in bleach is sodium hypochlorite, and its strength is stated in percentages (e.g. 5%) or parts per million (e.g. 5000ppm).

Concentration required to kill COVID-19 and other bacterial or viruses is between 500 to 1000 ppm (0.5% -1%). Therefore, a typical household bleach product of 5% strength will require dilution with 10 parts water, to give a 0.5% solution of bleach for environmental cleaning.

\[ \frac{P}{a} \times \frac{w}{a} = (\frac{i}{i} \times \frac{a}{a} \times \frac{h}{i} \%) \times 2 - 1 \]

E.g. up/part of commercial bleach at 7% strength will require \( 7 \div 0.5 - 1 = 13 \) cups/part of water added to it, to make a concentration of 0.5% (500 ppm), for environmental cleaning use.

(NB: The calculation provided above would change depending on the percentage of the bleach available within the workplace)

Direction for cleaning

• Clean, then disinfect, from the least soiled areas (cleanest) to the most soiled areas (dirtiest) so that dirtiest areas are cleaned last;
• Clean, then disinfect, from higher levels to lower levels so that debris may fall on the floor and is cleaned last;

Cleaning of Electronics

For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines

• Consider putting a **wipeable cover** on electronics.
• Follow manufacturer’s instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
• If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 60% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.
**Soft surfaces**

For soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes:

- **Clean the surface using soap and water** or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- **Launder items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Use steam cleaning for items that cannot be laundered e.g. upholstered furniture/mattresses.
- Heavily contaminated items that cannot be cleaned should be disposed immediately as an infectious waste.

**Dishes and cutlery**

- Dishes and cutlery should be cleaned in a commercial or domestic dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergent.
- Reusable dishes and cutlery must be cleaned using hot water and appropriate dishwashing detergent.
- Ensure all items are thoroughly cleaned.
- Clean and dry all dishes and cutlery and store in a cupboard or keep covered to prevent potential contamination from sneezes or coughs.
- Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds prior to handling dishes and cutlery.
- Any unused dishes and cutlery touched by guests or staff should be washed prior to reusing.
- When manual washing is required all dishes and cutleries should be washed, disinfected, rinsed, and dried out with disposable paper towels.

**Laundry**

For clothing, towels, linens, napkins, table cloths and other items

- Launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Wash in hot cycles of (70°C or more or maximum allowed based on type) with the usual detergents and dry items completely.
- **Wear disposable gloves, apron** when handling dirty laundry.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people’s items.
- **Do not shake** dirty laundry.
- Clean and **disinfect cloth hangers** according to guidance above for surfaces.
- Remove gloves after doing laundry, dispose in covered bin, and wash hands thoroughly.
Rooms of ill staff or clients

Report ill clients to supervisors. Get them to seek medical advice by phone.

It is recommended to close off areas used by the ill persons and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.

Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.

- Wear disposable gloves, apron and mask when cleaning the ill person’s room.
- Clean and disinfect with 1% concentration of diluted house-hold bleach solution or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.
- Clean at least once daily, and include all frequently touched surfaces.
- Remove all waste and soiled linen and place them in a separate bin liner and label accordingly. Use disposable masks, aprons and gloves when handling these again (e.g. for laundry).
- Waste from this room should be should double bagged labelled and discarded accordingly as these are considered infectious and it.
- The same cleaning process applies to rooms of ill persons who are under isolation precautions
- Clean all reusable cleaning equipment, and disinfect with bleach or at least 70% alcohol, before reuse with other clients.

In areas where ill clients have frequented, continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

N.B.: Avoid large-surface cleaning methods that produce mists or aerosols, or disperse dust, when cleaning a sick client’s room, e.g. dry sweeping, mopping, spraying or dusting.

References


Preparing for Covid 19 in Workplaces

Risk Communication Team, Department of Health
March 2020
Adapted from WHO Guidance published 28 February 2020
How Covid 19 will affect Workplaces and Businesses?

1. **Absenteeism**: illness, sick family, child’s school closure, fear.

2. **Change of patterns of commerce**: people buy more items for infection prevention, less of all else.

3. People may **stockpile**; shop at odd hours; use more home delivery.

4. **Supplies may be interrupted** (shipments/flights).
What can we do to Prepare?

Plan Ahead. Take Basic Precautions...

Panic or Fear will not solve the problem.
Promote hand-washing

• **Encourage regular hand washing** amongst all staff and customers.
  • Put sanitizing **hand rub** dispensers in prominent places around the workplace.
  • Make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled.
  • Display **posters/videos** promoting hand-washing.
  • Ensure **access to places to wash hands** with soap and running water.

• Why? Because washing kills the virus on your hands and prevents the spread of COVID-19.
Promote good respiratory hygiene

• Display **posters** promoting respiratory hygiene.

• Ensure that face masks and / or paper tissues are available at your workplaces, **for those who develop a runny nose or cough at work**, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of them.

• Why? Because good respiratory hygiene prevents the spread of COVID-19.
Ensure workplaces are clean and hygienic

• **Surfaces** (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be *wiped with disinfectant regularly*.

• **Why?** Because contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads.
Take general precautions to protect the community from spread of Covid 19

- Avoid large public gatherings.
- Avoid close contact with others when you or when the other person(s) are sick.
- Seek medical advice early – by phone.
- Wearing masks or gloves when not necessary or by persons not trained in their use may increase risk of infection.

Protect others from getting sick

Avoid close contact when you are experiencing cough and fever

Avoid spitting in public

If you have fever, cough, and difficulty breathing seek medical advice early by phone, and share previous travel history with your health care provider.
Ask employees to stay home if ill

- **If COVID-19 starts spreading in your community** anyone with even a mild cough or low grade fever (37.5°C or more) needs to stay at home.
  - Can work from home if mild illness.
  - People need to stay at home even if just mild symptoms.
  - Communicate this via calls/e-mails/posters/videos in your workplaces.
  - Agree to allow this time off to be considered sick leave.
Advise employees to consult National travel advice before going on business trips overseas

• **Before traveling**
  - Provide employees latest information from a **credible source**, such as WHO/CDC/Department of Health.
  - **Assess benefits and risks** related to upcoming travel plans.
  - Avoid sending employees who may be at higher risk of serious illness (e.g. older employees and those with medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart and lung disease).
  - Advice to travel with small bottles (under 100ml) of alcohol-based hand rub. This can facilitate regular hand-cleaning.
While Traveling

• Encourage employees to **wash their hands regularly** and stay at least one meter away from people who are coughing or sneezing

• Ensure employees contact local health authorities if they are feeling ill while traveling, and comply with their instructions.
When Employees return from travel

• **Return is subject to travel advisory restrictions.**

• Employees who have returned from an area where COVID-19 is spreading should **monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days.**

• **If they develop illness**, even a mild cough or low grade fever:
  • **Stay at home and self-isolate.** This means avoiding close contact (1 meter or nearer) with other people, including family members.
  • **Telephone the Department of Health**, giving details of their recent travel and symptoms, and follow advice and instructions given by them. Do **NOT** go directly to a clinic/emergency room.
  • **Inform the workplace.**
Getting your business ready in case COVID-19 arrives in your community

Develop an internal plan of **what to do if someone becomes ill at work** with suspected COVID-19:

- Put the ill person in a room or area where they are **isolated** from others.
- If a mask is available, ask the sick person to wear one.
- **Limit number of people who have contact** with the sick person. Ensure anyone entering the room **maintains at least 1 m** from the ill person.
- **Contact local health authorities** for further advice.
Work practices

When there is COVID 19 in your community,

• Where possible, promote working via telephone or online.
• Avoid public transport and crowded places.
• Develop a contingency plan for your business:
  • Plan how to keep your business running even if a significant number of employees, contractors and suppliers cannot come to your place of business - either due to local restrictions on travel or because they are ill.

• Communicate to your employees about the plan:
  • Make sure they are aware of what they need to do – or not do – under the plan.
  • Emphasize importance of staying away from work if ill (even mild).

• Provide information, support and encouragement for staff.
Work practices

• **Social distancing:**
  • Avoiding large gatherings/meetings.
  • Staggered or non-overlapping work shifts.

• **Downsizing operations:**
  • Stopping non-essential services.
  • Voluntary leave for these staff.

• **Delivering services remotely:**
  • From home – via telephone, e-mail, online.
Closing Note

• Simple precautions and planning can make a big difference.
• Action now will help protect your employees and your business.
• These actions are beneficial for employee health even outside a Covid 19 outbreak, and should be continued indefinitely.
• Together, we can beat Covid 19!
• For further information on Covid 19, contact:
  • 141 Hotline
  • Your local clinic via 4388000
• Thank you.