Aide-Mémoire on Factory/Industrial Establishment Reopening Post Covid-19
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me with relevant information and reference materials to complete this ‘Aide-Memoire’. Coronavirus dragged the world in a situation which was unknown and unprepared to majority of us. With your very proactive response and guidance, it has been possible to formulate a guidelines which would be helpful while reopening factories and industrial establishments following a prescribed course of actions by various stakeholders’ employers, managers, supervisors, workers and employees in a methodical way. I am profoundly indebted to all the participants and EOs in Asia and the Pacific Region to contribute through virtual group “Friends in Asia” formed in making this endeavor during the crucial pandemic crisis period.

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Coronavirus pandemic has shattered the whole world. The health tsunami which started in Wuhan, China in early December 2019 has spread across the world in such a way affecting not only the lives but also livelihoods completely upsetting the economic cycles in all countries and exclusively hard hitting some of the major economic players in the world. Manufacturing, commercial and all other establishments had to be lock-downed for 5 to 8 weeks depending on the degree of the outrage. As the factories and commercial establishments have started gradually opening up, therefore, it required strict adherence to certain guidelines and principles particularly to disallow any further revival of spread of this deadly virus.

Employers, management, workers—everyone will have a crucial role to play in the post Covid-19 world once factories/industrial establishments reopen. Their awareness and actions could make a huge difference in reducing the virus risk and ensuring the health and safety of all members. The actions taken could also significantly increase the chances for achieving good industrial relations while allowing industrial production and other activities to be recovered at pre-corona level or more.

The purpose of this booklet is to highlight such responsibilities and ideal responses and act as an “Aide-Mémoire”.

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Responsibilities of Employers’ to Make the Workplace Safe

- Remain up-to-date with the recommended practices pertaining to workplace safely as suggested by national and international experts including WHO and take necessary steps to apply those.

- The employer/appropriate authority must regularly arrange necessary briefings for all members of the organization while maintaining physical distance (social distance).

- Arrange necessary health protection behavioral training. Many such trainings are available online. If possible, have a public health specialist or medical specialist to conduct the training.

- Where possible, allow officers/employees/workers to work from home without appearing at work.

- Provide Level 2 or above Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for medical providers (doctors, medical assistants, and nurses) and Level 1 PPE for cleaning staff.

- Grant paid leave to the elderly (over 60 years of age) and already-sick workers.

- Install necessary arrangements for washing hands outside the factory/office building (e.g. soap, handwash, water, etc.) and ensure that workers/employees and visitors are allowed at least 30 seconds for that purpose.
Responsibilities of Employers’ to Make the Workplace Safe

- Ensure the gates of the factory/establishment are opened before the opening hours so as to avoid any form of crowd forming during the entry period.
- Stop recording workers’ attendance via biometrics. However, if using it, ensure that the biometric machine is cleaned with disinfectants after each use.
- Introduce a system of measuring everyone's body temperature while entering the factory/office. If someone's body temperature is higher than 98.4 Fahrenheit, the employer should not allow her/him to join work. In such cases, they should be granted leave without any deduction in wages.
- Take appropriate steps to ensure that adequate light and air enter the workplace and make all necessary changes and expansion in that regard.
- Arrange for workers and drivers engaged in loading and unloading to maintain as much distance as possible from other workers.
- Take steps to disinfect the vehicles immediately after entering the factory/establishment building.
- Arrange for spraying disinfectants on workers' shoes and keeping their shoes in a designated place (show-rack).
- Overall monitoring of health protection system and environment at workplace.
- Ensure that workers/employees are washing their hands properly with soap and water when entering factories and establishments.
- Allow anyone to go on leave without having to go to work if her/his body temperature is high. In such cases, nominate a suitable replacement.
- Preventing anyone with high temperature to either enter the factory/establishment or remain inside.
- Monitor that workers/employees are wearing masks, hand gloves and, where applicable, gowns (personal protective equipment).
- In case of suspicion of Covid-19 infection at workplace, inform the owner of the factory/establishment and the authorities of the government engaged in coronavirus control and medical work (IEDCR and the designated hospitals).
- Prohibit unnecessary entry of visitors to the factory/establishment as much as possible.
Responsibilities of Senior and Mid-level Managers to Make the Workplace Safe

- At the end of the day, ensure that the machines and equipment used by the workers/employees are cleaned with disinfectants as much as possible.

- Ensure that certain areas such as door handles, handrails, toilet seats, etc. which are most touched by people are always kept infection-free. Common areas, such as canteen tables where the virus can spread easily, should regularly be cleaned and disinfected.

- Routinely monitor whether toilets and urinals are cleaned regularly. Arrange for cleaning these places at least twice a day in case of labor-intensive factories/establishments.

- Have a system of sending and getting quick messages to and from workers. In that regard, appoint someone from among the officers as the focal point. The focal point’s mobile/intercom number should be made visible in different places at work.

- Not spread any message that may cause panic among the workers/employees.

- Keep a short and clear message about the novel coronavirus on the notice boards along with the emergency phone numbers.
Responsibilities of Supervisors’ to Make the Workplace Safe

- Supervisors will inform workers under their control about the novel coronavirus and alert them not to pay heed to any rumor.
- Inform and raise awareness about the prevailing occupational health and safety measures in the factory/establishment among workers.
- Ensure that workers/employees are using the reserved soap and water to properly wash their hands for 20 seconds before entering the factory and establishment.
- Not allow someone who has high body temperature to join work but rather recommend the concerned department to grant that worker leave.
- Monitor that workers/employees are wearing masks, hand gloves and, where applicable, gowns (personal protective equipment).
- At the end of the day, ensure that the machines and equipment used by the workers/employees are cleaned with disinfectant as much as possible.
- Routinely monitor whether toilets and urinals are cleaned regularly.
- Play the crucial role of building bridges and increasing communication between workers and employers/authorities.
- Follow the hygiene rules and help the workers to do the same.
Responsibilities of Workers'/all other employees to Make the Workplace Safe

- Workers/employees must wear masks, hand gloves, and, where applicable, gowns (personal protective equipment).
- All clothes worn should be cleaned regularly with soap or detergent powder.
- If someone feels sick (fever, cold-cough and shortness of breath), she/he should immediately without hiding inform the responsible person of the factory/organization about it. If there is no specific responsible person, she/he should inform the senior officer of Human Resources Department (HR) or Administration Department (Admin) as soon as possible.
- When entering the factory/establishment, workers must wash both hands with soap/handwash and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Everyone should refrain from scratching the face, nose and eyes with unclean hands.
- Everyone should use tissue paper or handkerchief when sneezing and coughing. If it is not possible to use tissue paper or handkerchief, they should sneeze and cough in the folds of their elbows. Used tissues should immediately be trashed in bins/designated places. Used handkerchiefs should be washed and cleaned.
Responsibilities of Workers’/all other employees to Make the Workplace Safe

- Everyone must adhere to the principle of physical distance (social distance). They should not shake hands or hug when meeting others but greet only by waving hands.
- Adhere properly to the rules and regulations issued by the authorities regarding hygiene from time to time and help others to comply.
- Adhere to the principle of physical distance (social distance) even at home as much as possible after returning from work.
- Avoid unnecessary crowds. They should entrust the responsibility of doing the necessary shopping to one healthy person from the family.
- Not make big teams inside the factory and take part in necessary meetings by maintain a distance of 2 meters (6 feet) from others.
- Take steps to reduce the number of visitors at home during this pandemic period and also refrain from visiting relatives’ houses.
Measures to be taken by Management to Ensure Social Distancing at Workplace

- Movement Passage: Arrange for one-way passage inside factories/establishments in places where crowds form.
- Working Hours: Working hours for different departments could be varied, if possible.
- Lunch Break: Lunch time should be scheduled in such a way that it is possible for everyone to maintain a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) from each other while eating.
- Signs: Distance indicating signs can be drawn to maintain a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet).
- Transport Facilities: Ensure that seats are occupied while keeping distance as far as possible in the vehicles provided by the authorities for the workers/employees. Also, everyone should get in and off the vehicle in an orderly manner.
- Use of Elevators: Workers/employees should be discouraged from using the elevators at this time so as to maintain physical distance.
- Sitting Arrangement: One’s seat should be at least 2 meters (6 feet) away from the that of the next person.
Stay informed about the comforts and grievances of the workers in maintaining good employer-worker relations and take immediate action if anyone is in trouble.

Ensure that workers do not lose their jobs (lay-off or retrenchment) during this crisis. In case of emergency, decisions should be taken through discussion with the workers in conformity with the rules and regulations of the prevailing labor law in Bangladesh.

If a worker becomes infected with the novel coronavirus, the cost of her/his treatment should be borne by the employer.

Try to resolve any problem in the factory/establishment through bilateral discussions (social dialogue). In case the bilateral discussions fail, the employer should seek the help of government agencies (Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments and the Department of Labour).
Workers’ Responsibilities in Maintaining Good Industrial Relations

- Workers will certainly present their just demands to the authorities. However, the labor leaders of the factory/establishment must remain wary and ensure that in the name of making demands, no selfish quarters’ agenda are being fulfilled.

- If any problem is observed in the workplace, the workers should sit down with the employer and focus on resolving the issue through bilateral discussions (social dialogue). If the problem could not be solved by that, they should inform the appropriate authority of the government. But they must keep in mind that no damage is done to the owner’s property.

- Co-operate as much as possible with the owner for keeping the factory/institution running during both this pandemic as well as post-pandemic period.

- Obey the rules and regulations issued from time to time regarding the novel coronavirus in the workplace and make other workers aware of those.
Formation of a Task Force/Committee to Implement the Guidelines on Covid-19, Monitoring, and forwarding Recommendations

- Form a committee consisting of officers and workers. If there is a trade union as a representative of the workers in the committee, its leaders or members of the participating committee and the safety committee should be given priority.
- If there are doctors and medical assistants in the factory/establishment, they must be given priority in this committee.
- The members of the committee will have to remain informed of the guidance and advice of the government, various local and international organizations/experts and make recommendations to the authorities for making the workplace safe accordingly.
- Organize regular meetings for coordination among the committee members.
Things to Do If a Employee/Worker/Staff is Infected with the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19)

- If a worker shows symptoms of the novel coronavirus (fever, cold-cough, and shortness of breath), she/he should be isolated as soon as possible. The employer must ensure all necessary tests and bear the expenses. If the infection is confirmed, the worker should be granted paid leave.

- Provide assistance to the affected worker in receiving medical treatment and extend financial assistance.

- Authorities should take full responsibility of transporting the suspected patients to their homes/hospitals using the factory/establishment’s own vehicles.

- Disinfect the affected worker’s sitting area as soon as possible by spraying disinfectants.

- Encourage a worker to stay home if a family member is infected with the novel coronavirus.
Rules to Follow

After considering the above guidelines, one may add to follow the two distinct Rules as under:

Rule 1: Seek and adhere to experts’ opinion.

Rule 2: Adopt different approaches for specific regions. For low-risk regions, restore economic and social activities fully with caution. For medium-risk regions, resume work and production in an orderly manner based on local health risks. For high-risk regions, continue to prioritize epidemic prevention and control.

Special Note: The above policy has been formulated mainly for the factories. However, wherever applicable, any organization/office may pick the applicable actions and implement those at its workplace. That would be beneficial for all.