



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



GUIDELINES



**COVID-19
RESPONSE**



FOR THE PROTECTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

UNODC COUNTRY OFFICE PAKISTAN'S
COVID-19 RESPONSE



GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTECTION AGAINST COVID-19, FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

Remain Vigilant, Alert and Informed

The key to effective law enforcement is to remain vigilant and alert of the situation in your duty area and your residential community, and to remain constantly informed of the latest orders, laws, policies and updates regarding COVID-19.

- Remain informed regarding the presence of any COVID-19 suspects and cases in your area of duty and residential community and exercise caution by alerting residents of the area regarding such cases.
- Remain updated regarding latest health care and protection guidelines released by Pakistan’s Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, Coordination; National Institute of Health; Provincial Health Departments and by World Health Organization. Know the proper way to wear masks, PPE and to wash your hands.
- Ensure that you are well informed of the provincial government’s orders with respect to performing policing duties during COVID-19.
- Remain vigilant during performance of your duties and when interacting with your colleagues. COVID-19 is mostly transmitted through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are spread from person to person. Hence, maintain a safe distance when interacting with colleagues, taking instructions from your seniors, and undergoing trainings during the COVID-19 situation.
- Be vigilant of health conditions of your colleagues. If you see a colleague experiencing the symptoms mentioned above, immediately report it to your senior officer, distance yourself from the person, ask the colleague to consult doctor.
- Members of provincial and district task forces and corona response emergency teams must remain alert of the situation in their designated area and ensure assistance to citizens.
- During performance of your duty, avoid subconsciously touching eyes, nose or mouth after having touched objects or surfaces contaminated by the virus, as COVID-19 is also transmitted through touch.
- Be aware that not all infectious persons will necessarily display overt symptoms of the disease; hence, abide by the protection guidelines against COVID-19. In case of experiencing symptoms of fever, tiredness, dry cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties, aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, or diarrhea, immediately contact your nearest doctor and get tested for COVID-19.
- Use your social media official accounts to spread accurate information about preparedness measures and national public advice to the public.
- Refrain from sharing posts on social media without verification of its



authenticity and the source of information.

- Encourage the culture of rumor reporting through proper helplines to combat fake news. Use social media and official police accounts to encourage public to report any fake news and to prevent sharing of non-verified news.
- Maintain harmony and interagency coordination with other departments and units of law enforcement agencies and health services to ensure consistent messages to the public.



Take protective measures while performing duties.

- Maintain social distance of 2 meters while performing your duty in police stations, police offices, at check posts, outside and within courts, whilst managing public crowds, and guarding localities.
- During duty outside courtrooms and in prisons, ensure that handcuffs are used to keep prisoners from escaping and avoid direct physical contact.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds following the hand wash technique/ steps suggested by WHO, after having direct physical contact with anyone and after handling crowds in public spaces. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer.
- If available, wear maximum personal protection equipment, including a facemask, eye protection and surgical gloves.
- Wear full sleeves, if a part of your uniform, and ensure that your body is covered maximum.
- When performing duty outside hospitals and quarantine centers, ensure wearing complete PPE and suits.
- Dispose off contaminated equipment immediately prior to continuing performance of official duties.
- Limit unnecessary contact with visitors coming to police stations and other law enforcement agencies' offices. Make use of alcoholic wipes, disinfectant sprays, and sanitizers to regularly sanitize office surfaces, office equipment, weaponry and ammunitions, and personal equipment after use.
- In handling documents, consider that they may be contaminated. Avoid unnecessary contact with documents, use gloves if possible, or wash your hands immediately after handling a document. Clean the documents using dry disinfected cloth to minimize germs across such documents.
- While performing duty at police stations, outside mosques and courtrooms, check posts, and traffic signals, hand out masks and gloves to citizens that are found commuting without them.



Performing Arrests and Searches

During the COVID-19 situation illegal activities and criminal activities may rise. Such activities increase the pressure on law enforcement agencies to curb and can make it difficult for them to focus on their COVID-19 related duties.

- During arrests, ensure maximum use of disinfected handcuffs to contain the accused instead of persistent manhandling of the accused. Ensure that during arrests, face mask and hand gloves are worn by the officer making the arrest.
- During arrest, limit the number of accused held in confinement in a particular area and ensure that they are kept at a distance of 2 meters from each other.
- While performing search on an individual, especially at cross border checking and airport security checks, begin by asking them to display items on them and any other item of interest that may arouse suspicion. Ensure gloves are worn while performing body searches and no part of your body comes in direct contact with the body of the person searched. Ensure that search equipment is regularly and thoroughly disinfected.
- If detention is necessary, consider how and where the detainee can be held safely and for how long; and also who is going to interact with the detainee while he or she is in custody.
- Ensure that detention facilities are regularly and thoroughly cleaned, and that operating personnel have access to personal protection equipment and are trained in its proper use.
- Maintain composure and remain polite with uncooperative individuals at traffic signals, check posts, airport security and border crossings. Maintain composure while arresting serious criminal and uncooperative individuals and avoid unnecessary debacle with them from your end to keep situation in control.
- Frequently disinfect search equipment, body scanners, and other equipment required during arrest.



Managing Public Order Situations

- Wear complete and maximum personal protective equipment including gloves, eye protection and disposable facemask, if possible, before coming in close contact with a crowd.
- Exercise maximum restraint and maintain your composure in case of dealing uncooperative citizens that are found violating section 144 and lockdown situations.
- Use megaphones to communicate with crowds and to create awareness. Explain the need for COVID-19 prevention measures to the crowd and ask them to disperse for their own safety.
- Use barricades to form boundaries around non-cooperative crowds to restrict their movement and contain chaos.



- Make use of riot shields to avoid direct physical contact with violent crowds.
- Frequently clean and disinfect all your official equipment and weaponry.
- There are two possible scenarios that law enforcement personnel may face during performance of duties: Someone may unintentionally cough or sneeze near them, or someone may deliberately spit, cough, and sneeze at law enforcement officers' faces to intimidate them. In both such cases the law enforcement officer must immediately corner himself/ herself, have sanitizers readily available to sanitize themselves, and immediately wash their hands and faces with antibacterial soap. In both such cases the law enforcement officers must be wearing complete PPE and should get them tested in case the alleged person was a potential COVID-19 carrier. In the latter, the alleged person be cornered for temperature screening and testing.
- For law enforcement personnel at the border crossing, officers should report any individual showing symptoms at border crossing points.



Contact Tracing and duty at the quarantine centers or hospital facilities.

For law enforcement officials deployed to assist public health officials, guard hospital facilities, manage and guard quarantine centers and related entities, or responsible for tracing potential individuals who are suspected of carrying the virus, it is imperative to ensure the following:

- Follow national rules and laws regarding dealing with COVID-19 carriers and perform their duties in strict compliance with national legislation.
- Uphold fundamental human rights and don't harm any citizen during their transportation to hospitals or quarantine centers.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy of potential and suspected virus carriers.
- Abide by all protective measures and guidelines laid out by national and international health services.



Managing the collection and disposal of dead bodies of victims of COVID-19

For all those law enforcement personnel, their assisting staff, and their team responsible for collection, transportation, and disposal of dead bodies of COVID-19 victims and managing processions of dead bodies. Such personnel must be trained on how to deal both with the dead body and the dead's guardians/ family.

- Always wear complete personal protective equipment and keep yourself covered when handling dead body of COVID-19 victim.
- Avoid direct physical contact with your team members, with the deceased's body, and the deceased's family members.
- Maintain social distancing and engage only with limited number of people during burial, cremation and other processions. Maintain communication with only the head of the family of the deceased, the



person in family responsible for dealing with the collection of the body, or the immediate family of the deceased.



- Exercise caution, politeness when engaging with the deceased’s family. It is quite likely that deceased’s family will insist on having a closer look at their deceased loved one. Try communicating to the elder or head of such family, or the member who is stable and persuade them to exercise caution.
- Remain sensitive to the religious, traditional and cultural sentiments and norms of the deceased’s family and community.
- In case of performing burial processions in rural areas and villages, remain extra sensitive to their customs and requests. Maintain your communication with key persons of the area including tribal heads or heads/ leaders of the village council.
- Ensure that all protective equipment and any vehicles used for the collection, transportation, and disposal of bodies to mortuaries or burial sites are sanitized before and after each use.
- Ensure that when the deceased body is transported from the hospital bed to the stretcher, the personnel are wearing PPE and are sanitized.
- When transporting deceased’s body to graveyard for burial purposes, ensure that only a limited number of family members or security personnel are present at the graveyard. Ensure that social distancing is maintained during the burial.
- Encourage small burial processions and limited people to accompany burial processions.
- LE personnel must ensure that after managing and burying/ cremating and disposing off the body of the deceased, they dispose off their PPE suits, sanitize themselves, sanitize their equipment and take a shower with soap if possible.
- Be sure to wash or sanitize your hands, and any other surface that may have come into contact with the infection at the earliest opportunity.



Medical Emergencies

- Only trained personnel wearing appropriate personal protective equipment should have direct contact with individuals displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Where available use trained Emergency Medical Service personnel to transport symptomatic individuals to the nearest healthcare facility.



Dealing with onset of cases of Domestic Violence and Abuse

Due to the lockdown and quarantined setup, cases of domestic violence, child abuse, and gender-based violence are likely to increase in certain households.



- Remain alert to any such cases within your residential locality and duty area.
- In case someone reports instances of domestic abuse in their locality, ensure that the matter is investigated.
- While dealing with abusers, ensure that all protection guidelines are followed, and measures taken to prevent transmission of the virus.



Dealing with COVID-19 victims who are also drug abusers

Use negotiation skills and persuasive communication to prevent COVID-19 victims from usage of drugs.

- Drug abusers found on streets, in slums and elsewhere may be at risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Ensure that when dealing with them reduce use of force rather consider effective and persuasive communication for effective arrests and medical treatment. Encourage such individuals to seek medical treatment if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19.



Operational Procedures to follow when allowing visitors to police premises

All visitors must be considered as potentially affected by COVID 19 therefore all preventive measures must be taken accordingly. Nevertheless, full respect of human rights principles shall always be considered.

- Visitors should be allowed to visit only specific areas identified within the police premises, preferably one office just dedicated for such purpose. Such area must be disinfected and cleaned frequently, ideally after each visit, at least surfaces touched by visitors should be cleaned and disinfected after each visit.
- A dedicated and isolated waiting area should be identified in case that more visitors are present at the same time, such area should meet all the general requirements to prevent the contamination of the virus.
- Each visitor before entering the premises may be provided with a surgical mask to wear during the entire presence in the premises and interaction with police officers and other persons.
- Procedures must be identified for the disposal of surgical masks provided to the visitors.
- All Police personnel must wear PPE during the entire interaction with visitors.
- It is a command responsibility to ensure that all police personnel and civilians working for police inside the premises receive proper and regular training on these operational procedures.



Protecting partners, families and friends after your shift

Law enforcement duties can potentially expose officers to **COVID-19**. Before coming back into direct contact with their loved ones, law enforcement officers should maintain social distancing measures and follow these steps when returning home:

- Clean or decontaminate your work equipment, including shoes, avoiding the spread of particles/dust.
- Take off duty clothes and wash them with laundry soap as soon as feasible. Handle, transport and wash them in way that limits exposure to skin, eyes, environment and other clean clothes (avoid shaking clothes).
- Take a shower or wash exposed skin with soap and water.
- Self-monitor for signs of illness.



UNODC’s response to **COVID-19** crisis is evidence-based & human rights centered, with a focus on “leaving NO ONE behind.” We believe that public health efforts must also incorporate interest & needs of the marginalized and vulnerable groups, in the line of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Country Office Pakistan is committed in “Developing Solution for Drugs and Related Crime in Pakistan”

Contributing to SDG Goals 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 17



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¹: Text is used from UNODC HQ Guidelines for Policing during the COVID-19 Emergency

