

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
Parivar Kalyan Bhawan, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh

No. COVID-19/NHM/Pb/20/1714-24

Date 21 July 2020 Chandigarh

To

1. Additional Chief Secretary (Cooperatives), Punjab.
2. Additional Chief Secretary (Development), Punjab.
3. Principal Secretary, Food & Civil Supplies, Punjab.
4. Director, Food and Civil Supplies, Punjab.
5. Managing Director Markfed.
6. Managing Director PUNSUP.
7. Managing Director PSWC.
8. Managing Director PUNGRAIN.
9. Secretary, Mandi Board Punjab.
10. All Deputy Commissioners, Punjab.
11. All the Civil Surgeons of Punjab.

Subject: Updated advisory on Safe Farming operations (Procurement and Marketing) in wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID -19) is a systemic disease caused by a novel Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2), transmitted in most instances through respiratory droplets, direct contact with cases and also through contaminated surfaces/objects.. Timely and correct information and knowledge about the corona virus is the key to control the pandemic.

Advisory regarding safe farming operations was issued vide letter No. 3081 (R) - 3084 (R) Dated, Chandigarh the 22nd April, 2020 which is now updated as this advisory. The summarized and consolidated guidelines for the various stakeholders involved in the operations- Farmers, Combine operators, Labour, Arhtiyas/Shopkeepers, Transporters, Staff of the Market Committees/State Procurement Agencies (SPAs)/ District Administration are hereby issued as follows:

A. FARMERS:

- i. Farmers should prefer mechanized operations over the manual, wherever feasible. Only the essential numbers of persons should be allowed to accompany the machine.
- ii. All machines should be sanitized at the entry point and at regular intervals.

- iii. All the persons engaged in the operations should use masks at all the times and ensure hand washing with soap at reasonable intervals.
- iv. The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth.
- v. The mask, if cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. If using surgical mask it should be discarded as per procedure. In case an N-95 masks is being worn, it must be used as per maker guidelines/instructions.
- vi. Face shields, in addition to the face mask, may be used where the workspace is crowded and maintaining a physical distance of 1 meter at all times may not be feasible.
- vii. Farmers should always maintain and ensure that social distancing of at least 1 metre is maintained by all the engaged labour during rest, taking of meals, transfer of produce at collection point, loading/unloading etc.
- viii. In case of manual field operations of harvesting/ picking, the farmer should accomplish the operation in 4-5 feet spaced strips assigning one strip to one person so as to ensure an adequate spacing between the engaged labours.
- ix. Stagger the field operations wherever possible and avoid engaging more number of persons on the same day.
- x. Engage only familiar persons to the extent possible and after reasonable enquiry as to avoid the entry of any suspect or likely carrier of COVID-19 during field activity.
- xi. The collection of the produce should be done in small heaps spaced at 3-4 feet and field level cleaning/processing, should be assigned to 1-2 persons/heap to avoid crowding.
- xii. All transport vehicles, gunny bags or other packaging material should also be sanitized.
- xiii. All persons engaged in operations should wash the hands with soap for at least 40 seconds by applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger and the thumb and the wrist immediately before the start and after the end of operations.
- xiv. In case a Sanitizer is being used, use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.
- xv. Do not indulge in gossip/rumours with regard to COVID-19 without verifying the facts while carrying the operations. All are encouraged to download "COVA APP" developed by the Government of Punjab for the correct, timely and authentic information.
- xvi. In case someone is diagnosed as COVID-19 with whom one had a contact during operations or otherwise, there is no need to panic. One should report to the Helpline

No. 104/State Control Room No. 01722920074/08872090029, detailing the exact nature of exposure.

- xvii. Farmer while transacting a paper/cash with labour/combine operator etc. should immediately sanitize his hands before as well as often any such transactions. He should also encourage the other person to sanitize his/her hands before and often during the transactions. The farmer is advised to use online transactions wherever possible.

B. COMBINE OPERATORS:

- i. The combine operator and his workers should always bear in mind that the appropriate social distancing and not the time is the key factor during the pandemic in determining his income.
- ii. The transporter and his workers shall be advised not to indulge in any handshakes or hugs to greet/see-off each other.
- iii. The operator and his workers should be advised to wear mask at all times immediately from leaving the house till the entry back into the house/place of stay.
- iv. The masks shall be worn in a manner that it snugly covers the nose as well as the mouth.
- v. The mask, if cloth mask should be washed with soap and water daily after use. If using surgical mask it should be discarded as per procedure. In case an N-95 masks is being worn, it must be used as per maker guidelines/instructions.
- vi. Face shields, in addition to the face mask, may be used where the workspace is crowded and maintaining a physical distance of 1 meter at all times may not be feasible.
- vii. All should always maintain and ensure that social distancing of at least 1 meter is maintained while interacting with the farmer/engaged labour during operations, rest, taking of meals, transfer of produce at collection point, loading/unloading.
- viii. All persons engaged in operations should wash the hands with soap for at least 40 seconds by applying the soap gently on the palm and back of the hand including web spaces between the fingers and space as well as between the finger and the thumb and the wrist immediately before the start and after the end of operations.
- ix. In case a Sanitizer is being used, use a minimum of 3ml of the sanitizer (approximately 2 pushes of sanitizer dispenser) on DRY HANDS for at least 30 seconds for good hygienic hand disinfection.

