



MINISTRY OF  
**HEALTH &  
WELLNESS**

**INTERIM GUIDE FOR COVID-19  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFECTION  
PREVENTION AND CONTROL FOR EMPLOYERS**



# **INTERIM GUIDE FOR COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL FOR EMPLOYERS**

---

A Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) was declared for the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)/ COVID-19 on 30 January 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO) Director General (DG) based on the number of persons affected. On the 11th March, 2020 – WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

Jamaica confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on March 10, 2020. The Government of Jamaica has mounted an intense prevention and control programme for the outbreak. Prevention and containment is a key strategy to minimize the impact on Jamaica's labour force. The Ministry of Health & Wellness (MOHW) is providing the following information to guide employers in supporting this strategy. It describes four possible scenarios for workplaces based on the extent of spread at this time.



# METHOD OF SPREAD

- When an ill person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or exhales, they release droplets of infected fluid.
- If persons are standing within one meter (or three feet) of a person with COVID-19, they can be infected by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled.
- Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects, such as desks, tables or telephones.
- Persons can also be infected with COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care.

Therefore, all sections of society, including hotels, businesses and employers, must play a role in halting the spread of this disease.



# DEFINITIONS OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

- **Asymptomatic** - Showing no symptoms or signs of a disease
- **Isolation** - Isolation separates people who are showing signs of illness from those who are not. This is to prevent the spread of an infectious disease and persons will remain in isolation as long as the signs are present.
- **Quarantine** - Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who may have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. In the case of COVID-19, the period is up to 14 days. This period allows for the person to be identified as being infectious.
- **Community Quarantine** - Community quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people in a community who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. When there is a small number of persons who are ill, community quarantine is applied to areas where there is a cluster of cases to prevent further transmission into other areas. For COVID-19, the period of community quarantine period lasts for 14 days.
- **Symptomatic** - Showing signs or symptoms of a disease.
- **Symptoms of COVID-19** - Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath.

# GUIDANCE FOR THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS

The MOHW investigates each case of COVID-19, which includes contact tracing. Based on these investigations, the necessary actions would be determined and are dependent on the size of the business operations and the interaction the employee had with co-workers and the general public.

## Scenario 1: Co-worker confirmed positive for COVID-19

- **In a large establishment** where the employee was limited to a defined area carrying out their daily job function, the department would be closed for as long as it takes for the disinfection/decontamination process to be conducted.
- The department must be disinfected following the guidelines established by the MOHW (environmental health considerations for cleaning, sanitization and infection control in the workplace).
- **In a small establishment**, the entire establishment may be closed and the institution disinfected.
- The institution is to map the location of all employees in relation to the confirmed case, in regards to daily operations and movement within the department. This will determine the level of exposure each employee had with the confirmed case and determine the action to be taken i.e., home / self-quarantine vs facility quarantine vs isolation.
  - › Co-workers within this department, as determined by the MOHW would be quarantined for a period of 14 days.
  - › If persons are found to be symptomatic they would be isolated and investigated by the MOHW.

## Scenario 2: Employee in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

### Asymptomatic

- The employee would be self-quarantined at home for a period of 14 days.
- Once the employee was asymptomatic (i.e., having no symptoms of COVID-19 – fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath), it is highly unlikely that they would have transmitted the infection to others within the workplace.
- No co-worker of the contact of the confirmed case would be required to self-quarantine as the individual is asymptomatic and therefore unlikely to transmit the virus.

### As a precautionary measure the following should be done:

- The department should be disinfected following the guidelines established by the MOHW.
- The institution is to map the location of all employees in relation to the employee in question, in regards to daily operations and movement within the department.
- If the employee develops symptoms, during the period of quarantine:
  - they will be isolated at a government facility and investigated.
  - Employees should report to the MOHW and the employer if symptoms develop.
  - Additionally, contact should be made with the local health department for coordination of management of the patient.

### Symptomatic

- If the employee is symptomatic, then they would be isolated at a government facility.
- All other actions as outlined in Scenario 1 would then be implemented.

## Scenario 3: Employee in contact with a suspected case of COVID-19

- The employee would be self-quarantined at home until the final result of the contact is determined.
  - › If the result of the contact is negative for COVID-19, the employee can discontinue self-quarantine.
  - › If the result of the contact is positive for COVID-19, the employee would be self-quarantined at home for a period of 14 days.
    - » If the employee under self-quarantine develops symptoms, he/she would be isolated at a government facility.
    - » If the employee under self-quarantine remains symptom free he/she would discontinue self-quarantine at the end of 14 days.
- Once the employee was asymptomatic they are unlikely to have transmitted the infection to the workplace.
- As a precautionary measure, the department can be disinfected following the guidelines established by the MOHW.



## Scenario 4: Employee from a quarantined community

Communities may be determined to be a quarantine zone by the Government of Jamaica. This means persons living in these communities are required to remain at home and are not permitted to leave the community for the period of 14 days. Similarly, unauthorized persons are not allowed to enter the quarantined community within the 14 days.

- The employee would be quarantined at home until the quarantine is lifted from the community they reside.
  - › If the employee under community quarantine develops symptoms, they would be isolated at a government facility.
    - » If the employee under community quarantine remains symptom free they would discontinue community quarantine at the end of the 14 days.
- Once the employee was asymptomatic during the 14-day community quarantine period they would have no potential of transmitting the infection to anyone within the workplace, as they were not infected.



# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS FOR CLEANING, SANITIZATION AND INFECTION CONTROL IN THE WORKPLACE

## Introduction

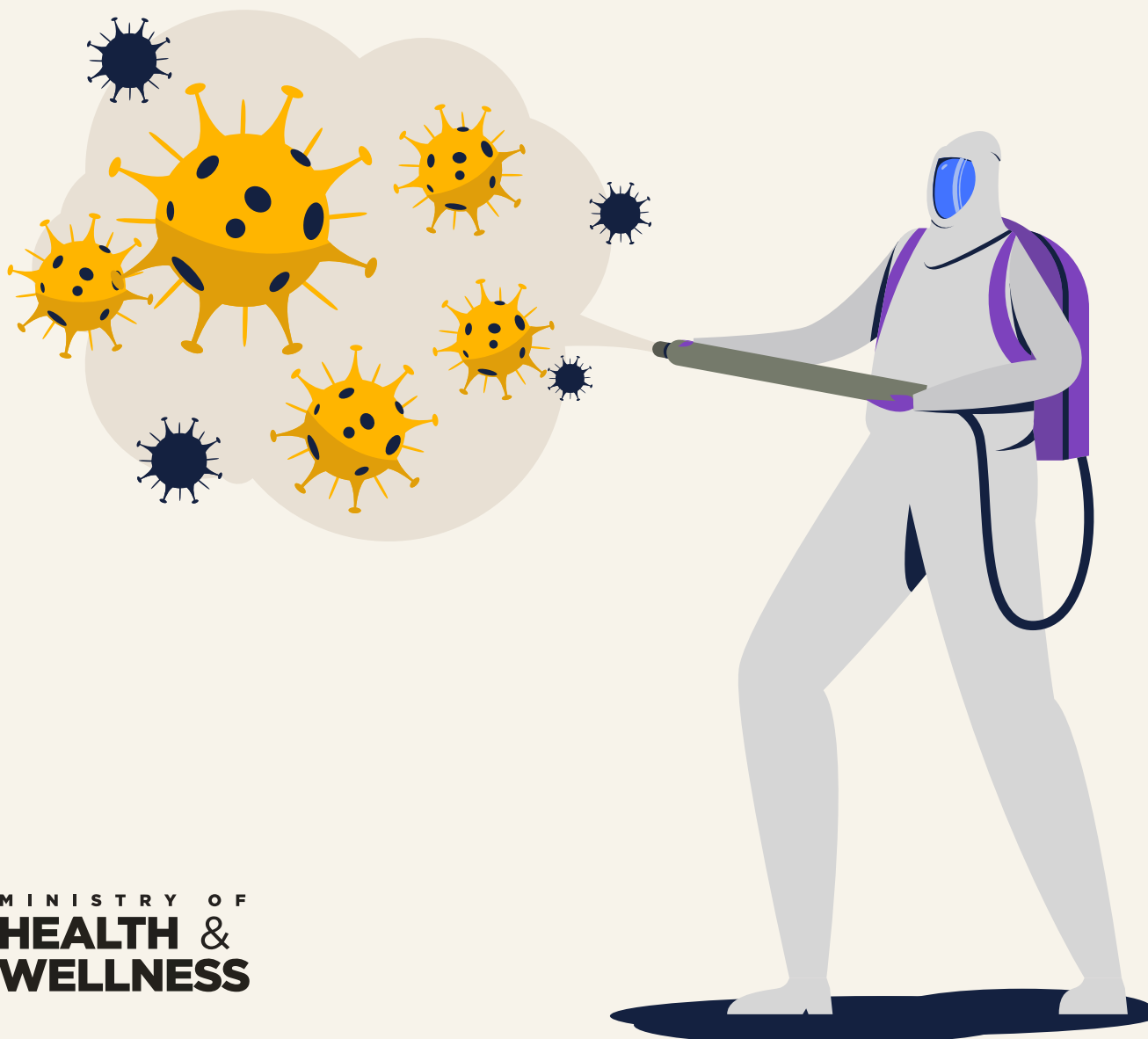
When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, they release droplets of infected fluid, which in most cases fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, telephones etc. Persons can become infected with COVID-19 by coming into contact with these contaminated surfaces or objects - and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Where persons are standing within one meter (3 feet) of an infected person, they can acquire the disease by inhaling droplets expelled through coughing, sneezing or exhalation. In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to the flu virus.

In light of this, where the workplace becomes aware of the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 by a confirmed or suspected person; these guidelines are intended primarily to guard against the risks to human health posed by contamination of the environment in institutions such as educational, health care, penal, commercial, industrial, residential care and other related facilities in Jamaica.

## Procedures to be followed in workplaces where COVID-19 exposure is suspected or confirmed

- The facility should be immediately closed to the public;
- All services rendered to the customers within the facility should be terminated;
- Inform staff of the situation and advise of the necessary precautions to be taken;
- Identify the persons and/or staff who could have been exposed (in this instance, contact should be immediately made with the local health department);
- Ensure that effective cleaning and sanitization is carried out in accordance with the guidelines published by the Ministry of Health & Wellness;
- Special emphasis should be placed on areas where the exposure occurred (contact surfaces, door knobs, pens, furniture and other such areas or items);
- Reopening of the facility should only be considered following the thorough cleaning and sanitization of all areas.



## Measures to be employed for safe operations

### Ensure all workplaces are clean and hygienic

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

### Contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads.

- Employ disinfection process for all surfaces (door knobs, computer keyboards telephones, counters, etc.)
- Promote regular and thorough hand-washing by employees, contractors and customers
  - › Erect sanitizing hand rub dispensers in prominent places around the workplace. Make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled;
  - › Display posters promoting proper hand-washing procedure;
  - › Make sure that staff, contractors and customers have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water.

**Washing kills the virus on your hands and prevents the spread of COVID-19.**

**Reminder: Cleaning staff should use appropriate PPE.**



# Appendix I

## Definitions

**Cleaning** - the physical removal of contamination and microorganisms using detergent and water. It should be used to remove contamination from the environment and minimize the risk of transmission between persons.

- **Cleaning Agents**

- › **Detergent and Water** - This physically removes soil from surfaces and is the best agent to be used for cleaning soiled environment.

### Disinfection

- Uses physical or chemical methods to reduce the number of microorganisms to a level at which they are not harmful, but which does not destroy spores.
- Disinfectants have a very short action on surfaces which can quickly become re-contaminated.

### Important note regarding mops and wiping cloths

These will become contaminated with micro-organisms from the environment and must be laundered daily and dried.

### Disinfectant Solutions:

- **Sodium Hypochlorite, Bleach**

Household bleach contains the active ingredient Hypochlorite and has been

found to be effective against COVID-19, Hepatitis B and C, HIV, other viruses and bacteria, including some spores. However, it is inactive by organic matter and solutions deteriorate rapidly.

A 1% concentration hypochlorite solution is required for disinfecting surfaces and same should be prepared each day. This 1% concentrated hypochlorite solution is achieved.

- » 1 Part of household bleach (3.5% available chlorine) in 2.5 parts water.
- » 1 part of household bleach (5% available chlorine) in 4 parts water

Concentrated solutions of hypochlorite are corrosive and damages both metals and fabrics, this, they should be washed off after use.

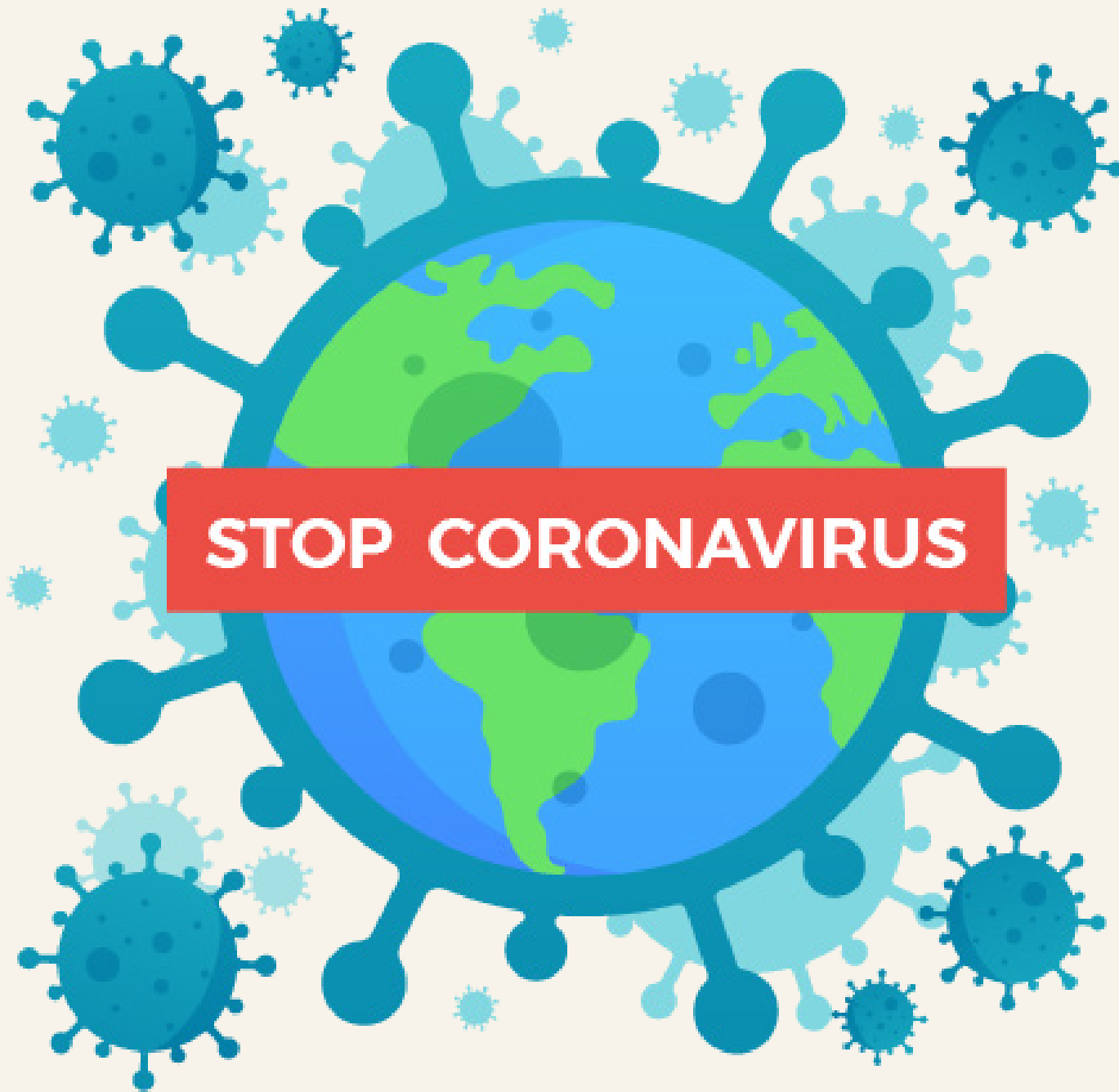
The individual conducting this cleaning and disinfection activity must wear rubber gloves for personal protection.

- **Alcohol(s)**

Ethyl alcohol (70%) or alcohol 60-70% is a rapid acting surface disinfectants that is effective against bacteria and most viruses. It is highly effective as a hand hygiene agent or for disinfection of equipment, but will not penetrate organic material.



MINISTRY OF  
**HEALTH &  
WELLNESS**



\*This document is based on excerpts from the Ministry of Health Facilities  
Infection Control Policies and Procedures Manual 2000, Revised: 2014

---

\* Advice and guidance from WHO on COVID <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>: Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19

Members of the public may make contact the Ministry via the hotline numbers:  
**888-ONE-LOVE(663-5683) | 888-754-7792 | 876-542-5998 OR [covid19@moh.gov.jm](mailto:covid19@moh.gov.jm)**