



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INTERIM GUIDELINES FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: COVID-19

Introduction

The Hospitality Industry referred to in these Guideline are Hotels, Guest Houses, Cottages, Villas and Attractions that focus their products primarily on leisure and service for their guests.

Guests accommodated in hospitality facilities and those who use attractions in their varied forms are at risk to COVID-19 infections due to, the large number of persons from varied nationalities, cultures, and hygiene practices and their confinement to a small geographic area.

Hospitality facilities and attractions carry a wide array of amenities and services which include but are not limited to:

- Beaches
- Swimming pools
- Hot tubs, Jacuzzis and spas
- Leisure rides (horseback, motorized and non- motorized vehicles)
- Water attractions (swimming, snorkeling, diving, canoeing, rafting)
- Gastronomy/banqueting facilities (restaurants, bars, delis)
- Eco tourism (adventures, farm tours)
- Accommodation (rooms)

Precautionary safety measures, heightened hygiene and sanitation practices are mandatory for the operation of hospitality facilities, in light of the current COVID-19 outbreak.

1.0 Tourist Establishment Regulations

The Public Health (Tourist Establishment) Regulation of the year 2000 stipulates that all Tourist Establishments that comply with the Public Health requirements be duly Health Certified by the Parish Health Department prior to the commencement of operations. Consequently, all tourist establishment that offer accommodation or attraction to guests should be licensed.

Environmental Health considerations for the safe operation of tourist establishments in light of the current COVID-19 outbreak will include but not limited to the following:

2.0 Health and Safety

The Health and Safety requirements for tourist establishments has taken on heightened significance in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Guests that are granted landing privileges are those considered healthy and asymptomatic, however, signs and symptoms of a serious illness can present after accommodation to a tourist establishment. The health and safety department which includes the medical support (nurses station) will play a critical role in surveillance and monitoring for COVID-19 as a Class I Disease which **MUST** be reported within 24 hours upon suspicion.

2.1 The Public Health (Tourist Establishment) Regulations stipulates that the owner or operator of a Tourist establishment having 100 rooms or more shall:

- Employ the services of a Registered Nurse who shall be on duty for specified hours of the day and whose services shall be available to guests and staff in case of emergency.
- Establish a nurse's station where, in the event of illness or injury, the services of that nurse may be sought by guests and employees.
- Where the registered nurse is absent from the nurse's station, the owner or operator shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that a Medical Practitioner is so advised; in the event of illness or injury to a guest or employee.

The owner or operator of a tourist establishment having less than 100 rooms shall secure the services of a registered nurse or medical practitioner in the event of illness or injury of a guest or employee.

2.2 In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak the Registered Nurse and or, support staff of the Health and Safety team of each tourist establishment should, exercise a heightened level of vigilance, which will involve a COVID-19 plan detailing the following:

- Establishment and maintenance of a guests and staff logbook specifically for COVID-19 surveillance.
- Identify and equip a designated room and/or block for the quarantine and/or isolation of suspected/confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Conduct preliminary investigation of all suspected cases of COVID-19
- Line listing of suspected cases of COVID-19
- Logistic planning:
 - Transport vehicles
 - Supplies
 - Communication lines

3.0 General Sanitation Requirements

All hospitality facilities must strengthen their environmental cleaning and sanitation programmes forthwith. This includes the cleaning and disinfection of all pedestrian and heavily utilized common areas such as:

- Paved surfaces (walkways, corridors, dining halls) deep cleaning and disinfection recommended with greater frequency and concentration of disinfectants due to the current COVID-19 outbreak.
- Grills, rails, door knobs, faucets, regular decontamination especially in areas where guests are quarantined.
- Installation of hand sanitizers at conspicuous locations with accompanying signage
- Appropriate signage in public areas highlighting frequent hand washing, cough etiquette and proper personal hygiene
- Hand wash stations for buffet lines

4.0 Accommodations

All hotel rooms for the accommodation of guests should meet Public Health requirements in regards to safety and sanitation. Areas of concern include but are not limited to:

- Guests restrooms – these should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily with accompanying cleaning schedule and checklist to verify same
- Hard surfaces and counter tops – these are areas where pathogens can remain for hours, possibly days. They should be cleaned and sanitized daily
- Bed linen – should be changed daily; towels and toiletries replenished as required.
- Door knobs, rails, and grills should also receive special attention for cleaning and sanitization
- House – keeping: house-keeping staff should be trained and fully sensitized about risks for COVID-19 transmission including identifying and reporting guests who are unwell, as well as proper cleaning and disinfection practices.

5.0 Water Sport and Other Activities

General water sport and other water activities are generally low risk for COVID-19 transmission provided that the necessary protocols for social distancing, public gathering and disinfection measures for recreational water are maintained.

5.1 Snorkeling and Scuba diving

Snorkeling and scuba diving require the use of specialized equipment which make close contact with the mouth and face of the user. This equipment can be a source of COVID-19 transmission if the guidelines governing their use, cleaning and disinfection are not applied. Consequently, all water sport activity which involve the use of specialized equipment which make close contact with the user's body must be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and maintained according to established disinfection procedures.

5.2 Swimming Pools, Jacuzzis and Spa

The Ministry of Health and Wellness Public Health (Swimming Pool) Regulations of 2000 requires that public swimming pools (Class "A" and Class "B") be licensed to operate and comply with the following:

- No person with a communicable disease should be allowed to enter the pool.
- There should be an adequate supply of chemicals and testing devices to operate the pool.
- Trained personnel to operate the pool

- Written emergency and standard operational and usage procedures
- Close the pool if its water quality does not meet Public Health standards
- Cause a daily inspection of the pool to be done
- Take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the pool meets Public Health Requirements
- The pool water is treated with chlorine, a chlorine compound, or bromine with a dosing device to maintain a chlorine residual of free available chlorine of 1 – 3 parts per million

6.0 Laundry Facilities

Personnel working in the laundry department should take special care and precaution and provisions made for the entire cadre to be fitted with personal protective equipment. Bed linen, towels, personal clothing of guests and staff can become contaminated with COVID-19 pathogens. The following precautions should be observed:

- Employees should wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry. Gloves should then be discarded after each use. If using reusable gloves, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19; these gloves should not be used for other purposes.
- Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed. If no gloves are used when handling dirty laundry, be sure to wash hands afterwards.
- If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

7.0 Banqueting Food Service

The Public Health (Food Handling) Regulations of the year 1998 stipulates that all Food Handling Establishments that comply with the Public Health requirements be duly Health Certified by the Parish Health Department prior to the commencement of operations. Consequently, all Food Handling Establishments, their employees and persons engaged in the food trade generally, should be Health Certified.

In light of COVID-19, the procedures, processes and systems for the safe and hygienic procurement, storage, processing, and display of food for consumption should be strengthened as, food service operations presents heightened risks for transmission.

7.1 Food Handlers

Food handlers should be free from communicable diseases and conduct food service operations in compliance with the Public Health (Food Handling) Regulations and approved food safety systems. Close supervision of food handlers, inclusive of line staff should be done at all times.

7.2 Food Service (A la Carte and Buffett Service)

Restaurants, shops, deli and room service operations are environments in which transmission of respiratory illnesses can thrive due to:

- The number of persons working in tight spaces and in close contact
- Persons in physical contact (guests who may be infected) queuing for service
- The physical touching of foods with hands that may be soiled, especially during buffet operations.
- Room service operations where the staff conducting wait service enter guest rooms.

In this period of heightened concern, buffet and other high-risk food service operations should be:

- Closely supervised
- Persons with visible signs of being unwell (e.g., coughing, sneezing, etc.) should be identified and given priority attention
- Food service stations should be adequately staffed to prevent queuing.
- Continuous cleaning and sanitization of contact surfaces should be done
- Observance and maintenance of temperature controls
 - Hot foods kept hot
 - Cold foods kept cold
- Installation of portable hand-wash stations along with sanitizers
- Increased signage to promote improved hand hygiene and cough etiquette.



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