



Preparing the Workplace for Coronavirus

RETURN TO WORK COVID-19 UPDATE Q&A 05/05/2020

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Programme

- Welcome
- Virus transmission & Workplace testing Mpume Ndaba (15
- Mental Health & Miscellaneous Mpume Ndaba
- Screening protocols & Vulnerable Workers Odette Volmink (10min)
- PPE Tebogo Maeteletja (Occ Hygiene)
- Compensation/ COIDA Dr Sam Iyaloo (Occ Med)
- Miscellaneous Odette Volmink (10min)
- Cleaning

SARS-cov2 Virus Transmission

- Is there any evidence that the virus can be carried and spread under footwear (Surface Contact)
- How does excess caffeine influence the effect of the virus? **Not sure????**
- Is there evidence that COVID-A9 is transmitted through paper/files handled by multiple people, or how long can the virus leave on paper



TRANSMISSION



Direct contact: **Touching an ill persons or a contaminated surface**

Droplet transmission: **inhaling droplets**

- **Coughing & sneezing generates droplets of different sizes**
- **Larger droplets fall to the ground within a 1-2m radius of the person within a few seconds**

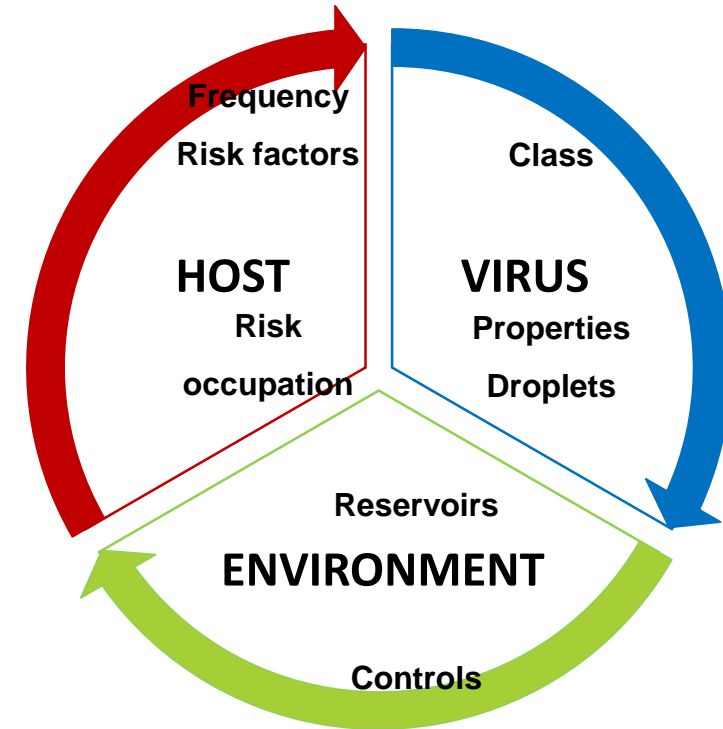
Testing Guidelines and Protocols in the workplace

- Rapid Test as part of the back to work plan, would appreciate an opinion on providing this service to all employees
- Why is it not compulsory for every essential worker especially those interacting with a lot of people at work, why are they not all tested not only screened, to protect their families
- ✓ No approved rapid test currently in SA - lab based testing
- ✓ Testing in the workplace: lab based testing ... NICD guidelines on testing +ve screening 1) history of contact with some diagnosed positive 2) positive symptoms
- ✓ Risk assessment and categorisation of a workplace is key for essential workers' **guidelines** on who will be tested, how often and based on what (e.g. Health workers)

Hazard identification & Risk assessment

A workplace specific Risk Assessment

- To determine the **RISK** of **EXPOSURE** to **COVID-19** & communicate to all in the workplace (workers and visitors)
workers
- To include all other hazards
 - Biological, Physical, Chemical, Ergonomic
 - **Psychosocial** - exposure to long working hours, psychological distress, fatigue, occupational burnout, stigma, physical and psychological violence



Different workers have different risk exposures: based on job specific risk assessments

Temperature Screening

- Are we required to do temperature testing prior to our employees entering our premises ?
- What temperature range is risky?
- If distance thermometer measures 32.7 is it low temperature even if the person is not complaining of being cold ?
- Can temperature be measures with an ear thermometer or the old digital thermometer and then cleaned and sterilised? What is the disinfection process for these thermometers? How accurate is the non-contact thermometers, which are imported now?
- Is the employer obliged to provide temperature devices?
- Symptomatic employees should be provided with surgical masks??? Where do we get surgical masks?
- Can you supply us with a screening questionnaire that we can use to screen employees/visitors before we allow them access to site?
- ✓ Guidelines for workplaces re-COVID 19. Screening/medical testing in the workplace.....trained person who understands implications and meaning of results....equipment specifications and manufacturer's guidelines
- ✓ Temperature screening document- NIOH website www.nioh.ac.za

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Comment

- Return to work Mental Health Suggestion to Counter Stigma and social isolation
- **Create a culture** where people are comfortable that they operate in a safe place=physically, clinically and psychologically
- **Those working closely** with someone who is returning from COVID-10 recovery are given a heads up and are reassured of the protocols
- **The colleague who returns** from overcoming COVID-19 is greeted/welcomes back as a “Hero”-an Overcomer and they are given a platform to share their Story, which should generate empathy and bolster collective resilience

Mental health.... Anxiety/stress inducing behaviour in the workplace

- How do we deal with officials who purposefully share anxiety inducing information amongst officials to intentionally increase stress on others in the work place? Is this reason enough to send such an official for counselling and assistance to understand the disruptive behaviour on a team at large, considering this person may be at an entry level of management within a team?
- ✓ Companies need to have their specific policies upfront to deal with such employees, it would also help to mention upfront that it is not allowed within the company and what harm it brings. Offer or subject EAP to that employees and warn that it might be disciplinable offense.

Mental health support services

- What about the support provided to Social Service Professionals out in the field conducting community screening and testing? Do they also not need to be offered such support or is that left up to the departments EAP programmes solely? We would like to tap into this group, seem like similar
- ✓ The specific department needs to assess this for its employees and decide what service will best suit their activities (Risk assessment: psychosocial stressors. Workplace policies, guidelines and programs)
- Are there any existing mental health posters for workplaces and subsidised mental health support for non-health care workers?

Mental Health Issues in the workplace

- Workplaces- EAP services- ? scaling up services
- South African Depression Anxiety Group (**SADAG**)
 - Provides FREE telephonic counselling & information
 - Nationwide referrals -> Support Groups, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Clinics, etc.
 - Online resources such as brochures, articles and self-help videos www.sadag.org
 - To speak to a counsellor, call 0800 21 22 23 (7 days a week, 365 days a year, 8am - 8pm)

MISCELLANEOUS

Workplace Practices

- Some persons do not present symptoms and might be carriers, thus if they stay at work they might spread the disease?
 - ✓ Workplace screening includes asking if they are contacts.
- Advise or guidelines on how to manage disciplinary action for substance abuse or employees possibly under the influence at work without being able to conduct breathalyser tests. Any other legal alternatives?
 - ✓ Other means of assessing intoxication. HR policies and changes in current practices to align with COVID-19.

Workplace Practices

- Please send me the list of specific PPE the Occupational Health practitioner should wear when doing Medical Surveillance. *Is audiogram necessary when using a KuduWave device?*
- ✓ Risk assessment for your own place will guide PPE requirements
- ✓ Guidance documents and posters on PPE selection for different work categories, based on activities
- ✓ Current standard for KuduWave device.... Please consult your OMP and manufacturer's guidelines

Cleaning

Q&A done by Dikeledi Matuka

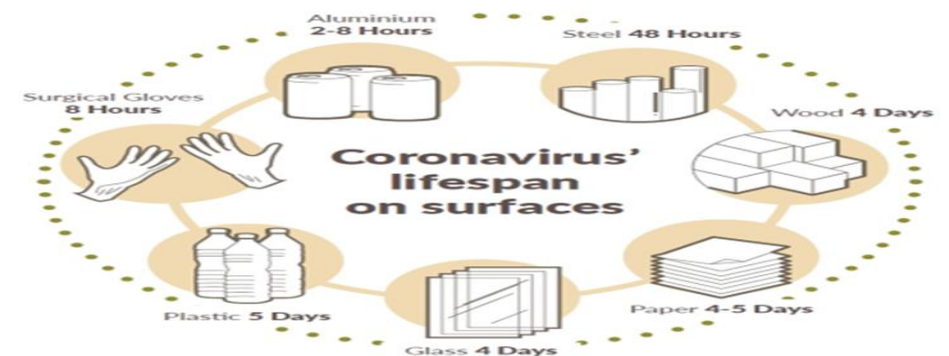
- Please confirm the effectiveness of disinfectant spray booths at entrance and exit points?
 - ✓ Has been answered on previous responses (there were about four similar questions I think)
- There is a lot of anxiety around the use of common areas. Some recommendations were that employees should bring their utensils.
 - ✓ It is not necessary for personal use if utensils are washed properly with hot water and soap, swabs must also be washed and dried daily, but individual preferences still fine , also guided by company policy.
- What is the advice in terms of cleaning and disinfection of areas such as kitchens surfaces and equipment?
 - ✓ Have cleaning protocol in place, depending on sector, cleaning in the morning and/or afternoon, twice especially for most frequently used surfaces, have sanitizer to be used before touching microwave or fridge for example, if there is no water basin near for handwashing. Just do risk assessment to identify your shared and frequently used items and decide on what works for you and is practical and cost effective. Control measures works hand in hand and compliance by workers is important.
- Can we use sunlight liquid and water to disinfect work surfaces?
 - ✓ Sunlight is soap not disinfectant and is used for cleaning dirt and does not kill the corona virus on surfaces where droplets can settle and survive longer, disinfectant must contain active ingredients (as single or combined) such as phenol, hypochlorite, alcohol and quaternary ammonium compounds to inactivate the enveloped (e.g. corona) virus. If the sunlight has antimicrobiocidal activity, confirm if it is effective against the viru
 - ✓ Dust or dirt interfere with the microbiocidal activity of the disinfectant by forming a barrier thus should be cleaned before disinfection. Some equipment maintenance must follow recommendations of the manufacture, confirm with supplier as some chemicals may damage the equipment. Take into consideration the type of surface as well (porous, non-porous etc) and many other factors mentioned in the presentation. If not sure please speak to your cleaning services contractor who can advise as experts.

- Do we provide spray stations that disinfect people as they walk in - bags, clothing, person? Are there any health risks with doing this - people inhaling the disinfectant?

✓ The organization must decide based on their policy, taking into consideration that chemicals can be harmful when inhaled and can cause allergy to certain individuals and possibly damage the bags of porous material. Hand sanitizers can be used as the most practical at the entrances before touching the door handles.

- What does the latest research show regarding SARS-CoV-2 virus transmission via various surfaces?

✓ The virus can be transferred from contaminated surfaces to the worker. Survival times (Aluminum 2-8h, wood, glass, plastic and paper for 4-5days, gloves 8h)



Cleaning and Disinfection

- Any recommendation on disinfecting carpets in offices or rather remove carpets
- ✓ Removing carpets will be a costly exercise. Contact cleaning companies who can advise on which methods to use (e.g. steam, mist or vaporized methods etc?)
- Will you share the Risk Assessment with us?
- ✓ Visit NIOH website under COVID19, click presentations, Risk assessment slides are there.
- A lot of prior access control mechanisms required the touching of a panel. Have processes around this been changed to avoid this?
- ✓ Provide hand sanitizers for workers before touching the panel and wipe the panel with 70% ethanol at interval determined by your cleaning protocol.

- Is there difference in meaning for the following 1) Virus 2) Bacteria 3) Germs And How do you treat and detected each one?

✓ Yes there is a difference and detection methods are different too. Germs is a generic term referring to microorganisms. At the moment we are dealing with the virus causing COVID-19. Visit NICD website (COVID19 toolbox) for methods of detection and treatment.

- Will Dettol or savlon remove corona, is it is a good sanitising method for offices.

✓ The coronavirus spreading at the moment, known as the 2019 “novel” coronavirus (2019-nCoV), has not yet been tested against Dettol products. Please ensure that the product used contain the active ingredients mentioned in the presentation which are recommended by CDC and WHO

- In sanitizing work places like offices or a factory- what chemical can be used. is it should be 60% spirit or something else can be done.
- ✓ 60% -70% alcohol can be used to wipe surfaces in offices. If other chemicals are used just make sure they are compatible with surfaces (e.g. Jik or hypochlorite can corrode some surfaces and such should be avoided). At the factory it also depends on the activity, do your risk assessment as determine what will be more feasible and affordable.
- Is there one type of disinfectant that would work on all types of surfaces?
- ✓ alcohols (ethanol, isopropyl etc) seem to apply for most surfaces but enquire with chemical suppliers as there may be other possibilities.
- How can you best disinfect equipment like Blood pressure cuffs between patients?
- Alcohol evaporates, so have heard that it is not that great to use.
- ✓ We use 70% ethanol in the laboratories for surface decontamination and it works perfectly. Please speak to the manufacturer to get more information on each product as they have made and tested it before selling.

- I would like to be briefed on Breathalyser as a safety risk, what does this mean
- ✓ Breathylsers require breathing into the equipment to determine whether the worker is intoxicated, this is used as a safety measure to reduce injury on duty , thus possible exposure to saliva droplets as the workers queue to get tested before shift in the mines.
- Regular intervals toilets handles- means,how often?
- ✓ There is no standard periods, it just depend on your policy based on risk assessment, how often it is used, the density of workers etc. Ideally morning before shift and possibly before breaks, but if there is hand hygiene protocol in place (e.g. sanitizer outside the door), that should minimize contamination.
- How should people with hypersensitive skins be approached if the cleaning/sanitizing products cause them to have skin reactions?
- ✓ They should be referred to the Occupational health practitioner or Occ. Health specialist or contracted dermatologist who will handle the cases.

- UNESCO and some other organizations recommend only using soap & water with proper hand washing techniques for hands. Which seems a bit contradictorily? What is your stance on this?
- ✓ <https://en.unesco.org/news/how-soap-kills-covid-19-hands>
- What about UV Ultraviolet Light as a disinfectant?
- ✓ It has been proven effective for surface decontamination to easily kill viruses but the devices should be installed properly , number of devices per room should be determined, irradiance must be measured and and fixtures must be maintained
- What is the acceptable time for a facility to be reopened after it was disinfected?
- ✓ It will depend on the disinfectant used and the contact time recommended, the manufacturer or cleaning contractor will advice on this.
- What is the effective ph for cleaning materials?
- ✓ Depends on what you are cleaning

- Is Surgical Spirits effective in killing the virus? - Could Surgical Spirits be added to wet wipes to be used to clean hands and surfaces?

✓%alcohol

- If you make use of air conditioners (central) wont it spread the virus throughout the building?

✓Centralized ventilation with air fresh supply and extractors or open windows with adequate air movement is recommended. Aircons with recirculating air are a problem.

- Do surfaces need to be wiped down after disinfection process? Do we leave the area to dry first?
- ✓ Depends on the recommended contact time by manufacturer, if that has passed and the surface still wet, it can be wiped with clean cloth, mop or paper towel, confirm with the supplier on the instruction of their product as they may be different from other products.
- Does alcohol in the hand sanitizers evaporate if left open?
- ✓ Sanitizers containers should not be left open mainly to avoid contamination, alcohol can evaporate to some extent. Is it advisable to have additional ingredients to hand sanitizers e.g. glycerine, would they lose their effectiveness? Use products according to product label, if you are concerned about dry skin, then use products that contain the emollient as well. How can we test that the products we are purchasing do indeed contain the right % of alcohol? Send samples to a chemistry lab to analyse.

- I understand that high germ zones are offices, what disinfectant is recommended to be used and how Often?
- ✓ Offices are not high risks. Choose disinfectants that cannot degrade surfaces. The frequency will depend on the company policy and the type of surfaces. The occupants must however practice hand hygiene and wipe their keyboards and phones first thing in the morning and if when they suspect contamination
- What method of disinfection can be used for items manufactured to assist health workers to fight COVID-19, example faceshields?
- ✓ Each equipment come with the maintenance information, please follow that so you know you using the correct one one.

- What chemicals are recommended for fogging when decontaminating a workplace and how necessary is the fogging?
 - ✓ Please contact the chemical or cleaning experts (manufacturer or supplier) who will advise after the inspection.
- What fogger / gas is recommended for room decon?
 - ✓ Please contact the chemical or cleaning experts (manufacturer or supplier) who will advise after the inspection.

- Also if using bleach, can workers return immediately after cleaning?
- ✓ yes. Use correct dilution and ensure adequate ventilation
- Could you please explain more on the Contact Time of disinfectants?
- ✓ Contact time is the time for the disinfectant to remain in contact with the surface to kill the organism, and that will differ by the product and manufacturer, so pay attention to the product label.
- Are there any approved or registered service providers for workplace sanitization and decontamination or any cleaning service provider can be allowed to clean the affected workplace?
- ✓ I am sure there are, but we are not promoting any brand , please use google search or contact relevant authorities or government departments

- We are working with pooling equipment (Pallets, agri bins, securetainers, RPC crates etc. What chemicals are recommended for fogging when decontaminating a workplace and how necessary is the fogging of these pooling equipment and workplace and how often?
- ✓ The type of chemical to used depend on the type of material, speak to the manufacturer, just ensure that the chemical has the active ingredient recommended for enveloped virus. Frequency of fogging is dependent on activities and possible contamination. health and safety must do risk assessment which will inform control measures including the frequency of cleaning.
- For counters that handle food @ home/ work. Is the vinegar recommended as a disinfectant?
- ✓ Vinegar has not been proven as a disinfectant because it cannot kill 99.99% microorganisms.
- Emphasis needs to be done of not using jik/ bleach as it is not safe for food areas.
- Jik /bleach is listed as an active ingredient for Corona virus at the correct concentrations. But due to its corrosiveness, care should be taken for some surfaces.

- Does Covid -19 require a review of the HBA regulations?
- ✓ Yes, corona virus is an emerging diseases
- What is your take in the use of alcohol breathalyzer test units being use? They are cleaned using a steriwipe after each individual test and staff use a straw to blow into the unit (a sealed straw is issued each time).
- ✓ It appears there is control measure in place. Just check what is the chemical used on steriwipes and if it meets the requirement of active ingredients as stated in the presentation, Determine the contact time of the wipes and ensure the directions on the use are followed. I presume the straw is used to direct the blown air directly into the device, is there adequate containment and no leaks? (do risk assessment and decide if that is adequate.

- What about the risk for cleaners Vacuuming? Don't the droplets fall to the floor?
- ✓ Vacuuming can resuspend particles which can settle on surfaces, reviewing cleaning procedure to avoid dust and provide the workers with correct PPE
- Please provide details of specialist cleaning companies that could be contracted for disinfection cleaning in the event of a confirmed case in the workplace.
- ✓ We are not promoting any company or brand, kindly google the information or contact the existing cleaning company to find out if they have the capacity.

I would like to know, regarding Fogging of workspaces. Is this a requirement for all spaces? Our department doesn't make use of fogging, just regular cleaning (wiping of surfaces and machines with soap (Biocide and water)).

- ✓ Fogging is usually done for massive spaces, especially where some surfaces cannot be reached by hand and there is no manpower to do the disinfection. Regular wiping still applies, as long as the biocide is targeted for Corona virus also (please review your products to make sure) and the correct concentration is prepared. Note that cleaning (remove dirt) and decontamination (kills virus and is done after cleaning) are two separate processes.
- In manufacturing businesses, do we need to do deep clean and disinfection process before return to work even if we don't have any positive cases.
- ✓ It is not necessary to do deep cleaning but routine cleaning and disinfection and hygiene practices, will be recommended to prevent exposure

- Would it be advisable to provide hand sanitizer in all classrooms, venues that are being occupied by people or can we expect people to bring their own? Whose responsibility is it – individual / school?
- ✓ The OHSAct of 1993 stipulate that employer must ensure a safe working environment for employees, visitors or contactors included. Yes sanitizer must be available at all prominent areas, especially where there is no access to water basins and soap.