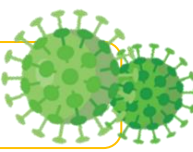


COVID-19: CORRECTIONAL SERVICES



The 2019 novel coronavirus or SARS-CoV-2 is a new respiratory virus that has not been identified before and can easily spread and infect people. The virus causes diseases of varying severities, ranging from mild (similar to common cold) to severe (e.g. pneumonia), and even death.

TRANSMISSION



- ▶ Person-to-person **contact** or touching contaminated surfaces.
- ▶ Can spread through **airborne transmission** of small aerosols that can remain suspended in the air for minutes to hours
- ▶ Likely to spread via respiratory **droplets** within a distance of two meters (2m) through coughing and sneezing
- ▶ Estimated incubation period is between 2-14 days

SYMPTOMS: Although these are commonly reported symptoms. In general, they differ according to the variants and sub variants.



Common symptoms of COVID-19



People infected with coronavirus, including Delta, can also be **asymptomatic:**

they may not show any symptoms.



SARS-CoV2 is listed as a hazardous biological agent (HBA) risk group 3 in the Regulations for Hazardous Biological Agents, 2022, placing a legal requirement for employers to limit employee exposure to the virus. With the Declaration of National State of Disaster and its Regulations on Covid-19 repealed, a Department of Employment and Labour Code of Practice: *Managing exposure to SARS-CoV-2 in the workplace, 2022* was effected to guide employers on managing the exposure to the virus and meet the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act and HBA Regulations.

A risk assessment should be conducted to establish the risk profile of different occupations with regard to COVID-19 and especially the following personnel should be considered:

- Healthcare workers
- Officials in the receiving area
- Security Officials guarding offenders at provincial hospitals
- Security Officials escorting offenders to hospitals and courts
- Security Officials guarding offenders at the cells
- Officials in visiting areas
- Court Marshalls / Parole Officers conducting house visits
- Officials in direct contact with offenders in work areas (e.g. in kitchens, agriculture and workshops)

Typical guidelines/steps to a risk assessment:



THE REQUIREMENT OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE IS THAT MANAGEMENT SHOULD CAUSE A RISK ASSESSMENT AND PLAN FOR MITIGATION MEASURE TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

The Risk Assessment and Plan must include:

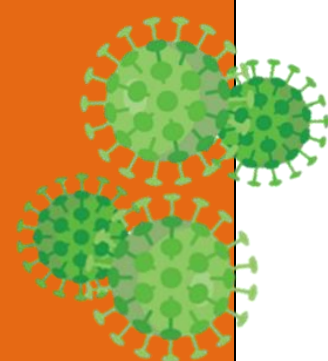
- Identification of vaccinated employees
- Symptoms reporting and isolation procedures
- Control measures to be implemented, following the HBA Regulations, including ventilation and PPE

In addition to the exposure control stipulated in the Regulations, the Risk Assessment and Plan may include:

- Social distancing measures
- Specific personal protective equipment
- Personal hygiene measures; wearing of cloth masks, barriers, hand washing, use of sanitisers and surface disinfectants
- Special measures; reducing numbers in and duration of meeting room occupancy

Ventilation

- Regarded as a preferred and more effective control measure
- Can be achieved by natural or mechanical means
- Where a mechanical ventilation is installed, it must:
 - Be technically assessed for effectiveness
 - Regularly serviced and maintained
 - Achieve the required ventilation rate
 - Not have ventilation vents that feed-back through open windows
 - Not recirculate air
 - Be in accordance with the NDOH Guidelines for ventilation to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus and have high efficiency particulate filters



Specific PPE

- To be worn by employees as informed by the Risk Assessment
- Information on suitable PPE for COVID-19 can be sought from the NDOH, NICD or NIOH websites

DCS Management must:

- Cause a Risk Assessment to be made within its facilities
- Notify Officials on the contents of the Code of Practice and how it intends to implement plans for protective measures
- Provide information and awareness on COVID-19
- Provide information on vaccination, including the benefits, contra-indications and associated serious side effects
- Be informed when Official experiences symptoms of COVID-19 and may require the Official to be tested for the virus
- Provide / keep workplaces well ventilated
- Provide suitable and adequate PPE

DCS Officials must:

- Inform designated members in cases of COVID-19 symptoms
- Isolate themselves when required
- Obey any lawful instructions given by the DCS Management, as stipulated in the HBA Regulation 5 on Duties of persons who might be exposed to HBAs



COVID-19 Workplace Preparedness & Prevention HEALTHY, SAFE & SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACES

Workplace Hotline: 0800 2121 75

Occupational Health Surveillance System [OHSS]

General queries for data submission: 0723215503 | 0713981169 | OHSSWorkplace@nioh.ac.za

OPERATING HOURS for the OHSS hotline: Mon-Fri: 08h00 - 17h00, Weekends and public holidays: Closed

www.nioh.ac.za | info@nioh.ac.za | [twitter: @nioh_sa](https://twitter.com/nioh_sa)

