



REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS
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Ministarstvo Zdravstva • Ministry of Health

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Nacionalni Institut za Javno Zdravstvo Kosova • National Institute Public Health of Kosova



PROVISIONAL GUIDE

ON THE

**APPLICATION OF MEASURES TO PREVENT
AND COMBAT COVID-19 IN PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS**

MAJ 2020



I. INTRODUCTION

This guide was developed on the basis of existing knowledge about the Coronavirus 2019 disease (COVID-19), as well as instructions of the most reliable institutions such as the WHO and the CDC. Considering that COVID-19 is a respiratory disease with uncertainties in terms of its longevity, and which can be passed from one person to another, protective measures to prevent the spread of the infection will become mandatory for an indefinite period of time. Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed guidelines that are regularly updated depending on the knowledge gathered about the behavior of the virus. Thus, this guide will also require periodical updates and amendments.

This provisional guide can also assist in preventing exposure to COVID-19 in workplaces, in non-medical facilities. To prevent any stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidelines described below in determining the risk of infection with COVID-19. Such risks cannot be determined based on race or country of origin and one must ensure protection of the confidentiality of any person confirmed to have been infected with the Coronavirus.

In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the outbreak of the new Coronavirus disease in the Hubei Province, China, as a Public Health Emergency of international relevance. WHO stated that there is a high risk for the new Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) to spread to other countries of the world.

WHO and public health authorities around the world are taking action to control the outbreak of COVID-19. However, there is no guarantee for long-term success. All layers of our society - including businesses and employers - have a role to play if we want to curb the spread of this disease.

NOTE:

This guide should be used by public and private institutions to develop own protocols specific to the nature of their work/activity, in order to take measures to prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19. Existing data show that there is still a lot to learn about tracking, significance, and other features of COVID-19, while research is ongoing. For this reason, this guideline, depending on the epidemiological situation and developing scientific data, may be updated, complemented or amended.



II. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

a. COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

Infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can cause a disease that may range from a mild to a severe, and in some cases, fatal condition. Symptoms usually include fever, cough, and difficulty in breathing. The disease may also manifest other symptoms, such as those of a gastrointestinal infection. It may also happen that despite being infected with COVID-19, persons may be asymptomatic. According to WHO and CDC, COVID-19 symptoms may appear between 2 to 14 days upon exposure.

b. HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

When the first cases of COVID-19 were identified, it was thought that they had been exposed to infected animals, but it has now been established that the infection can spread from person to person, including:

- Close contact of persons with each other (in less than 2 meters).
- Through small droplets, when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Such droplets may enter the mouth or nose of the people nearby, but also may contaminate surfaces, which may then be touched with the hands, and through the hands make it to the mouth or nose.

It is possible for a person to become infected with COVID-19 by touching a surface or object contaminated with SARS-CoV-2, and then touching their mouth, nose or even their eyes.

People are more contagious when they have symptoms (i.e. fever, cough, and difficulties breathing), but the spread is also possible from infected but asymptomatic people, albeit this is not the main spreading route of the virus.



When someone infected with COVID-19 coughs or exhales, they release virus-infected droplets and fluids. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as work desks, tables or telephones. People can get COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects - and then by touching their eyes, nose or mouth. If people maintain a distance of less than two meters from another person who has COVID-19, people can catch COVID-19, introducing it into the body through droplets spat out during coughing or exhaling (breathing out). In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to the flu. Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some continue to experience more serious symptoms and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age: people over 40 seem to be more vulnerable than those under 40. People with weakened immune systems and people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable.

c. GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY FOR COVID 19

All employees must pursue for their best options to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and reduce its impact on their workplace. These may include one or more of the following aspects:

- a. Reducing the transmission of the disease among employees;
- b. Maintaining sound standard operating procedures in their workflows and processes, and
- c. Maintaining a healthy working environment.

d. REDUCING THE TRANSMISSION AMONG EMPLOYEES

i. Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) should notify their employer and stay home.
- Sick employees must follow the instructions and recommendations of the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Public Health (www.kosova.health) and their family doctors. Employees must not return to work until the conditions/criteria are met to terminate domestic isolation, in consultation with the family doctor and the relevant health institutions;
- Employees who are in good health but have family members who have contracted COVID 19 at home should also notify their employer and follow the instructions and recommendations of the Ministry of Health, National Institute of Public Health (www.kosova.health) and their family doctors.



ii. Identify when and how employees may be exposed to COVID-19 at work:

Prepare to apply Basic Measures to Prevent Infection. For most employers, protection of employees depends on the level of application of basic measures to prevent infection.

To determine the level of risk of exposure for your employees, see Appendix 1. It is strongly recommended that all employees follow good hygiene and infection control practices, including:

- Encourage frequent and thorough hand-washing, including by providing places for hand-washing, by employees, clients and visitors. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based towels/wipes that contain at least 70% alcohol;
- Require employees to stay home if they are ill;
- Require measures to prevent the spread of infection through the respiratory tract (face masks). The mouth and nose should be covered with bent elbows or a napkin when coughing or sneezing. Remember that some employees may be at greater risk from serious illnesses, such as the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees, or assign job tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of 1.5 - 2 m from other employees, customers and visitors, or apply work from distance, if possible.
- Provide customers and the public with napkin and waste bins, and possibly disposable gloves;
- Employers should consider the option of developing regulations and practices, such as flexible schedules (e.g., homework, merged work shifts), to increase the physical distance between employees and others;
- Instruct employees not to use other employees' phones, desks, offices, or work equipment whenever possible;
- ***Apply orderly maintenance practices, including regular cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, equipment, and other items in the work environment. Cleaning chemicals should be selected and prepared according to the instructions in Annex 1 of this guide.***



iii. Separate sick employees:

- Employees who appear to have symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) when arriving at work, or fall sick during the day, should be immediately separated from other employees, clients, and visitors and should be sent home!
- If an employee has been confirmed to have been infected with COVID-19, such employees must inform other employees about the possibility of their exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but should maintain confidentiality according to rules of ethical conduct. Employers must instruct employees on ways of continuing operations on the basis of instructions in this guide.

iv. Train your employees on ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Employees can take steps to protect themselves at work and at home. The elderly and people with chronic diseases are at greater risk of complications.
- Follow your employer's regulations and procedures regarding illnesses, cleaning and disinfection, but also on official meetings and travel.
- Stay home if you are sick, unless you require medical care. Learn what to do if you are sick.
- Inform your supervisor if you have members of your family with COVID-19 at home. Learn what to do if someone in your home is sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. Use disinfectant containing at least 70% alcohol, if soap and running water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with dirty hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a napkin, scarf or mask when coughing or sneezing, or use the inside of your elbow. Dispose used napkins into the waste bins, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you cannot access soap and water, use a disinfectant containing at least 70% alcohol.
- Frequently clean and disinfect exposed objects and surfaces such as desks, keyboards, telephones, handrails and door handles. Any exposed surface may be cleaned with soap and water before disinfection. For disinfection, use appropriate products from Annex 1 of this guide, for the respective surface.
- Avoid using phones, desks, offices or other work tools and devices, whenever possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect before and after use.
- Apply physical and social distance, avoiding any gatherings with relatives, friends, etc. inside the home, any large gatherings, and maintain distance (approximately 1.5 - 2 meters) with others whenever possible.



v. Maintaining sound standard operating procedures in the work process

- **Identify a workplace coordinator** who will be responsible for COVID-19-related matters and their impact on the workplace.
- Make sure sick leave rules are flexible and consistent with public health guidelines, in accordance with applicable legal provisions.
- Implement flexible regulations that allow employees to stay home to provide care for sick family members, or to care for children, due to the closure of schools and kindergartens. Additional flexibility may include allowance of additional days of sick leave, as well as allowing the exchange or donation of sick leave days to one another.
- Employers who currently do not allow for sick leave to some or all of their employees may wish to draft non-punitive “emergency medical leave” regulations.
- Employers, pursuant to applicable legal provisions, should not require any positive COVID-19 test results, or a doctor's certificate for sick employees to prove their illness.
- **Evaluate your essential functions** and the dependence that others and the community have on your services or products.
- Prepare to change your working practices, if you need to maintain critical functions (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your functions, if necessary).
- Identify an alternative supply chain for material goods and critical services. Some goods and services may have greater demand, or may not be available.

KUFIZIME TË VEÇANTA

1. Numri maksimal i lejuar i klientëve është 1 person në 8 m²;
2. Pronarët e lokaleve janë të obliguara të publikojnë numrin maksimal të lejuar të personave para hyrjes së lokaleve;
3. Pronarët e lokaleve janë të detyruar që të zbatojnë masat e parandalimit dhe luftimit të përhapjes së infeksionit sipas këtij udhëzuesi;



vi. Consider establishing rules and practices of social distancing

Social distance must be implemented in full, without any alternative. Social distancing implies the avoidance of larger gatherings and maintenance of distance (of at least 1.5 meters) from others, whenever possible (e.g., restrooms or meeting rooms). Strategies that businesses can use include:

- Application of flexible workplaces (e.g., working from home);
- Application of flexible working hours (e.g., merged work shifts);
- Increasing physical space between employees in the workplace;
- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., 'drive through' service, ration sharing);
- Holding flexible meetings and travel options (e.g., virtual meetings, postponing meetings or non-essential events);
- Reduction of functions (essential only);
- Provision of remote services (e.g. telephone, video or web applications);
- Delivery of products by mail or postal services.

vii. Maintaining a healthy working environment

Consider the improvement of engineering controls, using the ventilation system structures. This may include some or all of the following activities:

- Increase ventilation levels.
- Increase volumes of outside air in internal systems.



1. Promote instructional posters for hand-washing for employees, clients and visitors to the workplace:

- Provide napkins/wipes and contactless waste bins.
- Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based towels/wipes that contain at least 70% alcohol. If hands are visibly unclean, soap and water should be applied before disinfectants. Make sure you have adequate amounts available.
- Place hand sanitizers in frequent posts to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage hand hygiene, to help stop the spread, at the entrance to the workplace and in other parts of the working environment, where they are most likely to be seen.
- Promote the use of other and contact-less greeting methods (no handshakes).
- Instruct employees to re-read the instructions for coughing and sneezing and hand washing for more information.

2. Routinely clean and disinfect the environment:

- Clean and disinfect routinely all surfaces that are frequently handled in the workplace, such as desks, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and door handles.
 - If the surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using detergent or soap and water, prior to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, most household disinfectants must be effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all disinfection products (i.e. concentration, method of application and duration, etc.).
- Discourage employees from using phones, desks, offices or tools, other devices and work equipment of other employees, when possible. If such use is unavoidable, clean and disinfect before using.
- Provide single-use cloths/towels to ensure that most frequently used surfaces (e.g., door handles, keyboards, TV remotes, desks and other work devices and equipment) can be cleaned by employees before each use.
- *Clean and disinfect work spaces in larger stores every 1.5 hours. Carrying carts and baskets more often, as needed;*

PERFORM A THOROUGH CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF THE SPACE AFTER A PERSON SUSPECTED/CONFIRMED WITH COVID 19 STAYED OR PASSED THERE!



3. Rules for official travel of employees

Things to consider when you and your employees travel:

a. Before you travel

Make sure the organization and its employees have the latest information on the areas where COVID-19 has spread. You can find such information in the following link:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

- Based on the latest information, your organization should assess the benefits and risks related to upcoming travel plans.
- Avoid sending employees who may be at higher risk of serious illness (e.g. older employees and those with diabetes, heart and lung disease) to areas where COVID-19 is spreading.
- Make sure that all persons traveling to locations reporting COVID-19 are briefed by a qualified professional staff (e.g. health services, health-care provider or local public health partner).
- Employees who are about to travel should be supplied with alcohol-based disinfectants in small bottles (less than 100 ml) for hand disinfection.

b. While traveling

- Encourage employees to wash their hands regularly and stay at least 1 m away from people who are coughing or sneezing.
- Ensure that employees know what to do and whom to contact if they feel ill while traveling.
- Ensure that your employees comply with instructions from local authorities of the country of travel. If, for instance, they are told by local authorities not to go to a certain place, they must comply. Your employees must respect any local restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings.



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c. Return from traveling

- Employees who have returned from an area where COVID-19 is spreading should be monitored for 14 days (quarantine or self-isolation, according to the indications determined by field experts) after the return and continuously take the temperature.
- If they develop even a mild cough or low-grade fever (i.e. a temperature of 37.3 C or more) they should avoid close contact (less than 1.5 meters) with other people, including family members. They should also call their health-care provider or the local public health department, giving them details of their recent travel and symptoms, and receive instructions on the necessary actions.

SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS AND PLANNING IN YOUR WORKPLACE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN PROTECTING YOUR EMPLOYEES FROM THE SPREAD OF COVID-19!



ANNEX 1

SIMPLE WAYS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

The low-cost measures will help prevent the spread of infections in the workplace, such as colds, flu and gastrointestinal infections, thus protecting your customers, contractors, and employees.

Employers should undertake such measure immediately, even if there are no confirmed COVID-19 cases in your institution. These measures can reduce working absences due to illness and stop or slow the spread of COVID-19:

a. RULES FOR THE DISINFECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MATERIALS

Due to the possibility of virus surviving in the environment for several days, premises and areas that are potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2 should be cleaned before they are reused, using products containing antimicrobial preparations that we know are effective against coronaviruses. Although there is a lack of specific evidence on their effectiveness against SARS-CoV-2, cleaning with water, detergents and common household disinfectant products should be sufficient for cleaning and prevention.

DISINFECTION WITH CHLORINE/BLEACH SOLUTIONS DESTROYS MICROBES.

- Use chlorine disinfectant solutions: 0.05% or 0.5%.
- 0.5% solution quickly destroys microorganisms, whereas the 0.05% solution destroys them within 30 minutes.

b. PREPARING DISINFECTANT SOLUTIONS

PREPARATION	SOLUTION 1:10 (0.5%)	SOLUTION 1:100 (0.05%)
Calcium Hypochlorite 70% (granules or powder)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Floors, environment• Toilets• Dirty clothes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hands, leather and shoes• Thermometers• Laundry clothes• Dishes, kitchen utensils.
How much?	1 tablespoon in 2 liters water	1 tablespoon in 20 liters water



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	Tretja 1:10 (0.5%)	Tretja 1:100 (0.05%)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Rroba të ndotura•Toaletet•Lëngjet, trupore, ekskretet, te vjellurat•Dyshemetë, mjedisi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Duart, lëkura dhe mbathjet•Termometrat•Rrobet në lavanderi•Pjatat, enët e kuzhinës
Kalcium Hipoklorid 70% granulat ose pluhur	1 lugë gjelle në 2 litra ujë	1 lugë gjelle në 20 litra ujë

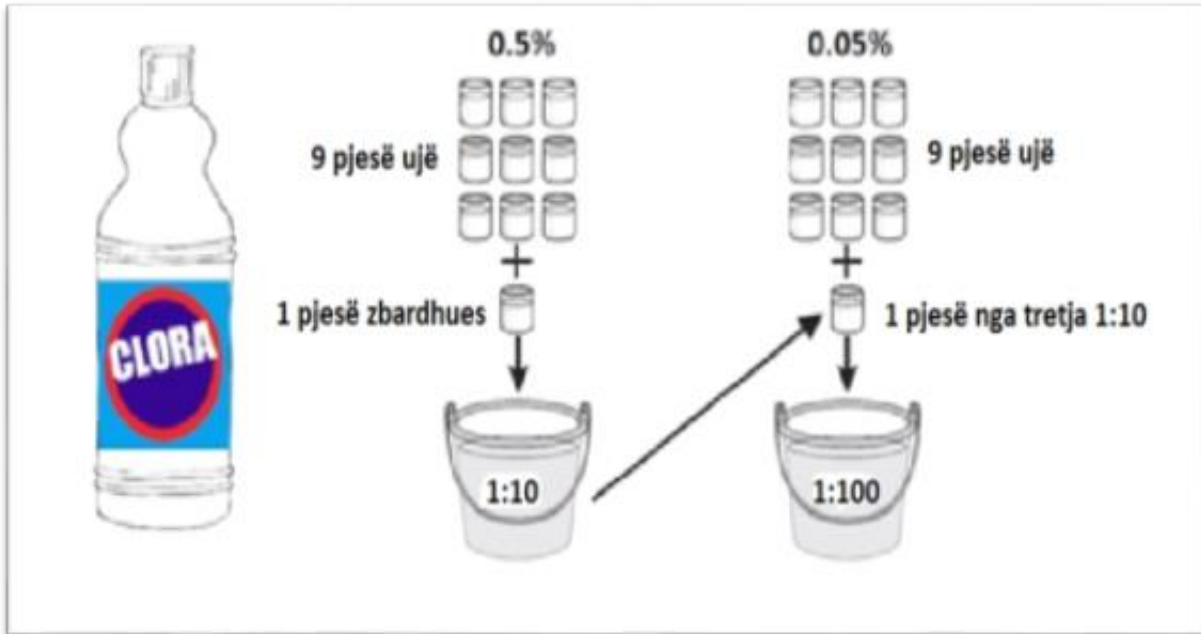
SOLUTION 1:10 (0.5%)	SOLUTION 1:100 (0.05%)
WASH	WASH
Dirty clothes	Hands, leather and shoes
Toilets	Thermometers
Body fluids, excretions, vomit	Laundry clothes
Floors	Dishes, kitchen utensils.
Environment	

PREPARE WITH 1 TABLESPOON IN 2 LITERS WATER PREPARE WITH 1 TABLESPOON IN 20 LITERS WATER



OR:

PREPARATION OF THE CHLORINE SOLUTION FOR DISINFECTION FROM BLEACH (5% CHLORINE SOLUTION)



0.5% 9 parts water
PREPARE WITH 1 PART BLEACH

0.05% 9 parts water
PREPARE WITH 1 PART SOLUTION 1:10



c. HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE CLEAN AND DISINFECT?

Three times a day (in the morning, lunch and evening) disinfect:

- Surfaces (tables, chairs and other items) and the work environment:
- Workers' canteen
- Vehicles (buses and vans)

How to disinfect?

- Clean with cleaning items (cloths, cleaning paper) without touching the surfaces directly with your hands!
- Use gloves when cleaning!
- Throw the paper towels in garbage bags.

d. PERSONS DOING THE CLEANING

Persons doing the cleaning and disinfection should be familiar with the procedures and solutions and, in suspicious cases, cleaning should be done using appropriate personal protective equipment: disposable gloves, water-resistant clothing, protective goggles and FFP2 respirators.

Personal cleaning equipment should be treated as a potential infectious material and discarded or disposed of in secure infectious material places.

If the floor, surfaces, and textile materials (carpets, curtains, or similar) cannot withstand chlorine solutions, consult the manufacturer's instructions to choose a suitable alternative, accompanied or combined with detergent cleaning.

All frequently affected areas, such as walls and windows, toilet seat and other toilet surfaces should also be carefully cleaned. All textiles (e.g. bed covers, curtains, etc.) They should be washed using a hot water cycle (90° C) and adding detergent for washing. If a hot water cycle cannot be used due to the characteristics of the textile, specific chemicals should be added when washing such textiles (e.g. bleach or detergent product containing sodium hypochlorite or decontamination products specially produced for use in textile).

When using chemical cleaning products, it is important to keep the place well ventilated (e.g. by opening windows) in order to protect the health of the cleaning staff.

CHEMICAL PREPARATIONS SHOULD NEVER COME INTO CONTACT WITH FOOD!

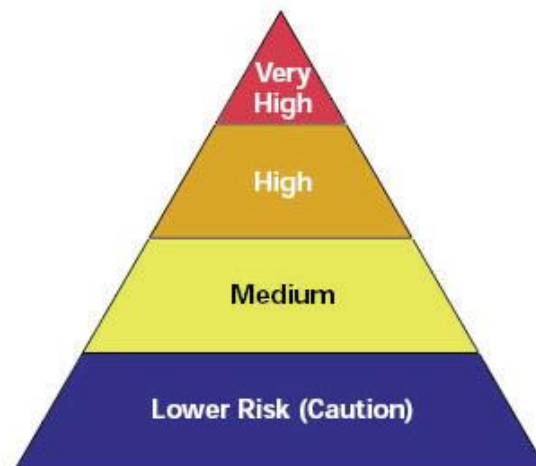


ANNEX 2

CLASSIFYING WORKER EXPOSURE TO SARS-COV-2

To help employers determine appropriate precautions, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) has divided job tasks into four risk exposure levels: very high, high, medium, and lower risk. The level of risk depends, in part, on the type of job, the need for contact within 2 meters with persons who are known, or are suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2. The Occupational Risk Pyramid shows the four exposure risk levels in the shape of a pyramid to represent the probable distribution of risk.

Occupational Risk Pyramid for COVID-19



SOURCE: OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA)



a. VERY HIGH EXPOSURE RISK

Very high exposure risk jobs are those with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during specific medical, postmortem, or laboratory procedures. Workers in this category include:

- Healthcare workers (e.g., doctors, nurses, dentists, emergency nurses) performing procedures such as intubation, bronchoscopies, some dental procedures, or invasive specimen collection on patients suspected or infected with COVID-19.
- Healthcare or laboratory personnel collecting or handling specimens from known or suspected COVID-19 patients.
- Healthcare workers in the morgue performing autopsies on the bodies of people who are known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of their death.

b. HIGH EXPOSURE RISK

High-risk exposure jobs are high-potential jobs for exposure to known or suspected COVID-19 sources:

- Healthcare service providers and support staff (e.g., doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff who must enter into patients' rooms) exposed to known or suspected COVID-19 patients. *(Note: when such workers perform aerosol-generating procedures, their exposure risk level becomes very high.)*
- Medical transport workers (e.g., ambulance vehicle operators) moving known or suspected COVID-19 patients in enclosed vehicles.
- Morgue workers involved in preparing for burial the bodies of people who are known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of their death.

c. MEDIUM EXPOSURE RISK

Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e., within 2 meters) people asymptomatic people with SARS-CoV-2. In areas without ongoing community transmission, workers in this risk group may have frequent contact with travelers who may return from international locations with widespread SARS-CoV-2 transmission. In areas where there is ongoing community transmission, workers in this category may have contact with the general public (e.g., schools, large grocery supermarkets, etc.).



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d. LOW EXPOSURE RISK (CAUTION)

Lower exposure risk (caution) jobs are those that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being infected with SARS-CoV-2, or frequent close contact with (i.e., within 2 meters) the general public. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.

FIND THE LATEST INFORMATION IN THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

MINISTRY OF HEALTH ([HTTPS://MSH.RKS-GOV.NET](https://msh.rks-gov.net))

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF KOSOVA ([HTTP://WWW.NIPH-RKS.ORG](http://www.niph-rks.org))