

HEALTH PROTOCOL POST RELAXATION OF THE LOCKDOWN IN MEGHALAYA

As the State is slowly easing the lockdown and essential economic activities are being opened in a phased manner and with people returning to the State from different zones, the State needs to gear up and prepare itself for the increased risk of transmission. It is to be noted that *community transmission* has begun in almost all countries that took the major hit from this pandemic. Therefore to prevent the threat of community transmission, the State should take a proactive approach of preparing itself by *acting as though community transmission is happening* and thus take necessary precautions and preventive measures for containment and reducing the adverse impact on the lives of people. Furthermore, it has been observed that 80% of the positive cases of Covid-19 are asymptomatic and cannot be ascertained without testing. Therefore, as a proactive approach, it would be apt to assume that everybody by default is an asymptomatic person. This will make people exercise adaptive leadership to be more cautious and responsible for their actions and also reduce stigmatization.

The Four Cardinal Principles

1. **Behavioural Change:** Everyone in Meghalaya shall be treated as Category 'A' patient. This implies living with the assumption that every person could be an asymptomatic, mobile carrier of the Covid-19 virus, with the ability to transmit the virus to others unknowingly. By assuming that everybody is an asymptomatic person, people will be more cautious and responsible for their actions and thus help in reducing the risk of community transmission. This will also mean that everyone shall follow the three commandments of health protocol for prevention of Covid-19: (i) compulsorily wearing a mask, (ii) practicing hand-hygiene (frequently washing hands with soap and water and/or using hand sanitizer) and (iii) maintaining physical social distancing at all times both in their personal space and work environment. A gradual but mandatory change in behaviour is required in this regard. The aim is for every person in the State to be able to combat the virus effectively.
2. **Testing:** Everyone coming from outside the State shall be tested at the entry points/designated facilities with gold standard RT-PCR test. Those who are symptomatic will be tested by both RTK and RT-PCR at the entry point.
3. **Isolation:** Everyone coming from outside the State shall undergo quarantine for 14 days. Quarantine can be at home, at community quarantine centres, institutional quarantine centre of the Government or paid quarantine facilities in identified hotels. Quarantine is the only way to reduce the spread of the disease and to make the virus less virulent.
4. **Training:** All communities and mobile workforce shall be trained on measures to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19. This implies following a Covid-19 Self Help Principle where Individualized training shall be provided to the high-risk group (the elderly and people with co-morbid conditions) and all mobile workforce through Village Dorbars and Associations. Training shall be organized by the Health Department with the help of identified Master Trainers. A certificate will be provided to all those who have successfully completed training.

Exceptions to manage essential services and to allow movement of skilled and technical manpower and professionals

While following the above cardinal principles, exceptions may be made for the **skilled workforce and the professionals** coming from outside the State, keeping in mind that their stay in the State can vary from a few days to a few weeks, as well as for those who visit the State for a brief period of time. These are as follows:

1. All skilled workforce and professionals will be tested upon entering the State. If tested negative, the concerned person shall proceed to their workplace while making sure that the three commandments are strictly followed and their movement will be restricted to their workplace. If they have already been tested from the place of arrival, they will need to produce a certificate to prove that they have been tested negative for Covid-19.
2. For those coming from high risk areas, based on self declaration, and if it is found that there is an exposure, another test will be conducted from the **5th to 7th day**. If they test negative, they can proceed to work while following the three commandments of health protocol for prevention of Covid-19.
3. Details of the mode of travel such as flight or train or vehicle details shall be furnished at the entry point/designated facility and pre-registration as well as application.
4. Drivers of vehicles carrying essential goods and other economic goods with inter-State/country movement will have to be tested once in every 10 days. It will be ensured that their movement will be restricted from Quarantine place (home/community or institutional centres) to their work place and vice-versa.
5. All Departments/Sectors shall identify skilled, highly skilled workforce and professionals from their respective sectors and devise mechanisms suitable for their sectors based on the above cardinal principles. Similarly, those persons working for Covid-19 Management and other urgent government duties will also be identified. This group of persons, if tested negative, will be allowed to proceed to work, while taking all due necessary precautions.
6. Agencies bringing skilled workforce and professionals from outside the State should ensure that guidelines are followed and should take the responsibility for them.