

Precautions and Safety Measures at Workplace During Pandemic

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Pandemic is a worldwide disease outbreak, caused by various types of agents for example influenza and coronaviruses. Recent pandemic has been the third outbreak of coronavirus COVID-19 (Corona virus disease-19) declared by World Health Organization (WHO), spread in more than 213 continent including Pakistan.¹ Transmission of disease during pandemic expected in workplaces not only from patient to healthcare personnel but also between the co-workers and people of general public and individuals from other workplaces.² In Pakistan, total number of positive cases: 302,424 of COVID-19 were reported and 6,389 deaths were confirmed till 15th September 2020.³ Unfortunately presently there is no vaccine available against COVID-19 to prevent this disease. The transmission and spreading of this virus in different countries is suppressed by testing and take care of patients, limiting travel, stopping huge gatherings such as concert, schools, sports events and quarantine the infected person.⁴ This pandemic placed a huge burden on all section of society including companies and employee workers by suspending their working activities and implementing new measures and practices in very small period of time during this crisis. The European Union member's countries established numbers of procedures and measures for the prevention and spreading of pandemic in working places.⁵ Major precautions and safety measures should be integrated in the workplace which covers all risks assessment by European Union and National Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and are as follows.⁶

- Instruct employees, frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or used alcohol based hand sanitizer which contains 60-90% alcohol.
- Encouraging hand hygiene by placing hand sanitizer in multiple locations and in common areas of working place.
- Provide surgical masks to employees.
- Sneezing etiquettes: Ensure that they cover their mouth and nose with tissue or sleeves while coughing or sneezing.
- Check, follow and share the instructions from the concern

authorities in the group; where the meetings or events are arranged.

- Brief the employees, workers and co-workers that anyone with low grade fever (37.3°C or more) and mild cough should stay home or work from home.
- Before starting work, disinfect your desktop/ laptop and table.
- Stop sharing food with your colleague and co-workers and eat distantly from others.
- Develop and approve the plan and strategies to prevent contamination of disease during meeting.
- Replace face to face meetings in teleconferences or online.
- Confrontation meetings could be scaled down and less people attend the meeting.
- Avoid direct touching the lift buttons, use tissue for handling and ensure that there are not more than two people in the lift.
- Maintain social distancing at the time of interaction with other people and avoid shaking hands.

All of the above mentioned guidelines can halt the transmission of virus and help the employers and employees to work safely at work place during COVID-19 outbreak.

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