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Government of India
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
Department of Commerce

Revised Consolidated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) / Preventive
measures to be taken while holding Trade Exhibitions to contain spread of
Covid-19

1. Background :

In terms of MHA Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 27-1-2021 regarding guidelines for surveillance, containment and caution for COVID-19 in the country, the Consolidated SOP was issued on 30th January 2021 to restart exhibitions outside containment zones with adequate precautions to prevent spread of COVID-19 infection. As Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Consumer (B2C) are two components of the Exhibition sector having different visitors and organizational dynamics, the Consolidated SOP has been revised to bring clarity to applicability of these guidelines for B2B and B2C Exhibitions.

The Revised Consolidated SOP for holding Exhibitions aims to minimize the physical contact and maximise physical distancing between Exhibition organizers, service providers, Buyers/Sellers/Exhibitors/ visitors, and other preventive and safety measures against COVID-19. This SOP will be effective from 1st February 2021.

2. Scope:

The document outlines various generic and precautionary measures to be adopted, in addition to the specific measures, for holding Exhibitions. The measures to be put in place are divided under the following categories viz:

- i. Measures to be adopted by Venue Provider(s)
- ii. Measures to be adhered to by Fair/Exhibition Organizer(s)
- iii. Measures to be adhered to by Service Provider(s)
- iv. Measures to be followed by Exhibitor(s)
- v. Measures to be followed by Visitors/ Business delegates

The competent Authority may implement additional measures within their jurisdiction as per their local assessment and in line with activities permitted by

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) as per MHA orders issued under Disaster Management Act 2005 from time to time.

Note: The words Fair/Trade Fair/Exhibition have been used interchangeably in this document.

3. **Generic Preventive Measures:**

The generic preventive measures that include public health measures are to be followed to reduce the risk of COVID-19. These measures need to be observed by all: the venue providers, exhibition organizers, service providers, exhibitors, visitors/delegates are as follows:-

- i. Persons above 65 years of age, persons with co-morbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years are advised to stay at home, except for essential and health purposes. Fair/Trade Exhibition Organizers to advise accordingly.
- ii. The other generic measures include simple public health measures that are to be followed during the trade exhibition at all times. These include:-
 - Physical distancing of at least 6 feet to be followed as far as feasible.
 - Use of face covers/masks to be made mandatory.
 - Practice frequent hand washing with soap (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (for at least 20 seconds) can be made wherever feasible.
 - Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing off used tissues properly.
 - Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest to state and district helpline.
 - Spitting shall be strictly prohibited.
 - Installation and use of 'Aarogya Setu' app shall be mandatory for all with smart-phones

4. **All the stakeholders, the venue providers, exhibition organizers, service providers, exhibitors, visitors/delegates, shall also ensure the following:**

A. **Measures to be adopted by Venue Provider(s)**

- i. The self-assessment through Aarogya Setu Mobile App is recommended for all the entrants and is mandatory for ones with a smart-phone. All the entrants should be instructed not to have a close contact with anyone if they are experiencing any of the symptoms in respect of the virus. Any person exhibiting symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 disease should not be allowed entry.
- ii. Venue Provider should setup health/first-aid kiosks manned by optimal staff with adequate equipment like thermal guns and hand sanitizers at all entry/ exit gates of the venue for mandatory thermal scanning and hand sanitization of all the entrants. All Security and cleaning staff should use Face Mask, Face Shield and Gloves.
- iii. Preferably multiple and separate entry and exits for visitors shall be ensured. The structure/space/venue for the event must also ensure adequate natural cross-ventilation.
- iv. The Exhibition halls shall be disinfected before giving possession.
- v. A well-planned garbage disposal policy should be implemented. The waste disposal should be in accordance with Central Pollution Control Board guidelines.
- vi. For air-conditioning /ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which emphasize that the (i) temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in range of 24-30 degree (ii) relative humidity should be in the range of 40-70%, (iii) re-circulation of air to be avoided to the extent possible, (iv) intake of fresh air should be as much as possible and (v) cross-ventilation should be adequate. The air handling unit is required to be cleaned and maintained regularly to maintain adequate in-hall temperature / air movement as recommended by health authorities.
- vii. Adequate number of CCTV should be installed in the venue/ campus, including inside the halls and the F&B locations, to closely monitor visitor movement to ensure physical distancing and control overcrowding at any point. There should be adequate AV unit for announcement to manage the crowd movement.
- viii. A dedicated lane for vehicles movement with single entry and single exit of the vehicles needs to be created. The round robin arrangements should also follow this dedicated lane. The drop-off points and parking points should be identified. The spaces for parking of vehicles should be clearly defined so as to maintain physical distancing in the parking areas. The parking space provided should have adequate distancing norms between vehicles.
- ix. The F&B service providers to be advised that proper hygiene be maintained and the infrastructure be disinfected regularly. They may be advised to offer pre- packed food to the extent possible and to avoid a buffet-style set-up to avoid queue-ups. Digital payments must be encouraged. The F&B outlets / counters shall mandatorily install glass partitions as a physical distancing measure. The serving personnel should wear masks and gloves. The F&B services providers will be required to follow the guidelines issued by the relevant government agencies. The visitors/delegates to be encouraged to bring their own water bottles. There should be a provision of tissue papers near water

- dispensers, Tea/Coffee makers etc. to avoid direct contact with hand. All equipment should be as far as possible made contactless.
- x. To maintain physical distancing the number of individuals that can be permitted in any given hall, stall/ booth and toilet/ washroom at any particular time may be moderated such that the latest MHA/ MoHFW guidelines on physical distancing are complied-with, which currently translates into a 3.25 sq. m per person in the halls. (10,000 sq. m hall should have a maximum of 3076 persons; a 5,000 sq. m hall should have a maximum of 1538 persons.)
 - xi. Isolation centre should be created by the venue owner on a permanent basis.

B. Measures to be adhered to by Exhibition Organizers

- i. The Fair/Exhibition Organizer should assess the risk involved by doing a thorough pre-event review of the event prior to the planned dates. The Organizer should also analyze the health and safety situation of the zones of the expected attendees, both national and International.
- ii. Based on health and safety analysis of visitor origin cities, the Organizer should avoid promoting their events to visitors from affected areas whose visit to the event may possibly impact the health and safety of other visitors at the show.
- iii. A plan should be prepared well in advance about conduct of each activity separately (exhibitions, meetings, shows, food/catering arrangements etc.)
- iv. Fairs/Exhibitions shall be permitted outside the containment zones only. Fair /Trade Exhibition Organizers, venue providers, service providers, exhibitors and business visitors from containment zones shall not be permitted.
- v. Keeping in view the physical distancing norms, event sites should have adequate floor area at all locations which are likely to be visited by public. The Organizer should ensure that the number of visitors into the Venue, in respect of their event, is regulated as per the Govt. guidelines during that particular time. Physical distance of a minimum of 6 feet, when queuing up for entry and inside the venue may be ensured as far as feasible. Specific marking for the purpose may be done at various places like, queues at entry and exit of halls, in front of registration desks, in front of booths/stalls in the passageways etc.
- vi. Fair/Exhibition Organizers should stagger the operational hours of exhibition so that there is organised gathering. The Organizer may also be requested to plan for staggered exit of exhibitors and visitors / delegates at the closing time of the show on each day.
- vii. With regard to B2B events, the Organizer should maintain record of all the entrants & participants who will enter the venue in respect of their event. They should be able to provide traceability support of suspects to local health authorities, if required. In line with the govt. guidelines, the entrants screened-out based on travel history/symptoms/ information based on the medical interview sheet may be refused entry. Availability of information of any overseas COVID-19 cases that were detected during or after the event should be passed on to their respective embassies.

- viii. The Organizer must ensure that they, along-with the exhibitors, visitors, staff/ labour belonging to all the agencies for Construction and Decoration (C&D), Food and Beverages (F&B), Security, Housekeeping etc. hired by the organizer and any other staff deployed by them, in connection with the exhibition/conference, are aware of and are following all the precautionary measures advised by the Govt. Authorities, in respect of Covid-19 disease, from time to time.
- ix. Appropriate arrangements for personal protection gears like face covers/masks, and other logistic like hand sanitizers, soap, sodium hypochlorite solution etc. shall be made available by Fair/ Exhibition Organizers/exhibitors for their staff as per requirements
- x. The Organizer should regularly play recorded messages/announcements on the precautionary measures, good practices and relevant information in respect of the virus during the full tenancy period. Regular Health and safety announcements may be made in English and local languages. They should promote 'Namaste' greetings as a replacement to handshakes. It should highlight availability of onsite doctors and ambulance. Signage/boards are to be installed at all prominent places, about preventive measures to be followed by entrants and also that spitting inside the premises will be prohibited. A short advisory on physical distancing in all signage, digital messages, boards etc may be included to reinforce the standard signage.
- xi. Visitors should be given prior information on what they should carry, which includes face mask, water bottle, hands sanitizer.
- xii. The Organizer should advise all the entrants to practice hand washing etiquettes (even if the hands are visibly clean) with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol content.
- xiii. The Organizers should encourage online purchase of tickets.
- xiv. The Organizers should encourage pre-registration of business visitors / delegates to minimize queues at the registration area and seek health declarations from all attendees in a pre-exhibition entry safe zone. All attendees should be registered in order to ensure traceability, if needed at a later date. Contact-less entry should be encouraged.
- xv. Adequate number of ticket counters/registration counters shall be planned duly ensuring physical distancing norms. The Organizer should consider minimal social contact while setting up their Registration area. Queue masters could be used to manage movement flow. Registration counters set up by the organizer could have transparent glass partitions to act as a barrier to physical contact
- xvi. The Organizer shall also encourage online registration with the option of printing of entry badges at home. Further, QR Code may be generated during the registration and the entry can be allowed inside the hall by scanning the QR code by the Organizer.
- xvii. The Organizers should encourage use of technology to minimize human interface. The organizer should ask its exhibitors to encourage the use of e-brochures to minimize contact and paper wastage.
- xviii. The Organizers should be advised to monitor the number of visitors in a particular hall by technology-enabled/other means by tracking the inflow as

well as outflow of visitors in real-time. As soon as the hall reaches saturation as per the hall-wise occupancy load notified by Government agencies, inflow may be restricted. Number of people in the elevators shall be restricted, duly maintaining physical distancing norms

- xix. The furniture and other surfaces (frequently touched or otherwise) present in each of the halls and going to be used in respect of their event need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly by the Organizer.
- xx. During the event, the Organizer should ensure that there are sufficient hand sanitizers/soap/tissues in all the washrooms. Their housekeeping agency should be strictly instructed to regularly monitor the hygiene of all the halls including the washrooms. All the tissues should be in closed bins. Visitors and staff should be advised to dispose of used face covers/masks in covered bins available at premises. The housekeeping agency should ensure that the used tissues are thrown into closed bins immediately after use. The CPCB guidelines available at https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/Projects/Bio-Medical-waste/BMW-GUIDELINES-COVID_1.pdf may be referred to for bio-medical waste management (mask, tissues, etc.)
- xxi. The Organizer should encourage use of pre-fabricated material while constructing stands to ensure minimum time spent by the stand fabricators, fitters etc. The organizer should also instruct the C&D agent to disinfect the booth construction material etc. Stand Contractors should use mechanized trolleys / pallets etc. to minimize human labour while bringing / taking out material out of the halls.
- xxii. The minimum stall size should be 12 sq mtrs and preferably all stalls should be two side open. The passage width for movement of people should be a minimum of 5 metres.
- xxiii. The organizer need to ensure that a minimum of 60% of the area in an exhibition hall is left open for circulation of visitors.

▪ **Note: The clauses (xxii) and (xxiii) shall be applicable to B2C exhibitions only.**

- xxiv. The Organizers will construct minimum of one Isolation Room of minimum 3m x 3m (four sides & ceiling covered, with lockable door), which would be manned by the Fair Organiser staff adept in handling a COVID-19 patient and would have adequate facilities like PPE kit, face masks and sanitizers. The Fair /Exhibition Organizer would also ensure to identify and safely transfer the identified suspected COVID-19 patient to the isolation room till arrival of medical team or transferring to a COVID Hospital. Disinfection of premises shall be taken up if the person is found positive.
- xxv. The Fair/Exhibition Organizer should ensure that the paramedic ambulances that are inside the venue for their event are manned by full-time doctor/healthcare staff/nurses with personal protective equipment like mask, visors, gloves etc.
- xxvi. The Fair/Exhibition Organizer shall set up and chair Core COVID-19 response team with involvement of senior officials of all service partners

- and venue. The organiser should Identify and convey emergency contact numbers to all the stakeholders on repeat basis till the exhibition dates.
- xxvii. Digital payments should be encouraged.
 - xxviii. If Organizers are providing transport shuttles, they should be cleaned regularly. Avoid transportation to/fro from any Containment Zones, if identified by the Government.
 - xxix. Organizers should ensure that there should be no live music events.
 - xxx. Organizers to ensure that all eating places must be outdoors as far as feasible.

C. Measures to be adhered to by Service Providers

- i. Duly filled in Self health Declaration forms shall be collected from all Stand Fabricators
- ii. Service providers shall park their vehicles at designated places till they get clearance from Venue Owner to enter.
- iii. Vehicles shall be parked by maintaining physical distancing.
- iv. All service providers shall undergo thermal scanning at entrance of the exhibition venue by maintaining physical distancing.
- v. Cleaning and regular disinfection (using 1% sodium hypochlorite) of frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, elevator buttons, hand rails, queue barricades, seats, benches, washroom fixtures, etc.) to be made mandatory in all public utility common areas.
- vi. The bio-medical waste (mask, face covers, visors, PPEs etc.) generated may be disposed off in accordance with the hazardous waste disposal guidelines. (https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/Projects/Bio-Medical-Waste/BMW-GUIDELINES-COVID_1.pdf).
- vii. **While setting-up the Exhibition:**
 - a. Arrange maximum pre-fabrication of the confirmed stand design at own premises.
 - b. Ensure necessary physical distancing among workers, supervisory staff etc.
- viii. **While Transporting the prefabricated materials to exhibition venue:**
 - a. Sanitize the delivery vehicle and all materials before loading.
 - b. Driver and other personnel involved in transportation of material must ensure physical distancing and wear all necessary PPE.
 - c. Ensure contact-less transportation of materials to the exhibition venue.
 - d. Complete stand build up maintaining physical distancing at the site.

ix. **While Dismantling:**

- a. Sanitise the stall along with furniture, fixtures etc. before dismantling the stall.
- b. Dismantle and deliver all material back to the warehouse using sanitised vehicle and mandatory use of masks and other required PPE by the driver and other personnel.
- c. Avoid any unnecessary stopover during transit. Duly filled in Self health Declaration forms shall be collected from all Logistic Providers.
- d. Sanitise the logistics and warehouse facilities along with all equipment before use by the workers.

x. **During Pickup and Transportation:**

- a. Exhibitor goods shall be sanitized before packaging.
- b. Pick up and ensure contactless transportation of the exhibitor goods to the exhibition venue.

xi. **During Re-transportation:**

- a. Sanitise the exhibitor goods before pick up from the venue.
- b. Re-transport to the port of origin.

D. Measures to be followed by Exhibitors

- i. Aarogya Setu Mobile App is recommended for all the persons manning the stall and is mandatory for the ones with a smart-phone.
- ii. All the stalls should have hand sanitizers. They should ensure that a sufficient gap (of two yards) is maintained at all time between the people manning the stall. All the personnel at the stall should use Face Mask at all times.
- iii. Every stall should have a covered dustbin.
- iv. To maintain physical distancing the number of individuals that can be permitted in any given stall / booth at any particular time may be moderated such that the latest MHA / MoHFW guidelines on physical distancing are complied-with. This will also need to be moderated by exhibitor for the customer depending on the size of its stall and open interface for interaction with the customers.
- v. Exhibitors should encourage Digital Payment Options.

E. Measures to be followed by Visitors

- i. Aarogya Setu Mobile App is recommended for all visitors/delegates and mandatory for the ones with a smart-phone.
- ii. Visitors should pre-register themselves.
- iii. The visitors/delegates should not enter the venue ground if their temperature is not normal.

- iv. Visitors to be allowed entry only if using face cover/masks. The face cover/mask has to be worn by all, at all times, while in public places.
- v. Frisking of persons entering the venue, if planned, shall be undertaken after thermal screening. Personnel involved in frisking shall wear triple layer medical mask (in addition to gloves). Proper hand hygiene shall be maintained by such personnel every time they change their gloves.
- vi. The visitors must ensure that they maintain a sufficient distance (of about two yards) from other persons at all the time. Proper physical distancing shall be maintained while exiting the premises too.
- vii. The number of visitors inside the event venue shall be restricted in accordance with the order issued by Ministry of Home Affairs from time to time.
- viii. Seating arrangement in the exhibition halls, food courts, meetings, etc. to be made in such a way that adequate physical distancing of 6 feet is maintained
- ix. In case a person falls sick having fever, body ache, sore throat etc., he must report to the COVID help desk.
- x. Visitors should adhere to all the guidelines prescribed by the Trade Exhibition Organizer.

F. Additional SOPs for holding Conferences during Exhibitions

- i. Identify closed door conference areas for any conference sessions planned during the exhibition with seating and avoid any standing attendees. Preferably the conference sessions can be held in an Open air Conference Hall.
 - ii. Speaker / panelist chairs to be placed ensuring safe distancing.
 - iii. Ensure physical distancing for attendees and sanitization of conference area after regular intervals.
 - iv. For holding B2B meetings during the event, a suitable facility ensuring sufficient space must be created to hold the meetings. The Meeting table must be separated by a distance of at least 6 feet. Not more than two people are allowed to sit at the table at a time for the meeting. Face shield along with mask and hand gloves must be made mandatory for the B2B participants
5. The National Directives for COVID-19 Management and the relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and relevant State Governments etc. shall be strictly complied with during all activities.
