

Provisional recommendations for action and implementation of COVID - 19 protection measures in hotels and other establishments aimed at the provision of accommodation services

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In all establishments where accommodation services are provided, it is important to implement and adhere to general measures to prevent the transmission of infections. All hotel industry employees are required to comply with general measures to prevent the outbreak of infections, while hotel administrations and managers are required to implement certain administrative and organizational measures aimed at improving compliance with recommendations and their implementation in practice as well as measures proposed by the Institute of Public Health to employers, which relate to the treatment of employees and their possible illness.

In addition, there is a set of technical measures of special importance and the first one is to provide an adequate and functional ventilation system, as well as an easy access to basic personal hygiene products for guests and employees (running water and soap) and disinfectants for hands and working surface. It is also necessary to provide an adequate quantity of:

- thermometers,
- tissues,
- paper hand towels,
- medical or cotton masks
- disposable gloves,
- bin bags,
- surface disinfectant solutions,
- products for maintaining hygiene and disinfection of large surfaces,
- dispensers with hand rub sanitizer.

THE ACCOMMODATION SERVICE PROVIDER IS OBLIGED TO DETERMINE THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Given the currently available data, the greatest risk is posed by people with symptoms of respiratory infections although there is clear evidence that the role of patients with mild symptoms and people without symptoms is significantly greater than it was initially thought. When it comes to the necessary procedures, at this level of knowledge they do not differ from those intended for patients with seasonal flu.

Therefore, we should insist on tighter measures for cleaning and disinfection of shared space, rooms and sanitary blocks, as well as on posting notices and posters of the Institute of Public Health and other healthcare institutions on how to act in certain situations.

In case of symptoms of COVID-19 infection among guests, the hotel should have its own action and communication plan which should include defined procedures in case of any of the symptoms (high temperature, cough and shortness of breath) in which case:

- Guests are required to stay in the room and contact the hotel reception which further follows the protocol and recommendations of the Institute of Public Health.
- During registration, guests are given instructions (the so-called “Dear guest letter”) where the emphasis must be placed on contacting a specially appointed hotel employee who will then:
 - inform the competent doctor and/or epidemiologist,
 - ensure this person to be isolated in the room,
 - provide the person with symptoms with all the necessary comfort: delivery of food, medicine, and the provision of health care either in the room or in the nearest health centre.

Such notices and plans make guests and employees feel safe.

Informing the employees and the procurement and distribution of personal protective equipment contribute to the overall organization of the procedure and its smooth implementation, which prevents situations of spreading panic.

Proper planning, as well as effective prevention and informing of guests and employees, ensure the lowest possible risk of spreading the infection and additionally ensures the protection of the health of guests and staff, but also the proper functioning of the hotel.

GENERAL RULES FOR HOTEL AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS

Entering the hotel: Hand disinfection is mandatory for all guests upon each entry into the hotel.

Masks: Employees and guests are obliged to wear a mask and strictly take care of hand hygiene during their stay in shared space in the hotel. The mask is not required to be worn in a restaurant, but measures of physical distance must be respected.

Physical distance - During their stay at the hotel, guests must adhere to a 2 meter physical distance from other guests, unless they are members of the same family or group.

Disinfectant - At the entrances of hotel rooms (halls, reception, sports and recreational facilities, payment counters, etc.) and in the working area of employees, it is necessary to install dispensers with disinfectant (based on alcohol in a concentration of not less than 70% or other virucidal agents suitable for the skin).

Visible warnings and information for guests - At the entrances to the hotel in a visible place, it is necessary to post information on hygiene procedures or information with

guidelines on proper conduct and protection measures in the areas where guests stay or give this information to guests upon check-in or put a leaflet in accommodation unit.

Maximum number of persons in the rooms - the rules related to the maximum number of persons allowed in certain premises must be followed in accordance with the defined rules of 2 meter physical distance in relation to other guests, unless they are members of the same family or group.

Regular maintenance of space hygiene. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned as often as possible (every 2 hours). Such surfaces are e.g. door handles, chairs and armrests, tables, light switches, handrails, water taps, elevator buttons, etc.

Guidelines for general advice for space cleaning and disinfection are available at: <https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/web.repository/ijzcg-media/files/1585233255ciscenje-i-dezinfekcija-26032020-ijzcg.pdf>

RECEPTION, HALLS AND OTHER PUBLIC SPACES

Ventilation - Regularly ventilate all areas.

Reception hygiene - Reception areas should be disinfected at regular intervals (e.g. every hour), and the check-in and check-out area (touched surfaces) should be disinfected more often than other reception areas.

Physical distance at the reception – It is necessary to provide sufficient distance between the receptionists and the guest, as well as between workers, reduce the check-in/check-out time below 15 minutes (which is the definition of close contact) or if it is not possible, install screens (made of plexiglass or similar material which provides the required sanitary distance). The maximum number of people in the reception area is regulated and limited in accordance with the measures of 2 meter physical distance.

Information for guests and staff - Reception staff should receive all necessary information about COVID-19 in order to be able to prevent the possible outbreak of COVID-19 within the hotel.

Use of technologies - It is recommended to insist on the online check-in procedure, online booking and guest registration from home, contactless payment, invoice payment, scanning documents, etc. (where applicable).

Check-out - Employees at the reception are recommended to organize a schedule of check-out time in communication with the guests in order to avoid staying and grouping at the reception.

Currency exchange and ATMs - guests should be advised, where it is possible, to change and withdraw money at ATMs located outside of the reception. It is mandatory to install a disinfectant dispenser in the immediate vicinity of the ATM.

Elevators - Due to the impossibility of maintaining the distance, persons who are not sharing the same room are recommended to avoid staying in the elevator; the priority should be given to physically challenged individuals and to persons carrying luggage. It is mandatory to install a disinfectant dispenser in the immediate vicinity of the elevator. If possible and practical, use of stairs should be encouraged.

Conditions for maintaining the hygiene of sanitary facilities - It is recommended to increase cleaning, disinfection and ventilation of public sanitary facilities every two hours (and more often if necessary) and at the same time limit the use of sanitary facilities in accordance with the size and prescribed sanitary conditions.

Business centres/conference rooms - Tables and all equipment must be disinfected after use. The 2 meter physical distance between certain groups of guests must be respected.

Children's amenities - The recommendations of the Institute of Public Health regarding kindergartens and playrooms will be applied.

ACCOMMODATION UNITS

Accommodation units cleaning frequency - Cleaning and change of bed linen and towels will be performed in accordance with existing standards.

Cleaning surfaces and sanitary blocks - All surfaces that have come into contact with the guest (bedside table, table, chairs, coffee table, any furniture, amenities, telephone, remote control, etc.) must be cleaned with a suitable detergent and disinfectant. Special attention must be paid to cleaning all bathroom surfaces after the change of guests in the room.

Bed linen and towels - Used bed linen (bed linen and towels in the bathroom) must be kept in a closed container separate from the cart with clean bed linen; dirty and clean bed linen must always be separated and must not come into contact.

Information for guests – It is necessary to ensure that information/guidelines on new procedures for cleaning rooms and changing bed linen are clearly visible and accessible to guests. After each change of guests in the room, it is necessary to clean and disinfect the accommodation unit thoroughly, and increase ventilation of the accommodation unit for at least an hour.

- **Instructions for the operation of catering facilities are available at:** <https://tinyurl.com/ydamehxx> as well as at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybynmnoo> .

Where possible, food should be served to the guests instead of self-service at a buffet.

- If serving food at the table is not possible, then hygiene measures should be tighter: guests should be reminded to apply hand sanitiser at entry to the restaurant,
- Determine one employee to serve food to guests from the buffet;
- Ensure physical distance between guests who are taking food;

- Limit the number of guests present in the facility at any time to ensure physical distancing;
- avoid waiting in line or, if this is not possible, ensure maintenance of distance;

- **Instructions for the operation of commercial facilities are available at:**
<https://tinyurl.com/y8kr98ow>.

- **Recommendations for the operation of outdoor and indoor swimming pools, water parks, spa & wellness centre during the epidemic COVID-19 are available at:**
<https://tinyurl.com/ybqpw3la>.

- Instructions for the work of fitness centres and gyms are available at:
<https://tinyurl.com/y7dugm53>.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOTEL STAFF

General protective measures – It is necessary to avoid close contact with persons who show symptoms of increased body temperature, cough and/or difficult breathing as well as touching the face, mouth, nose and eyes, shaking hands and close conversation and to maintain a 2 meter physical distance. When coughing or sneezing, it is necessary to cover your mouth and nose with an elbow or tissue, which should be placed in a waste bin with a lid immediately after use, after which hands should be washed. Hands should be washed regularly with soap and water and/or use an alcohol-based or other skin-friendly disinfectant with virucidal effect according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Maximum protection of guests and hotel staff - If possible, a protective screen at the place of service and reception should be installed. Contactless credit card payments should be encouraged. During their stay in the hotel premises, guests should adhere to measures of the 2 meter physical distance in relation to other guests, unless they are members of the same family or group.

Occurrence of health problems with hotel staff - Employees who feel ill (refers to all symptoms and signs of illness, not only respiratory diseases), should not come to work, but should inform the superior and the competent health institution. Between each shift of workers, it is mandatory to perform a detailed disinfection of work surfaces as well as frequently touched surfaces in the process of work.

Information for staff - Before starting working/opening, staff should be educated about all measures implemented.

PROCEDURE IN CASE OF SUSPECTED NEW CORONAVIRUS INFECTION

In case of noticing the symptoms of coronavirus infection among hotel guests, the following steps should be taken:

- specifically determined employee should immediately contact competent epidemiologist in order to report suspected case and receive instructions on necessary procedures
- If a hotel has a doctor, immediately inform the competent doctor as well
- The suspected case is advised to stay in a room with the door closed; he/she should be provided with a surgical mask, tissues and hand sanitizers.
- Hotel staff is advised not to enter a room where there is a person suspected of having an infection
- If there is a need for contact with a guest, only one person should be determined to deal with that guest and he/she must use a protective mask, gloves and other equipment and maintain at least one meter distance from the patient, preferably two meters.
- Masks, gloves and similar protective equipment (PPE) should be placed in plastic bags immediately after use and placed in a waste bin with a lid ideally designed for infectious waste. This equipment must not be reused. After throwing protective equipment in the waste bin, employees should wash their hands with soap and water.

**PROCEDURE FOR WASHING AND CLEANING A HOTEL ROOM WHERE A
PERSON SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED TO BE INFECTED WITH
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) STAYED**

If possible, a potentially contaminated room should not be used for at least 24 hours (ideally 72h) in order to mitigate the infectivity of the virus. If the construction solution allows, the room should be ventilated during this period so that the air flow does not endanger the surrounding rooms.

Cleaning instructions:

- Before cleaning, make sure to wear a mask and gloves. If less than 24 hours have passed since emptying the room, it is necessary to wear a high-filtration N95 mask
- Touching the face and eyes during cleaning is prohibited
- During cleaning the windows should be open so as to ventilate the room
- Big surfaces such as floor should be first cleaned with a detergent and then disinfected
- Then all potentially contaminated surfaces: door handles, telephones, handles in corridors and stairwells should be wiped and disinfected
- toilets, including toilet bowl and all accessible surfaces in the toilet are cleaned with detergent and then disinfected
- No spray products should be used for applying a disinfectant as splashes may occur which may further spread the virus.
- Bed linen, pillows, quilts and other fabrics should be removed in a special plastic bag and taken to a machine washing (60 - 90 °C).
- After cleaning, the used cloth should be washed at 90 °C.
- Gloves and mask are removed last, placed in a plastic bag, after which hands should be washed with soap and water and apply hand sanitizer
- Waste collected during cleaning should be disposed of in waste bins as soon as possible
- Immediately after cleaning it is desirable to take a shower and change clothes
- Windows remain open for some time
- When using cleaning products it is important to:

- Follow the instructions for use given by the manufacturer of the product
- Avoid contact with eyes and skin and keep out of reach of children
- Do not mix different products for cleaning and ventilate rooms where a cleaning agent is used
- For disinfection of contaminated surfaces or materials, it is necessary to avoid the use of sprays and leave the product on the surface for some time in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

These recommendations are based on the European Commission's guidelines: "COVID-19 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION: EU Guidance for the progressive resumption of tourism services and for health protocols in hospitality establishments" available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication_tourismservices_healthprotocols_hr.pdf