

United Nations Medical Directors

Reducing the Risk of Acquiring Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): Recommendations for UN Personnel

6 February 2020

(Note: This document may be frequently updated and is valid from date above)

- The following occupational health recommendations are provided by the UN Medical Directors to all Organizations and UN personnel to reduce the risk of UN personnel acquiring 2019-nCoV.
- These recommendations should be applied to all UN personnel.
- As this is a rapidly evolving outbreak, be sure to check <https://hr.un.org/page/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> for the latest version.
- For any questions, contact the Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health (DHMOSH)'s Public Health team at dos-dhmosh-public-health@un.org

UN Personnel Risk Categories

UN Medical Directors Recommendations

- | UN Personnel Risk Categories | UN Medical Directors Recommendations |
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| 1 All UN Personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All UN personnel should have comprehensive awareness of 2019-nCoV prevention strategies including adherence to hand hygiene measures, respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes), social distancing (min 3 feet or 1 meter), signs and symptoms of 2019-nCoV, staying away from ill persons and staying home when ill. Detailed information is available https://hr.un.org/page/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov• Wherever they are, all UN personnel should be aware of how they and their family can seek medical attention when it is needed.• Please note that according to the WHO, individuals without any respiratory symptoms are not required to wear a medical mask, as no evidence is available on its usefulness to protect non-sick persons. However, masks might be worn in some countries according to local cultural habits. If masks are used, ensure best practices should be followed on how to wear, remove, and dispose of them and on hand hygiene action after removal (https://www.who.int/publications-detail/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-health-care-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak) |
| 2 UN Personnel who are Travelling or Plan to Travel to Mainland China | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When possible, defer all non-essential travel to, or meetings in mainland China given the current 2019-nCoV outbreak situation. While the WHO does not recommend travel and trade restrictions, if possible defer all non-essential travel to, or meetings in mainland China. Travelers should be provided contents of travel advisories issued from WHO and DHMOSH. See https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/travel-advice and https://hr.un.org/page/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov
Note that this is a rapidly evolving situation, as such, recommendations may change as new information becomes available. |

2 UN Personnel who are Travelling or Plan to Travel to Mainland China (con't)

- **If you must travel to mainland China, pay attention to your health during your travel and after you leave**
 - Ensure to receive your agency's travel clearance or consult with a healthcare provider before travel.
 - Avoid travel if you are sick, or have fever and cough.
 - Monitor your health for at least 14 days after your travel.
 - Seek medical care immediately if you begin to develop fever or respiratory symptoms such as shortness of breath or cough. Remember to share your previous travel history with your health care provider and make every effort to inform them by phone prior to visiting a medical facility.
- **Keep up to date with local health advice before and during your travel**
 - For all travelers, please be aware that local authorities may begin to implement travel restrictions and health screening measures for travelers entering or exiting the country. Some countries may have their own furlough restrictions and perhaps might even have halted flights which would make travel difficult.
 - All UN personnel should check with the destination countries' embassy, consulate or Ministry of Health and keep up to date with local health advice before and during your travel. You should also comply with any screening measures put in place by local authorities.

3 UN Personnel who Recently Returned from Mainland China

- **UN personnel returning from mainland China should be advised to return to work ONLY if they are completely free from symptoms. They should be advised to monitor their health daily for 14 days after travel and to seek medical attention should they develop any signs and symptoms.**
- HR personnel and managers are encouraged to exercise flexibility around **remote working arrangements in case asymptomatic staff want to self-quarantine and work from home for 14 days post travel.**
- Individuals who are ill must be advised to stay at home and not come into the workplace if they develop symptoms. They should only return to work when free of symptoms and/or once cleared by a medical professional.
- Seek medical care immediately if you begin to develop fever or respiratory symptoms such as shortness of breath or cough. Remember to share your previous travel history with your health care provider and make every effort to inform them by phone prior to visiting a medical facility.

4 All UN Health Care Workers

- **Provide all UN personnel with preventative information on 2019-nCoV** so as to reduce their general risk of acquiring an acute respiratory infection. Encourage all UN personnel to receive the influenza vaccination.
 - Within UN healthcare facilities, emphasize standard **infection prevention and control practices in clinics and hospitals.** Always follow appropriate infection prevention and control measures and routinely and consistently implement standard precautions regardless of patient's diagnosis. In addition, apply contact and droplet precautions. For aerosol generating procedures please utilize airborne precautions. For more info, see [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected)
 - Become familiar with WHO and DHMOSH guidance for **management of severe acute respiratory infection** (See [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/clinical-management-of-severe-acute-respiratory-infection-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/clinical-management-of-severe-acute-respiratory-infection-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected)) Know how to administer supportive care to
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4 All UN Health Care Workers (con't)

- suspect/confirmed 2019-nCoV cases, especially complicated cases. Participate in WHO's free Open Course Online Training on the management of severe acute respiratory infection available at <https://openwho.org/courses/severe-acute-respiratory-infection>
- UN health facility in the duty station should **develop specific protocols to identify, triage, and manage suspect 2019-nCoV cases**, in coordination with local health authorities and local referral hospitals. Such plans should be exercised periodically.
 - **Ensure that the necessary PPE for health care workers** to manage cases of 2019-nCoV is available and accessible.
 - UN medical staff should review, familiarize and be **trained to don and doff the PPE needed for management of 2019-nCoV cases**. For more information, see [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected-20200125](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected-20200125). Healthcare workers **using an N95 respirator must be fit tested before use**.

5 All UN Administrators

- **Review the 2019-nCoV DHMOSH/UNMD Preparedness Checklist For All Duty Stations** (available at <https://hr.un.org/page/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>) to evaluate completeness of your internal plan.
- Ensure all UN personnel have **comprehensive awareness of 2019-nCoV prevention strategies**. A standard presentation for staff is available at <https://hr.un.org/page/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> and can be adapted for your organization/duty station's use.
- Develop, update and test **business continuity plans** that will allow for performance of critical functions with reduced number of UN personnel.
- In alignment with local health authorities, develop **workplace protocol for how to manage** any UN personnel, who meet the WHO/local health authorities definition of a suspect or confirmed 2019-nCoV case or their contacts. (For WHO case and contact definitions, see [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-surveillance-for-human-infection-with-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-surveillance-for-human-infection-with-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)) Keep staff informed of these protocols.
- For **administrative guidelines related to management of staff** during this outbreak, see section under "administrators and managers" at <https://hr.un.org/page/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
- If your duty station has UN health care workers, ensure the **appropriate PPE for UN healthcare workers is available** and accessible.

6 UN Personnel Involved in Environmental Cleaning

- Adhere to **WHO recommendations for cleaning/disinfection of environment and equipment** including linens and utensils. For more info, see [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected)

References:

- WHO's 2019-nCoV webpage: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- UN DHMOSH's 2019-nCoV webpage: <https://hr.un.org/page/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>