

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

MHA issues SOPs for movement of Indian Nationals stranded outside the country, as well as, for those persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad for urgent reasons

New Delhi, May 24, 2020

Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued a Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for movement of Indian Nationals stranded outside the country and for those persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad for urgent reasons. This order is in supersession of MHA order, dated 05.05.2020, on the same subject. These SOPs would also apply to passengers arriving through the land borders.

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, international travel of passengers has been prohibited under lockdown measures. As per information available, many Indian Nationals who had travelled to different countries before the lockdown, on various purposes such as employment, studies/ internships, tourism, business, etc., are stranded abroad. Due to their prolonged stay abroad, they are facing distress and are desirous of returning to India urgently. Apart from the above cases, there are other Indian Nationals who need to visit India in medical emergencies or death of a family member. There are also many persons stranded in India, who desirous to travel abroad urgently for various purposes.

For travel of Indian Nationals stranded abroad, priority will be given to compelling cases in distress, including migrant workers/ labourers who have been laid off, short term visa holders faced with expiry of visas, persons with medical emergency/ pregnant women/ elderly, those required to return to India due to death of family member, and students.

Such persons would have to register themselves with the Indian Missions in the country where they are stranded, along with necessary details as prescribed by MEA. They would travel to India by non scheduled commercial flights as allowed by Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA) and ships as allowed by Department of Military Affairs (DMA)/ Ministry of Shipping (MOS). The cost of travel would have to be borne by the travellers. Further, only those who are asymptomatic would be allowed to travel to India.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) would prepare flight/ ship wise database of all such travellers, including relevant details and share with the respective State/ UT in advance. Further, MEA would designate their State/ UT wise nodal officers, who would co-ordinate with the nodal officers designated for this purpose by the respective States/ UTs. The schedule (day, place and time of arrival) of the incoming flight/ ship would displayed by MEA on their online digital platform, on at least two days notice.

The Guidelines for international arrivals, including for quarantine arrangements, issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), have also been attached in the link below along with MHA SOPs. According to Health Ministry guidelines, before boarding all travellers would have to give an undertaking that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days – self paid 7-day institutional quarantine, followed by 7-day isolation at home.

For persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad, would have to apply to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) or to any agency designated by MoCA for this purpose,

along with necessary details, including the places of departure and arrival, as prescribed by MoCA. The travel from India would be on non-scheduled commercial flights that have been allowed by MoCA for bringing back stranded Indian Nationals from abroad. The cost of travel would have to be borne by the travellers.

Travel to destination countries would be allowed for those who are citizens of that country; who hold visa of at least one year duration of that country; and green card or OCI card holder. In cases of medical emergency or death in the family, Indian Nationals holding six month visa can also be allowed. Before the tickets of such persons are confirmed. MoCA will ensure that the destination country allows entry of such persons in that country.

Indian seafarers/ crew seeking to accept contracts to serve on vessels abroad, can travel on the non-scheduled commercial flights departing from India under the Vande Bharat Mission or other flights arranged by their employers, subject to clearance given by the Ministry of Shipping.

At the time of boarding the flight, MoCA will ensure that all travellers undergo thermal screening as per health protocol. Only asymptomatic travellers would be allowed to board the flight. While on board the flight, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. would have to be observed by everyone on board.

To see the SOP Document and Health Ministry Guidelines↓

VG/SNC/VM

No.40-3/2020-DM-I (A)
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs

North Block, New Delhi-110001
Dated 24th May, 2020

ORDER

In continuation of Ministry of Home Affairs' Orders No.40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 17th May, 2020, 19th May, 2020 and 20th May, 2020 and in exercise of the powers, conferred under Section 10(2)(l) of the Disaster Management Act, the undersigned, in his capacity as Chairperson, National Executive Committee, hereby issue Standard Operating Protocol (SOP), for ***movement of Indian Nationals stranded outside the country and of specified persons to travel abroad, as Annexed***, in supersession of MHA order of even number dated 5th May, 2020 to Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, State /Union Territory Governments and State /Union Territory Authorities with the directions for its strict implementation.


Home Secretary

To: (As per list attached)

1. The Secretaries of Ministries /Departments of Government of India.
2. The Chief Secretaries/Administrators of States/Union Territories.

Copy to:

- i) All Members of the National Executive Committee.
- ii) Member Secretary, National Disaster Management Authority.

**Annexure to Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) Order No.40-3/2020-DM-I (A)
dated 24th May, 2020**

A. Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for movement of Indian Nationals stranded outside the country

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, international travel of passengers has been prohibited under MHA's Orders related to lockdown measures. As per information available, many Indian Nationals who had travelled to different countries before the lockdown, on various purposes such as employment, studies/ internships, tourism, business, etc., are stranded abroad. Due to their prolonged stay abroad, they are facing distress and are desirous of returning to India urgently. Apart from the above cases, there are other Indian Nationals who need to visit India in medical emergencies or death of a family member.

2. In order to facilitate the movement of such Indian Nationals, the following SoP is hereby laid down:

- i. Such persons will register themselves with the Indian Missions in the country where they are stranded, along with necessary details as prescribed by MEA.
- ii. They will travel to India by non scheduled commercial flights as allowed by Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA); and ships as allowed by Department of Military Affairs (DMA)/ Ministry of Shipping (MOS). Only those crew and staff, who are tested COVID-19 negative, will be allowed to operate these flights/ ships.
- iii. Priority will be given to compelling cases in distress, including migrant workers/ labourers who have been laid off, short term visa holders faced with expiry of visas, persons with medical emergency/ pregnant women/ elderly, those required to return to India due to death of family member, and students.
- iv. The cost of travel, as specified by the carrier, will be borne by such travellers.
- v. Based on the registrations received, MEA will prepare flight/ ship wise database of all such travellers, including details such as name, age, gender, mobile phone number, place of residence, place of final destination; and information on RT-PCR test taken and its result. This data base will be shared by MEA with the respective State/ UT in advance.
- vi. MEA will designate State/ UT wise nodal officers, who will co-ordinate with the nodal officers designated for this purpose by the respective States/ UTs.
- vii. MEA will display with at least two days notice, the schedule (day, place and time of arrival) of the incoming flight/ ship, on their online digital platform.
- viii. All travellers will also be required to give an undertaking that they are making the journey at their own risk.
- ix. Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India.

- x. The Guidelines for international arrivals, including for quarantine arrangements, dated May 24, 2020, issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) will be followed. A copy of the Guidelines is enclosed.

B. Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for movement of persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, international travel of passengers has been prohibited under MHA's Orders related to lockdown measures. As per information available, many persons are stranded in India who desirous to travel abroad urgently for various purposes.

2. In order to facilitate the movement of such persons, the following SoP is hereby laid down:

- i. Such persons will apply to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) or to any agency designated by MoCA for this purpose, along with necessary details, including the places of departure and arrival, as prescribed by MoCA.
- ii. Only those persons shall be allowed to travel to the destination countries, who are citizens of that country; who hold visa of at least one year duration of that country; and green card or OCI card holder. In cases of medical emergency or death in the family, Indian Nationals holding six month visa can also be allowed.
- iii. The travel from India shall be by on the non-scheduled commercial flights that are allowed by MoCA for bringing back stranded Indian Nationals from abroad.
- iv. Indian seafarers/ crew seeking to accept contracts to serve on vessels abroad, can travel on the non-scheduled commercial flights departing from India under the Vande Bharat Mission or other flights arranged by their employers subject to clearance given by the Ministry of Shipping.
- v. Before the tickets of such persons are confirmed, MoCA will ensure that the destination country allows entry of such persons in that country. The conditions, if any, imposed by the destination country, will have to be fulfilled by the person intending to travel.
- vi. The cost of travel, as specified by the carrier, will be borne by such travellers.
- vii. At the time of boarding the flight, MoCA will ensure that all travellers undergo thermal screening as per health protocol. Only asymptomatic travellers would be allowed to board the flight.
- viii. While on board the flight, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline staff, crew and all passengers.



F. No. Z.28015/19/2020-EMR (Pt.)
Government of India
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated the 24th May, 2020

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Government of India has been taking various measures towards management of COVID 19. As part of graded response various travel related restrictions were put in place and guidelines issued from time to time as per evolving situation. A nationwide lockdown was enforced since 25th March, 2020 and orders were issued under Disaster Management Act. States have been advised to implement stringent measures to break the chain of transmission and contain COVID19.

Certain activities have since been allowed including trains for migrant workers and evacuation of Indians stranded in other countries. Regular train services are also being resumed in phases and limited services of domestic airlines are scheduled to commence from 25th May, 2020.

With a view to harmonize health related instruction during such travel, the guidelines as mentioned in annexures are hereby issued.

States/UTs are requested to implement the aforesaid guidelines. However, they may develop and implement their own protocol as per their assessment of the situation with a view to effectively contain COVID 19.

This is issued with the approval of Competent Authority.

Encl:

- (1) Guidelines for International arrivals
- (2) Guidelines for domestic travel (air/train/inter-state bus travel)


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To

- Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs
- Secretary (Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Highways and Road Transport)
- Chairman, Land Port Authority of India

Government of India
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Guidelines for international arrivals

- i. Before boarding, all travellers shall give an undertaking that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days - 7 days paid institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by 7 days isolation at home with self-monitoring of health.
- ii. Only for exceptional and compelling reasons such as cases of human distress, pregnancy, death in family, serious illness and parent(s) accompanied by children below 10 years, as assessed by the receiving states, home quarantine may be permitted for 14 days. Use of Aarogya Setu app shall be mandatory in such cases.
- iii. Dos and Don'ts shall be provided along with ticket to the travelers by the agencies concerned.
- iv. All passengers shall be advised to download Arogya Setu app on their mobile devices.
- v. At the time of boarding the flight/ ship, only asymptomatic travelers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.
- vi. Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India.
- vii. Self-declaration form in duplicate shall be filled by the person in the flight/ship and a copy of the same will be given to Health and Immigration officials present at the airport/ seaport/ landport. The form may also be made available on Aarogya Setu app.
- viii. Suitable precautionary measures such as environmental sanitation and disinfection shall be ensured at the airports as well as within the flights.
- ix. During boarding and at the airports, all possible measures to ensure social distancing to be ensured.
- x. Suitable announcement about COVID-19 including precautionary measures to be followed shall be made at airports/port and in flights/ships and during transit.
- xi. While on board the flight/ ship, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline/ ship staff, crew and all passengers.
- xii. On arrival, thermal screening would be carried out in respect of all the passengers by the Health officials present at the airport/ seaport/ landport.
- xiii. The passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facility as per health protocol.
- xiv. The remaining passengers shall be taken to suitable institutional quarantine facilities, to be arranged by the respective State/ UT Governments.
- xv. These passengers shall be kept under institutional quarantine for a minimum period of 7 days. They shall be tested as per ICMR protocol available at <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Revisedtestingguidelines.pdf>
If they test positive, they shall be assessed clinically.
 - a. If they are assessed as mild cases, they will be allowed home isolation or isolated in the Covid Care Centre (both public & private facilities) as appropriate.

- b. Those having moderate or severe symptoms will be admitted to dedicated COVID Health facilities and managed accordingly.

If found negative, they shall be advised to further isolate themselves at home and self-monitor their health for 7 days.

- xvi. In case, any symptoms develop they shall inform the district surveillance officer or the state/national call center (1075).

NOTE: States can also develop their own protocol with regards to quarantine and isolation as per their assessment.