

Government of India
Ministry of Culture

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SOPs for Re-opening of Museums, Exhibitions and Art Galleries, on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19

1. Background

Covid-19 pandemic has led to closure of museums worldwide; however museums have started reopening in several countries. Since the festive season is here, it has been decided to reopen all museums, art galleries and exhibitions under Ministry of Culture with effect from 10 November, 2020 so that the public can once again enjoy exploring rich cultural heritage of India. In order to allow museums and art galleries to re-open and resume their operations and activities, it is essential that strict precautionary measures are observed by all staff members and visitors to prevent further transmission of COVID-19.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This document outlines the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for museums, art galleries, temporary and permanent exhibitions, to conduct safe operations upon re-opening and prevent the spread of COVID-19. These SOPs are to be followed by all staff members and visitors of museums and art galleries.
- 2.2 No museums and art galleries falling within the containment zones shall be permitted to re-open.
- 2.3 States/UTs may consider proposing additional protocols as per their field assessment.

3. SOPs related to Re-opening of Museums and Art Galleries

3.1 General Dos and Don'ts

Following basic principles can help prevent the spread of the disease. These measures need to be observed by all employees and visitors at all times.

Dos

- i. Adequate physical distancing of at least 6 feet to be followed at all times.
- ii. Use of face covers/masks to be made mandatory at all times.
- iii. Sanitization of premises to be done on a regular basis.

- iv. Availability of hand sanitizers, preferably in the touch-free mode, at entry and exit points as well as common areas within the premises.
- v. Adequate dustbins must be provided at key points, with specially marked dustbins for proper disposal of masks, gloves or other equipment, especially those used by cleaning staff.
- vi. 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.
- vii. Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest to state and district helpline.
- viii. Installation & use of *AarogyaSetu* App shall be advised to all visitors and staff having compatible mobile phones.
- ix. Periodical public announcements should be made advising the visitors to follow standard protocols such as maintaining safe distance, covering face with mask, regular hand sanitization etc.
- x. Designate on-site safety officer to report unsafe conditions in the premises, immediately.
- xi. Management authorities of each museum/art gallery may establish a clear chain of command in case of emergency situations.
- xii. In case of a suspect or confirmed case in the premises:
 - a. Place the ill person in a room or area where they are isolated from others.
 - b. Provide a mask/face cover till such time he/she is examined by a doctor.
 - c. Immediately inform the nearest medical facility (hospital/clinic) or call the state or district helpline.
 - d. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the designated public health authority (district RRT/treating physician) and accordingly further action be initiated regarding management of case, his/her contacts and need for disinfection.
 - e. Thorough disinfection of the premises to be taken up if the person is found positive.

Don'ts

- i. Use of audio guides to be suspended unless these can be disinfected after every single use.
- ii. Lift operation to be limited; preferably reserved for physically challenged or elderly persons. Crowding to be avoided.

- iii. Vehicles will only be permitted to the extent of parking space while observing due physical distancing norms. Priority will be given to vehicles of staff/visitors with prior permission of museum authorities.
- iv. Use of digital(touch based) technology to be limited except in cases where disinfection can be ensured after every single use.

3.2 Guidelines for Cleaning

- i. Frequency of cleaning and disinfection of premises to be increased, especially frequently-touched surfaces and items.
- ii. All indoor areas such as galleries, entrance lobby, corridors and staircases, elevators, security guard booths, cafeteria, to be cleaned with prescribed disinfectant as per latest norms, such as disinfectant with 1% sodium hypochlorite or phenolic disinfectants.
- iii. All seats, hand railings, washroom areas, braille signage, door knobs, dustbins, etc., to be regularly cleaned.
- iv. For metallic surfaces like door handles, security locks, keys etc.,70% alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach (Sodium Hypochlorite) is not suitable.
- v. High contact surfaces (elevator buttons, handrails, call buttons, elevator handrails, public counters, intercom systems, telephone, printers/scanners and other office machines prescribed disinfectant as per latest norms shall be used for regular cleaning twice a day(linen/absorbable cloth soaked in 1% sodium hypochlorite can be used).
- vi. Frequently touched areas like table tops, chair handles, pens, diary files, keyboards, mouse, mouse pad, tea/coffee/water dispensing machines etc. shall be specially cleaned.
- vii. All cleaning measures taken, may be implemented in a way that does not damage the heritage value/old surfaces of the museum/art gallery .

3.3 Guidelines for Purchase of Tickets

- i. For purchase of entry tickets, non-cash payment methods like online ticket purchase, contactless card, UPI applications or mobile wallets are advised.
- ii. Sale of tickets at museums/art galleries to be kept to bare minimum, to avoid human interaction.
- iii. Pre-booked time slots could be introduced to reduce the number of visitors in locations at the same time.
- iv. Floor markers shall be used for physical distancing during queue management at the ticket counter.
- v. UV-c/UV-d sterilizing box to be made available in the ticket counter for exchange of currency notes and printed tickets.

3.4 Guidelines for Visitor Safety

Dos

- i. Temperature screening of all visitors to be implemented.
- ii. Contact details of all visitors to be recorded to ensure tracking in case any positive cases are found in the museum/art gallery.
- iii. Visitors coming in vehicles may keep their belongings in their vehicles to avoid baggage checks at the entrance.
- iv. Use of face covers/masks to be made mandatory at all times.
- v. Body and baggage screening will be done by CISF, who should be equipped with PPEs, Face Shield, etc.
- vi. The hand baggage of all the visitors should be properly sanitized before allowing them in or keeping them in a cloak room.
- vii. Adequate physical distance between visitors to be ensured through the following:
 - Use of floor markers (or other forms of barricades) to guide visitors and maintain a distance of 1.5-meter between each individual.
 - Visitor numbers to be limited to avoid over-crowding. Social distancing is a must. No crowding should be permitted in the galleries, batches of no more than 20 to 25 persons are desirable in a single gallery.
 - Areas where visitors are likely to congregate (such as toilets, stair cases and other common areas) should be identified and measures put in place to disperse them (e.g. stationing MTS staff at these points to usher them along).
 - Holding area with seats if any, should be marked for seating as per social distancing norms.
 - Benches provided for seating of senior citizens in galleries should be marked as per social distancing.
- viii. All visitors should carry online ticket as either printed or digital copy.
- ix. Visitors may be provided with inexpensive disposable gloves at the entrance of gallery to facilitate safe touch while handling digital exhibits
- x. Time slots may be implemented, if possible, to prevent over-crowding. Limits on number of visitors will be introduced by each Museum/Gallery.
- xi. Maximum number of visitors per exhibition room will be defined in a way that allows a safety distance of 1.5 m between each visitor.
- xii. Separate flows of entrances and exits to be maintained and clearly communicated one-way routes and space queuing systems may be introduced to manage the flow of visitors.
- xiii. Museums and galleries are encouraged to utilize their outdoor spaces and provide more outdoor art&culture experiences than indoors.
- xiv. Museums and galleries should also limit the use of their lecture halls, seminar rooms, conference centres and event spaces.
- xv. Sufficient liquid soap and water arrangements to be made in wash rooms preferably with foot operated devices/sensor based systems.

Don'ts

- i. Entry of senior citizens, vulnerable groups, pregnant women, infants and toddlers should be discouraged in closed spaces.
- ii. Access should be denied to persons showing symptoms of the disease.
- iii. Guided tours should be avoided. If at all permitted, these may be restricted to groups having up to 10 persons, with adequate social distancing.
- iv. No group photos should be permitted.

3.5 Guidelines for Staff Safety

Dos

- i. Ensure staff have access to, and are using personal protective equipment such as reusable cloth masks.
- ii. Adequate stock of Hand sanitizers to be provided to staff.
- iii. Mandatory temperature checking to be done twice daily for all staff, once on arrival and a second time thereafter, the results of which shall be recorded.
- iv. All staff/officials to be advised to take care of their own health and look out for symptoms such as fever, respiratory problems and, if feeling unwell, should leave the workplace immediately after informing.
- v. A detailed planning activity and roster should be in place. Where possible, staggered timings/working from home may be explored.
- vi. Flexible working arrangements can be implemented with each department divided into two or three teams.
- vii. All contractors and their manpower including labour working within the premises, parking area, or those managing visitor amenities, shall also ensure the wearing of masks, regular washing of hands and adequate physical distancing.
- viii. They shall also ensure cleanliness of the areas under their jurisdiction and of all equipment being used by them.
- ix. All office vehicles to be sanitized on a daily basis, preferable twice a day.

Don'ts

- i. Gathering of five or more persons at any one spot in the premises and in the canteen to be avoided.
- ii. Entry of visitors in the office areas to be avoided completely.

3.6 Guidelines for Cafeteria

- i. Tables in cafeteria should not be crowded; adequate distance to be maintained between seats.
- ii. Services in the cafeteria may be restricted to serving only tea/coffee from vending machines and dry packed food items only.
- iii. Use of disposable cutlery and crockery to be encouraged.
- iv. Water dispenser, if any, should be used in such a manner as to avoid littering. Staff may bring their own water in recyclable bottles.
- v. Littering must not take place and should be strictly monitored.
- vi. Food & drink should only be consumed within the cafeteria zone and is strictly prohibited in the museum/gallery areas.

3.6 Guidelines for Adequate Training of Staff

- i. Museum and gallery staff to be trained for advising visitors on necessary dos and don'ts.
- ii. Staff should also be trained for regular cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces.
- iii. Disinfection protocols should be strictly followed in the building/exhibition rooms as per guidelines.
- iv. Training on correct procedure of wearing triple layer mask, reminders for frequent hand washing and observing physical distancing to be provided to all staff members.

3.7 Guidelines for Reception and Security Staff

- i. Security staff will be present at the reception desk and in the museum rooms/galleries to ensure that there is sufficient distance between the visitor and the works on display.
- ii. They will also ensure there is sufficient distance between visitors themselves.
- iii. They will look out for visitors who appear unwell and discourage them to go around the premises.

3.8 Guidelines for Display of Signage

- i. Signage with graphics are to be displayed at strategic locations (entrance gates, all floors, corridors etc.) for visitors' information about Dos & Don'ts related to observing social distancing, and non-contact mode of operation of exhibits.
- ii. The signage may be displayed in both English and local language of the state.

3.9 Guidelines for Air-Conditioning/Cooling

For air-conditioning/ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which, inter alia, emphasizes the following:

- i. Temperature Setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30°C.
- 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.
- v. Cross ventilation should be adequate.

3.10 Anti-stigma Behaviour

COVID-19 related stigmatization or unruly behaviour should be dealt with strictly by coordination between museum/gallery manager(s) and the local authorities.

4. The National Directives for COVID-19 Management and the relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, State/UT Governments, etc. shall be strictly complied with during all activities and operations.

5. These guidelines shall come into effect immediately, and shall continue to be in effect until further orders. While the museums, exhibitions and art galleries under Ministry of Culture would be reopened from 10 November, 2020 onwards, others can be reopened as per convenience and in tune with relevant State/city /local laws, rules and regulations/unlock guidelines in force.
