

# ESIC Issues Guidelines for COVID-19 Safety Measures at Workplace

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Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, and Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State (I/C) for Labour & Employment, jointly released Safe Workplace Guidelines for Industry & Establishment to combat Covid-19 in here today. Dr. V. K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog, under whose constant guidance these guidelines have been prepared, also joined the release as Guest of Honour.

Shri Heera Lal Samariya, Secretary, Labour & Employment, Ms. Anuradha Prasad, Director General, ESIC, Smt. Aarti Ahuja, Additional Secretary, MoH&FW and Prof. (Dr.) Sunil Kumar, DGHS and ESI Corporation Members also graced the occasion. The Office bearers of Industry/Establishment Associations, Trade Unions and representatives of State Governments joined the release online across the country.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister lauded the importance of the guidelines and informed about the steps undertaken by Govt. of India in combating Covid-19 pandemic. He emphasized upon the need of maintaining the social distancing at workplaces and to follow the safety guidelines issued by MoH&FW time to time. He appreciated the efforts undertaken by ESIC in fighting Covid-19 and for providing quality Covid-19 care to general public in ESIC Hospitals across India. He urged industries and establishments to adhere to the safety guidelines issued and to make necessary modifications/changes at workplaces and process accordingly to maintain continuity in business activities with keeping workforce safe.

During his address, Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar hailed the recently passed three Labour Codes. He said that with passage of these bills now more workers will get the benefits of social security. He further said that these bills will also ensure the ease of doing business. He informed that ESIC has been working continuously since its inception to provide social security to its Insured Persons, who are low income workers and now its reach is going to increase many folds from its present approximately 12 Crore beneficiaries base with passage of Social Security Code, as the ESI Scheme will be implemented in the entire country as against the Notified Districts of the country, at present. Shri Gangwar informed that ESIC has taken number of measures to provide financial relief and health protection to Insured Workers as well general public during the covid pandemic. He intimated that the rate of unemployment relief payable under Atal Bimit Kalyna Yojna has been doubled from 25% to 50% of average wages with relaxation in qualifying criteria for job loss during 24.3.2020 to 31.12.2020. Earlier, ESIC has allowed employers to defer payment of contribution for the month of March & April to 15th of May 2020 without levy of any penalty.

Further ESIC is actively contributing in the treatment of Covid-19. A total of 23 ESIC Hospitals with around 3597 beds across India functioned as COVID-19 Dedicated Hospitals to exclusively provide COVID medical services to the general public of the area. Further, a total of 555 ICU/HDU Beds with 213 Ventilators have also been made available in these Hospitals. The Minister also informed about operationalization of Covid Hospital at ESIC Hospital, Bihta having facility of 500 beds and 125 ICU beds. ESIC Medical College & Hospitals at Faridabad (Haryana), Sanath Nagar, Hyderabad (Telangana), Gulbarga (Karnataka), K.K.Nagar (Chennai), Rajaji Nagar (Bangaluru) and ESIC PGIMSR, Basaidarapur

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## **Making Corporate India Comply**

(Delhi) have started ICMR approved in-house Covid-19 lab test service. Convalescent Plasma Therapy treatment is being provided at ESIC Medical College Faridabad (Haryana) and Sanath Nagar, Hyderabad (Telangana).

Dr. V.K Paul, Member, NITI Aayog informed that workplace guidelines for industrial workers are of great significance in curbing the spread of COVID-19 disease to industrial workforce of our country. This is playing a critical role in ensuring that production and economy of the country is not deterred by the pandemic. At the same time, the industrial workers and their families should remain safe and free of fear. These guidelines are very timely and should be disseminated and embraced widely.

About Safe workplace guidelines for Industry & Establishment to combat Covid-19;

The guidelines have been prepared as a comprehensive planning guidance for employers and workers to use it to help identify risk levels of Covid-19 at individual workplace settings in their premises and to determine appropriate control measures. These guidelines are in the form of a booklet which consolidates all important measures into a ready reckoner of action points to make the workplace safe Based on the bulwark of infection control measures like respiratory hygiene, frequent hand washing, social distancing and frequent sanitization of the workplace. It details the structural and administrative measures and HR policies that can be used to control the spread of Covid-19 at the workplace. Guidance for the assessment, categorization and mitigation of risk related to varied work related exposures to Covid-19 and contingency plan has also been provided in the guidelines. Isolation and management of sickness at the workplace has been dealt with in detail. Dos and don'ts for social behavior have also been listed for all the stakeholders in the safety guidelines.

Shri Gangwar urged the business community and workforce to follow the guidelines to stop the spread of Covid-19 pandemic and maintain the continuity of the business activities.

ESI Scheme in India;

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation is a pioneer Social Security organization providing comprehensive social security benefits like reasonable Medical Care and a range of Cash Benefits in times of need such as employment injury, sickness, death etc. It is covering about 3.49 Crores of family units of workers and providing matchless cash benefits and reasonable medical care to its 13.56 crore beneficiaries. Today, its infrastructure has increased many folds with 1520 Dispensaries (including mobile dispensaries)/307 ISM Units and 159 ESI Hospitals, 793 Branch/Pay Offices and 64 Regional & Sub-Regional Offices. The ESI Scheme today stands implemented in 566 districts in 34 states and Union Territories of the country.