COVID-19 RECOMMENDED CONTROL MEASURES FOR WAREHOUSING

The outbreak of COVID-19 worldwide requires some changes to warehouse operating procedures. It is paramount to provide guidance to personnel to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to protect the most vulnerable people of concern, while also maintaining efficient operations.

The main objective of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to provide guidance on the control measures to be put in place at areas/points in and around warehouses to limit exposure to COVID-19.

WAREHOUSE GUIDANCE

- The number of personnel in the warehouse should be reduced to the minimum level possible.
- Loader/porter groups to be reduced to a maximum of 15 persons per one group. This may slow down the work, but it serves to maintain social distancing during loading/offloading. Groups to be staggered in shifts and only those who are assigned to a shift will be allowed to access the warehouse.
- The requirement for surge capacity labour is predictable and must be prepared for in advance.
- Proper sensitisation and planning with all warehouse parties/stakeholders is essential to avoid misunderstanding of procedures. Use communication tools like posters/signs to clearly explain processes and responsibilities.

AT MAIN GATES TO THE WAREHOUSES

The procedure for minimising risk at the main gates is as follows:

- The security guard, wearing a face mask, measures temperature using a non-contact infrared temperature device for all persons intending to access the warehouse.
    - Only those with temperatures below or equal to 37 °C will be granted access to the warehouse.
    - Those with temperatures above 37°C will not be accepted to enter the warehouse and instead will be requests to self-isolate and asked to wear a mask. The guard informs the warehouse manager who informs designated health personnel in the region.
- All main entrances to the warehouse are to have hand washing facilities with clean water, soap or wash solution of 0.05% bleach composition.
- Hand washing and disinfection is mandatory for all personnel before entering the warehouse, including truck drivers and driver assistants.
- Drivers, including truck drivers and passengers/assistants, shall disembark the vehicle, wash hands, sanitise and have their temperatures taken by security guards.
- Registration of loaders is always carried out by the loaders themselves at a designated place, at a distance from the guardhouse, to avoid congestion at the gate and maintain social distancing.
- Guards are to follow the proper procedures of wearing/removing facemasks, gloves and taking temperatures, and to keep a social distance of at least 1 meter while carrying out screening process.

TRUCK ARRIVAL AND HANDLING

- In order to limit the physical touching of documents from external sources/service providers, the personnel handling the documents at all levels/points should maintain regular sanitisation of hands. Wearing gloves for office related tasks should be discouraged because this tends to create a false sense of security, decreasing the regularity of sanitisation and increasing the likelihood of contamination.
- Upon arrival of the truck, the driver registers with either the traffic marshal or security guard, with the entry recorded on a traffic marshal sheet.

- It is the responsibility of the traffic marshal/security guard to scan and send the sheet to the warehouse manager/logistics assistant informing him/her of the arrival of the truck/s.
- The warehouse manager/logistics assistant allocates the truck to the specific store where it should be offloaded.
- The storekeeper uses the information on the traffic marshal sheet to create the work order and prints two copies of it; one copy for the tally clerk and one to remain with the storekeeper for supervision of offloading.
- Once the offloading is done, the storekeeper reconciles with the tally clerk and signs off the work order.
- The tally clerk goes ahead to prepare the tally sheet and the storekeeper updates the stack card and uses this information to confirm the receipt waybill.

DOCUMENT FLOW

- Waybills presented by transporter to the warehouse staff are placed in a separate isolated box.
- System generated receipt waybill is printed/signed by transporter/store keeper after sanitisation is carried out.
- Transporter is given the receipt waybill copy, which will be scanned at time of invoicing. Any stamps or signatures on original transporter's documents can be done outside of the office with proper hand sanitisation after this.

DELIVERY OF LOCAL SUPPLIES

- The supplier scans a delivery note and sends this to the warehouse manager or a designated email address.
- The warehouse manager/logistics assistant prints the scanned copy of the delivery note and uses it to create a work order which is shared with the tally clerk and storekeeper to guide offloading.
- Once the offloading is done, the storekeeper reconciles with the tally clerk and signs off the work order.
- The tally clerk goes ahead to prepare the tally sheet and the storekeeper updates the stack card and uses this information to acknowledge receipt by signing the delivery note printed from the email.
- The driver/supplier representative is given one copy of the signed delivery note and one copy is filed by the storekeeper for future reference.

SIMULTANEOUS LOADING AND OFFLOADING

- In case where loading and offloading are to happen simultaneously, the warehouse personnel must ensure that each activity is taken at a different store/MSU to avoid interaction with too many persons. This should be communicated clearly to third parties and loaders/porters.

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL

- Where applicable, metallic drums/insinuators/buckets are placed in different corners of the warehouse compound to deposit all COVID-19 related used materials such as face masks and hand gloves, which are burned daily to avoid re-use/littering in the compound.

SENSITISATION

- Sensitisation/awareness of all warehouse personnel on COVID-19 and the proper use of COVID-19 provided materials should be done regularly.
- Visibly display COVID-19 related materials, possibly in pictorial form and local languages, at different points within and outside the warehouse e.g. outside the gate, loading bay, waiting areas, storage facilities/MSUs, washrooms, offices, corridors etc. Ensure wide reach of the audience, but avoid congestion.
- Monitor personnel health conditions and advise to seek medical treatment in case of signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

OTHER CONTROL MEASURES

- The entire office floor and other items such as office desks, laptops, desktops etc. should be cleaned thoroughly and disinfected regularly.
- Handwashing points with water, soap, sanitisers or disinfectant solutions are to be placed at different points in the compound i.e. at the entrance of each warehouse/MSU and at the places of convenience. Encourage warehouse personnel to wash hands frequently.
- One or more sanitisers are to be placed in each warehouse office depending on the size of the office.
- Designated separate areas should be assigned for third party/service provider staff to avoid congestion of offices.
- Encourage warehouse personnel to maintain a social distance of at least 1 meter from each other and to maintain personal hygiene and avoid communal use of office items and utensils such as cups, pens, notebooks etc.
- Loader/porters, tally clerks and security guards are to be provided with disposable protective gears such as facemasks and gloves and to be sensitised on their proper usage.
- Discourage loaders from showering within the warehouse premises, or temporarily close the showers until the situation improves. Maintain maximum cleanliness of the washrooms.