



RULES & GUIDELINES THAT NEED TO BE ADHERED TO BY THE STAFF OF THE SEC TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka - handbook

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Preamble

Dear all,

Today is Vesak. For us, it is a special time to reflect on good things. However, this time it is a time to acknowledge our own good things, our efforts to stop the COVID-19 virus from spreading among us.

As you already know, we now plan to open the office for our regular work from Monday, the 11th May 2020 and I want to make a special appeal and adopt the attached Rules and Guidelines that need to be adhered to by the SEC staff to prevent the spread of the virus and I'm particularly grateful to our Chairman for providing extensive insights into that as always.

In fact, we want you all to read and fathom the document in its entirety. We want you all to engage with your Directors and respective Senior Management to prepare workable plans and to make systems so that you know what to expect when you come to office, what our plan is, what the priorities are, who the first team is, what are the second and third teams, who the critical staff are, who is required to come most days. And further, how you could work from home, what is essential to work from home, what you can take home, how you can take things home, how you can overcome inherent issues and problems in working from home, what you should ensure, how you could ensure confidentiality and safety of documents and all in all how you can play your part in an effective and responsible manner in these difficult times, indeed.

On the other hand, over the last couple of months Sri Lanka as a country responded comprehensively to contain the spread, and to protect the people effectively. However, if some of us fail to comply strictly with the measures introduced by the Government with the opening of offices in the next week, the whole idea will fail, and then all our inconvenience, pain and sacrifice will have been in vain. As you all know, this COVID-19 virus is very contagious. It only takes a few people to let down their guard, and the virus will slip through. This is why I want each of you to take these precautionary measures very seriously. Please comply not just with the letter of the rules, but their spirit. We need everyone to understand and play their part.

At SEC, we feel responsible for the safety and well-being of you and your families. I hear the situation could get worse before it gets better, so we have to be patient, but we also have to be resolute and we have to get through this somehow, I know these measures are going to be very inconvenient to all of you but please adhere to these rules and guidelines strictly.

I wish you well and thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Chinthaka Mendis
Director General
07th May 2020



Introduction

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka (SEC) is committed to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all its staff members. With a view to achieving this objective, the SEC has developed the following rules and guidelines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Senior Management and staff are required to follow these rules and guidelines with the correct spirit to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities. Therefore, we request the fullest cooperation of our staff to maintain the safety and health of our workplace as well as safeguarding the health of your loved ones at your home and the community at large.

We consider all of you as our extended family and our most valuable asset. We are extremely serious about your safety, health and well-being while we deliver optimal service to our stakeholders.

We have already taken a number of measures to safeguard the health and safety of all of you and our stakeholders. The closure of the Colombo Stock Exchange for Trading was predominantly based on the Government imposition of curfew to restrict the movement of people and advocating social distancing. As the apex regulator in the capital market, the SEC has always adhered to the Government guidelines and gives its fullest support and cooperation to the Government in mitigating the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government established the 'work from home' policy to encourage social distancing and at the SEC, we have enabled the work from home facility by giving access to web-mail and other measures to all staff.

It is commendable to note that during these difficult times we have successfully implemented the 'work from home' policy. Certain divisions have already taken steps to 'work from home' in a swift manner. Also, we have established number of task-forces to address critical issues that were raised by our stakeholders and have responded to them in a timely and very effective manner.

Further, the SEC as the regulator in the capital market understands the difficulties faced by its stakeholders and has proposed a number of relief measures to safeguard its stakeholders while maintaining a fair and orderly capital market.

It is given that, we need to strictly **maintain integrity, honesty, and professionalism, commitment and dedication** in carrying out our official work in these difficult times. These qualities are some of the main ingredients of a successful life as well. Therefore, we believe that carrying out our work in an ethical manner is the cornerstone of successful regulation and expects all of you to always behave and act in an ethical and morally correct manner.



The Director General has given freedom to all Directors and senior management staff to take decisions whilst using their discretion to ensure that the work is carried out in an efficient and effective manner by adhering to Government guidelines. It is a must that if any one of you has any concerns pertaining to coming to work, health concerns etc pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic that you should discuss those with the respective Senior Management and should make alternative arrangements to ensure work is carried out in a smooth manner.

The SEC is in contact with the Ministry of Finance, health officials, other relevant organizations and is closely monitoring the developments of the COVID-19 pandemic and stands ready to fully co-operate and implement Government guidelines to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

This document covers the following areas.

1. Office Hours
2. Senior Management Responsibility - Staff Rotation
3. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
4. General Housekeeping
5. Conduct of meetings
6. Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons during office hours
7. Transportation
8. After you reach home from work
9. Special Cases
10. General Considerations

This document was discussed, reviewed and finalized at the Director General's office on this 07th May 2020.

How to Prevent COVID-19 Outbreak? Basics:





1. Office Hours

The office shall re-open on 11th May 2020 and will be restricted to following hours.

Commencement time : 10.00 am

Closure : 03.00 pm

Note: This timeframe shall apply until such time SEC determines it is feasible to recommence normal office hours



2. Senior Management Responsibility - Staff Rotation

The Director General has given the full discretion to the Senior Management to determine number of divisional members that must report to work as per the Government guideline of maximum of 1/3 of organizational staff. Others should carry out their work from home and the Senior Management should allocate sufficient work to them. We are in the process of pursuing a password protected system where the master file can be accessed by the respective divisional member and he/she will be in a position to extract a working paper such that he/she can continue to work from home.

If any staff member is intending to take files/documents (to work from home) he/she may do so after making a log entry in a register maintain in the division and the respective divisional senior management (who is present in that batch) has the discretion to authorize the request. The staff member must maintain confidentiality and must protect the documents that he/she take home. Upon returning the file, a log entry shall be made which has to be certified by the person who authorize the release stating that the file that was taken out from office was returned in good condition and with all the documents/materials intact. The director/senior management who is in charge of the division has to once a week send an email to the Director General's office indicating the file name, the name of the person who is (taking/returning) the files (home/ back to office) and a rough description of the contents of the file, when returning the file to indicate that it was in order. The director/senior management is encouraged to create a workable/feasible plan in carrying out work from home.



The following strategy shall apply with respect to staff rotation:

1. Process

For the **first three weeks of work** - to be in line with Government guidelines of a maximum 1/3 of the staff reporting to work and to **continue same** until such time SEC determines it is safe to commence normal office work as per Government guidelines.

1. Segregating the entire executive staff into three batches (ensure 1/3 of the staff members of each division are represented in one batch*). Also, non-executive staff to be segregated into three batches.
2. Then identify those batches as batch 1, batch 2 and batch 3.
3. **The Directors/Senior Management of each division should submit their plans to their respective staff in the respective divisions by 2.00 pm on 10th May 2020.**
4. **The submissions should be made by the Senior Management on or before 11th May 2020 by 2.00 pm to the office of the Director General/FAD.**
5. Thereafter, the first batch to report to work from **11th May 2020 and to work the entire week throughout (till 15th May 2020)** and other two batches will be working from home. Then first batch will be working from home for the remaining two weeks. This provides an automatic 14-day quarantine period for that batch (in case of an infection).
6. Subsequently second batch to come to work from week commencing (**18th May 2020-22nd May 2020**) and other two batches will be working from home. Then second batch will be working from home for the remainder of the two weeks. This provides an automatic 14 - day quarantine period for that batch (in case of an infection).
7. Finally, the third batch will come to work from the week commencing (**25th May 2020-29th May 2020**) and the other two batches will be working from home. This third batch will be working from home for the remainder of the two weeks. This provides an automatic 14 - day quarantine period for that batch (in case of an infection).
8. The divisions which consist of less than three staff members have to make arrangements with their respective immediate reporting line to make sure that alternate arrangements is made to carry out the duties (in the event you don't have members to all three batches, you will have to make arrangements to work from home and to fulfil tasks with guidance of Senior Management. **The same person cannot be part of all three batches. It is encouraged Senior Management to follow the same** **.

Note: **This mechanism is been taken for your own good as well as for the goodness of your colleagues, your loved ones at home as well to support the continuous uninterrupted regulatory services to our stakeholders.



9. It is the responsibility of the Senior Management to ensure that all divisional staff members are included in the three batches and those **batches should not coincide** with each other. For example, if we assume two divisions and division one is KLM where it has three batches, batch 1 consists of A, B, C. batch 2 consists D, E, F, batch 3 consists of G, H, I

The other division is XYZ where it has three batches, batch 1 consists of red, blue, yellow; batch 2 consists of green, pink, orange and batch 3 consists of black, purple, white.

As per the example division **KLM batch 1 members (A,B,C)** shall not at any given time interact (interchanged the weeks) with **Division X,Y,Z batch 2 or 3**. In the event a person is replaced from a particular batch to a new batch because of a sickness or otherwise that person **shall remain** in the new batch while the existing one (the person who was suffering from sickness or otherwise) will be transferred to earlier person's batch.

To repeat the above process until such time the Government of Sri Lanka declares that it is safe to commence normal office work with full staff participation. There could be an instance where last batch may be recalled from the week thereon to work in the event if the Government withdraws the guidelines in place as a result of health authorities' recommendation.

Outcome

- This will minimize at any given time the number of staff members that will be exposed to the risk of COVID-19.
- This will ensure adherence to the Government standard of bringing in a maximum of 1/3 of staff to work.
- We will always have adequate batches in place in case of an emergency.
- This will minimize an instance where the market is open while the regulator is not in a position to function (uninterrupted service is provided to the stakeholders).
- This method would provide an automatic quarantine period of 14 days (even if a batch gets infected assuming it doesn't become severe)
- It will be easy to trace and monitor the batch for contacts (in case of a spread of the virus)

Note: *Those Senior Management/Heads of Divisions who would like to bring in **more than 1/3 of their** divisional staff members can do so **after consulting the Director General**. However, **this can be**



accommodated only in an instance where any other division is capable of working from home and is in a position to award their quota of 1/3 to those divisions who would like to bring in additional staff, such that those vacant slots can be utilized. However, the members who are added additionally to the batch of 1/3 of the division shall be considered as one batch and will have to report to work after two weeks' time once their week work ends. This shall continue until such time the Government of Sri Lanka relaxes the aforementioned one third rule of staff coming to work. If the Government relaxes these rules and this process shall amend accordingly.

In the event if a person in a batch is unable to report to work as a result of sickness (or otherwise) shall inform the respective divisional head and shall make arrangements where a member from the immediate preceding batch shall take his/her position. It is at the discretion of the Senior Management to call a person from the immediately preceding batch. Hence each member in the batch should be ready to replace any other member in a batch in the event if the Director/Senior Management deems necessary to call upon him/her due to the exigencies of work or as result of the urgencies.



3. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette - Office Work

- Wearing a mask is compulsory. (Mask should be worn securely and properly and should not be touched thereafter until it is removed) – SEC has made arrangements to provide you with reusable face masks. In the event if you wear a disposable face mask, you should dispose them to a closed bin (which is placed in the respective washrooms).
- Keep a minimum distance of one meter from your colleagues at all times (Note: Director/Senior Management when deciding on the one third of your division for a batch, needs to try and make a conscious attempt as much as possible to avoid bringing in divisional team members who sit next to each other for a one particular batch).
- You shall not share pens and other stationary items with your colleagues.
- Always share documents via email and other form of digital communication methods. Avoid using hard copies as much as possible.
- SEC shall provide you with a hand sanitizer (will be kept at your desk) and is required especially to be used it when you touch a foreign object (if you handle others documentation etc).



- Make a conscious attempt not to touch your mouth, face, nose when working. In the event if you feel you need to touch them, you should wash your hands with the hand sanitizer or should wash your hands thoroughly for at least twenty seconds before and after doing so.
- You may wear gloves at your discretion and should never be re-used and should be disposed to a closed bin (which is placed in the respective washrooms). For the immediate use, SEC has made arrangements to provide you with adequate number of gloves.
- Avoid sharing glasses, plates and other utensils during meals and you should be seated in the lunch room in a zigzag formation in the event if you intend to use the lunch room. You are encouraged to have your meals at your work station. SEC has already made arrangements to keep snacks (crackers, cheese and snacks) in lunch rooms for your convenience.
- You are prohibited from **requesting/sending the support staff out of office to attend for your personal chores (to bring lunch, banking etc)**. This is suggested for your **own safety** as the person who is been sent out is vulnerable to so many unknown contacts and it is implemented with a view of safeguarding our own support staff.
- If you require to get lunch from outside you may use any other alternative mechanisms such as online delivery. However, items coming from outside will undergo the disinfection process.
- You are not allowed to leave office premises (banking activities or any other personnel chores etc) once you come into work unless for a washroom break. This is implemented to safeguard you from getting contaminated from virus as well as to reduce number of unknown contacts.
- If you have a meeting to attend in an outside place, you should inform the Director General in advance and should use an office transportation mechanism where applicable. In the event failure to arrange an office transports and you are using alternative arrangements, then you are required to maintain a log of your travel. This is to ensure contact tracing in the event you become exposed to the virus.
- Movement of staff between 28th and 29th floors are **strictly prohibited (this applies to both executive and non-executive staff)**. You may move between floors only in an instance where you are required to attend for a meeting or there is a technical or administration failure which requires fixing (e.g. computer malfunctioning, malfunctioning of printers etc).
- The support staff will be designated into two to floors.
e.g. A staff member on the 28th floor requiring to send a document to a staff member on the 29th floor, may do so by packing the documents in a sealed envelope and keeping them on the 28th floor counter and then the 28th floor designated support staff personnel shall take it to the 29th floor and would hand it over it to the designated support staff personnel on the 29th floor entrance. Then the designated support staff personnel on the 29th floor shall deliver it to the intended staff personnel after carrying out necessary disinfection process. This will apply vice versa. **The same method will apply in the event if you request stationary.**



- You should not expose your mobile phone to shared surfaces, always clean your mobile phone using hand sanitizer. You should not share your mobile phone with the other members of the staff.

Recommended General Hygiene etiquettes for a healthy lifestyle

- Always drink adequate amount of water (preferably hot water)
- Always try to have a balance diet
- Always wash your hands
- Abstain from unhealthy habits such as smoking and drinking
- Do some regular exercises
- Have adequate sleep
- Don't cough or sneeze into your hands



4. General Housekeeping

- All attempts have been taken to thoroughly clean the office before the reopening of office.
- Since we are not in a position to rotate our tea person for an entire month (like the batch process rotation suggested to our staff), we will have to discontinue his/her services temporarily. Since it is an outsourced service, we are not in a position to trace the contacts and whereabouts of the person etc. Whilst we understand the inconveniences caused, we trust that you will appreciate all the efforts taken by us to safeguard you and your loved one's.
- Sanitizing foot-bath rubber mats will be kept outside the main and side entrances for you to wipe your shoes.
- General housekeeping staff shall at all times wear protective equipment i.e. masks, gloves etc.
- Liquid Sprayers will be used to disinfect the items coming from outside.
- An attempt is being made to use the services of a professional team to disinfect the office as and when possible.
- You are encouraged and it is highly appreciated whenever possible if you could take a few minutes of your time to wipe your personal belongings and your table with the disinfection liquid.



- The staff members who are in rooms or in closed divisions are encouraged to see the possibility of keeping their room doors open as much as they can so that it will minimize the handling of door knobs, touching of doors etc



5. Conduct of meetings

- Wherever possible avoid face-to-face meetings, give preference to conference phone calls or to e-mails.
- If you need to organize meetings at the Boardroom or in a committee room; organize them in a manner allowing for space for physical distancing (at a minimum with 1-meter distance).
- Do not shake hands with other participants, instead say ‘Ayubowan’.
- Make sure all organizers, participants, caterers (try and avoid as much as possible) and visitors at the meeting provide contact details: mobile telephone number, e-mail and address where they are staying. State clearly that their details will be shared with local Public Health Authorities if any participant becomes ill with a suspected infectious disease. If they will not agree to this, they cannot attend the meeting.
- Encourage regular hand-washing or use of an alcohol rub by all participants at the meeting
- Always try to minimize the number of participants to the meeting. Where ever possible connect them via phones and other communication methods.



6. Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons during office hours

- Staff members are encouraged to inform immediately their respective Director/Senior Management heads if the staff member feels a rise in temperature or any other symptom that is common to COVID-19
- The suspected staff member will be kept in isolation and all relevant precautions will be taken to limit the spread of the disease, until transfer to a hospital.
- In the event a staff member informs a team member in their division of any condition that is not normal, one of the colleagues in the division should seek assistance from the hotline 1390 and follow the instructions given or alternatively take steps to transfer the team member to the nearest Government hospital (**should immediately take steps to inform such an incident to Director General and admin for necessary action**), by ambulance. Suwasariya ambulance service can be contacted by dialing 1990.



- If this staff member tests as positive for COVID-19; the health authorities will visit SEC and will instruct on further preventive measures.
- All staff members should adhere to Govt/Health Authority guidelines.



7. Transportation

- You may arrange private transport to come to work and alternatively the SEC plans to make necessary arrangements to reimburse same during the initial period.
- In the event you plan to come to work by your personnel vehicle, we will reimburse you the parking fees during the initial period.
- We are planning to formalize a unified transportation mechanism which will facilitate you to come to work and go home in a timely manner.



8. After you reach home from work

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Remove the clothing and shoes/slippers and leave them outside, and wash them before taking it inside or wearing them again. Wash clothes worn at work using your usual laundry detergent.
- Leave all your belongings outside. If any item is taken inside the house, either wash it with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol sanitizer. (This applies to your mobile phone, spectacles, wrist-watch etc.)
- Shower before interacting with your family.
- Always try to take as many precautions as possible to safeguard your loved ones.





9. SPECIAL CASES - CATEGORIES OF STAFF MEMBERS WHO SHOULDN'T REPORT TO WORK

- Those having fever, with or without acute onset respiratory symptoms such as a cough, runny nose, sore throat and/or shortness of breath (even within your neighbourhood).
- Those who have had contact with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 for the last 14 days.
- Those who are quarantined for COVID-19.
- Pregnant staff members.

Note: In the event if a person in a batch is unable to report to work as a result of above factors he/she shall inform the respective Director/Senior Management shall make arrangements where a member from the immediate proceeding batch shall take his/her position. It is at the discretion of the Director/Senior Management to call a person from the immediately preceding batch. Hence each member in the batch should be ready to replace any other member in a batch in the event if the Director/Senior Management deems necessary to call upon him/her due to the exigencies of work or as result of the urgencies.

General Symptoms: COVID-19 - Important



Fever



Cough



Shortness of Breath



Sore Throat



Don't Panic: Call hotline 1390 and follow the instructions given or alternatively transfer the staff member to the nearest Government hospital, by ambulance. Suwasariya ambulance service can be contacted by dialing 1990.



10. General Considerations

- **Always keep your office identification card and national identification card with you. The SEC has made arrangements to distribute a card system rather than the currently in place finger print identification system to minimize the spread of COVID-19.**
- Most persons infected with the virus develop mild symptoms and recover without any complications.
- Those with reduced immunity and people suffering from conditions such as diabetes, heart, liver and lung disease are more at risk. The risk also increases with advancing age and people over 40 years seem more vulnerable.
- Always follow one-meter social distancing rule.
- Wash hands regularly at least for a minimum of twenty seconds.
- Avoid walking in groups.
- Adhere to World Trade Centre (WTC) guidelines on prevention of the spread of COVID-19.
- Adhere to the guidelines set for usage of the WTC lifts at all times.
- Make a conscious attempt not to use your bear fingers when operating the lifts.
- Make use of the hand sanitizers made available by the WTC at the public areas.
- Make a conscious effort after getting down from your respective floor (28th or 29th floor) to wash your hands properly and to make use of the hand sanitizer made available outside the entrance before you enter the office.
- You are advised to make a conscious effort to wear a minimum number of accessories as far as possible in coming to work.
- We are working closely with the WTC management to make sure all possible health, hygiene and safety measures are implemented wherever possible to protect you from this pandemic.





"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."
 ~ Marie Curie (source: brainyquote.com)



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