



Pohnpei State Social and Physical Distancing Guidelines

Updated September 10, 2020

POHNPEI PREPAREDNESS OF COVID-19

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11th March 2020. Consequently, the Pohnpei States has scaled up its preparedness and operational readiness measures to ensure early detection and rapid response to potential cases of COVID-19. This includes strengthening surveillance systems to rapidly detect cases at points of entry, ensuring that rapid response teams are ready to respond if cases are identified, that laboratory systems are in place to rapidly test suspected cases and other public health responses are in place to contain the spread of the virus. Thankfully to date, we have had no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Pohnpei State. However, it is important to remember that we are not immune to this risk, and globally we are still learning a lot about this virus. What we do know though is that a holistic participatory community response is needed to address the risk of COVID-19.

RATIONALE OF SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The method of social/physical distancing is to increase the physical space between people to prevent spread of diseases including COVID-19. When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus, if the person coughing or sneezing has the disease. Staying at least six (6) feet perimeters away from other people may reduce the chances of catching COVID-19, especially in crowded places and in mass gatherings.

ESSENTIAL VS NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES

The distinction between essential or non-essential services and social gathering needs to be defined by each department, business entity and community. For example, FSM DHSA is currently developing Essential Health Service Strategy to define what service items are considered essential and needs to be delivered in any condition. This determination is situated within the local economic and social context of the country. The approach should be:

- Assessing the transmission/exposure risk of a service.
- Taking preventive measures in an easy, practical, and sustainable way to operate under additional measures.

The recommendations from this document may be subject to further revisions, discussions, and consensus, but must be in the interest of preventing or minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Generally, socio-cultural events such as parties, picnics, Sakau sales, clubbing, drinking sessions, gambling, wedding party and public movie theaters are considered as non-essential services at this time of the COVID-19

pandemic and thus are strongly discouraged. These social events have the potential to draw large crowds and so can become hotspots for coronavirus transmission.

LEGAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Under the FSM Health Code, the national government aims to support the states with relevant guidance, resources and assistance during times such as this emergency; and implement measures under Presidential Orders (*FSM Health Code, Chapter 7, Disaster Relief Assistance Act of 1989, s705*).

The purpose of such proposed measures is not to undermine civil rights, but to address the very real and potential threat to our communities, if COVID-19 was introduced to the country.

UNIFORM APPROACH OF SOCIAL /PHYSICAL DISTANCING

General principles for social and physical distancing advisories at the workplace, in public spaces and at home are mentioned in this document. Risk communication materials have been developed and translated into local vernaculars for use in each of the states to ensure the advisories are complied with.

States have been urged to develop and adopt unified approaches based on the National public health guidelines to ensure their respective communities understand and are not confused by the COVID-19 preventive measures. The practices are aligned with the five different conditions of COVID-19 from FSM COVID-19 Response Framework.

Table 1: Social and Physical Distancing for Public Service Settings

COVID-19 Condition	5 (zero threat)	4 (threat exists no cases confirmed)	3 (1 to 10 confirmed cases)	2 (10 - 100 confirmed cases)	1 (state-wide transmission)
Health (Hospitals, CHCs, Dispensaries)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)
EPA Sanitation (Trash services)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)
Public safety (Police Station, Courts, 911, Customs)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)
State Treasury	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Public Information (Governor's Office, PIO, V6AH)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)
T&I (Utilities, Shipping, Telecom, Airport, Seaport)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)

COVID-19 Condition	5 (zero threat)	4 (threat exists no cases confirmed)	3 (1 to 10 confirmed cases)	2 (10 - 100 confirmed cases)	1 (state-wide transmission)
Agriculture / food related trade and commerce (Agricultural Services)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)
Education (Primary, Secondary, Post-Secondary)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (Alternative of Continued Learning/Distance Learning)	OPEN (Alternative of Continued Education/Distance Learning)	OPEN (Alternative of Continued Education/Distance Learning)
Weather Service	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)
Postal Service	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)	OPEN (limit to essential services)
Public Parks	OPEN	OPEN	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED

Table 2: Social and Physical Distancing for Private Service Settings

COVID-19 Condition	5 (zero threat)	4 (threat exists no cases confirmed)	3 (1 to 10 confirmed cases)	2 (10 - 100 confirmed cases)	1 (state-wide transmission)
Banking / Lending Institutions & Money Transfers	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers; implement strict physical distancing protocols)	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers; implement strict physical distancing protocols)	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers; implement strict physical distancing protocols)
Grocery stores, Mom & Pop Shops	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers; adhere to physical distancing protocols)	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers; adhere to physical distancing protocols)	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers; adhere to physical distancing protocols)

COVID-19 Condition	5 (zero threat)	4 (threat exists no cases confirmed)	3 (1 to 10 confirmed cases)	2 (10 - 100 confirmed cases)	1 (state-wide transmission)
Restaurants & Bars	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit only to take outs and hotel residents)	OPEN (limit only to take outs and hotel residents)	OPEN (limit only take outs and hotel residents)
Food outlets (take-out stands)	OPEN	OPEN	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED
Transportation services	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit customers, adhere to other guidelines)	OPEN (limit customers, adhere to other guidelines)	OPEN (limit customers, adhere to other guidelines)
Hardware stores	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers; adhere to physical distancing guidelines)	OPEN (limit opening hours and number of customers; adhere to physical distancing guidelines)	OPEN (limit opening hours and number of customers; adhere to physical distancing guidelines)
Exercise & Sports facilities	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit opening hours and number of customers)	SUSPENDED (limit to households/online and outdoor individual exercise)	SUSPENDED (limit to households/online)
Religion (Churches, Temples, etc.)	OPEN	OPEN (limit to 50 people and strongly enforce preventive measures)	OPEN (services continue remotely via online / at the discretion of church leadership)	OPEN (services continue remotely via online / at the discretion of church leadership)	OPEN (services continue remotely via online / at the discretion of church leadership)
Cinema	OPEN	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED
Barbershop & Salons	OPEN	OPEN	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED

COVID-19 Condition	5 (zero threat)	4 (threat exists no cases confirmed)	3 (1 to 10 confirmed cases)	2 (10 - 100 confirmed cases)	1 (state-wide transmission)
Manufacture (Handicraft, Oil Production)	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers)	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED
Water Suppliers	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Laundromat	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers)	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers)	OPEN (limit opening hours and customers)

Table 3: Social and Physical Distancing for Cultural/Traditional Gatherings

COVID-19 Condition	5 (zero threat)	4 (threat exists no cases confirmed)	3 (1 to 10 confirmed cases)	2 (10 - 100 confirmed cases)	1 (state-wide transmission)
Funeral	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (limit to 50 people and follow COVID-19 burial guidelines)	OPEN (limit to 50 people and follow COVID-19 burial guidelines)	OPEN (limit to 50 people and follow COVID-19 burial guidelines)
Traditional & Cultural activities (Wedding, Parties, Sakau)	OPEN	OPEN	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED

During the current period when we have no cases but knowing the immediate threat of COVID-19 to our communities and State, we strongly recommend adoption of the recommended social/physical distancing measures.

These measures have been identified as appropriate given the immediate threat COVID-19 poses and noting that to date we know that about 80% of cases are mild and asymptomatic.

PROTOCOLS FOR SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN PUBLIC, AT HOME, AND AT WORKPLACE:

In view of Pohnpei State's COVID-19 response measures, guided by the Health Directors Emergency Operation Centers (DEOC), the following measures on Social/Physical distancing practices are recommended. The recommendations match the different conditions of COVID-19 and the nature of the gatherings in either essential or non-essential settings. Among others, the following have been identified by The DEOC as Essential and Non-essential social gatherings:

- **Essential Services:** Government offices, Banks, Post Office, Money Transfer Entities, Public Utilities, Telecom companies, Hospital services, Public transport providers, Gas stations, loading and unloading of goods and cargo movements, Education, Stores & Markets, Restaurants, Burial, etc.
- **Non-Essential Social Gatherings/services:** Parties, Picnics, Sports events, Bars, Sakau bars, clubs, joints or drinking sessions, Gambling centers, Prostitution, Public theaters, Weddings, Religious gatherings, Traditional feast, Mass Funerals, etc.

Social and Physical Distancing Protocols in Public spaces include the following:

- Avoiding crowded mass social gatherings like banks, markets, parties, rallies, night clubs, funerals, etc. as much as possible.
- Practicing safe distancing (keep at least six (6) feet perimeter distance from others).
- Practicing frequent handwashing and cough/sneeze etiquette (regular handwashing with soap and water; covering nose and mouth with disposable tissue when coughing/sneezing, or coughing/sneezing into a bent/flexed elbow).
- Avoiding physical greetings such as handshaking, hugging and kissing. Practice safe greetings like a wave, a nod or a bow.
- Avoiding going to crowded places (stores, markets, banks, parties etc.) unless it is very essential.
- Avoiding crowded public transportation (taxi, boats, etc.)

Social and Physical Distancing Protocol at Home includes the following:

- Minimizing receiving visitors at home and visiting others at their homes at this time.
- Regularly disinfecting frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, tables, toilet covers, etc.)
- Ensuring good ventilation at home by keeping the windows and doors open
- Cleaning air-conditioning and fans (filters and propellers) regularly
- Staying home and self-isolating even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, and immediately call the Toll-free 320-3109 for help. Have someone bring you essential supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a face mask to avoid infecting others.
- Ensuring the elderly and people with chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, asthma are treated with special care and respect.
- Non-vulnerable family members or neighbors running essential errands like buying of groceries, medicines, and other necessities for those who are vulnerable.

Social and Physical Distancing Protocol at Workplace include the following:

- Avoiding physical greetings (handshakes, hugs, etc.) of coworkers and others, instead practice safe greetings (like waving, nodding, or bowing).
- Ensuring you are well before going to work. If exhibiting any COVID-19 related symptoms (e.g. cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell), stay at home and contact your supervisor.
- Avoiding having large face-to-face meetings and hold meetings via videoconferencing and phone call as much as possible.
- Ensuring essential meetings are held in a well-ventilated area.

- Promoting frequent handwashing and ensure cough and sneeze etiquettes are practiced at all times.
- Placing alcohol-based hand sanitizers at vantage places for all staff to use.
- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting touchable surfaces like payment portals, shared equipment, and objects like pens.
- Avoiding non-essential travels as much as possible.
- Workplaces should consider placing additional limitations on the number of personnel in any enclosed office space at the same time by ensuring at least 6 feet of separation. Ensure all desks or individual workstations are separated by at least 6 feet.
- Workplaces should always post an employee near the door to ensure that the maximum number of customers is not exceeded, and that customers comply with the other preventive Protocols. Ensure that this employee is more than 6 feet away from customers to maintain adequate social/physical distance.
- Encouraging electronic or contactless payment methods as much as possible.
- Businesses like restaurants should close all public seating/eating areas and encourage deliveries and Take-aways.

ADVISORIES:

<u>Betelnut</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Election</u>	<u>Funeral</u>	<u>Human Remains</u>
<u>Mask Use</u>	<u>Office Visits</u>	<u>Public Gatherings</u>	<u>Restaurant</u>	<u>Sakau</u>
<u>Spitting</u>	<u>Take Outs</u>	<u>Taxi</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>Worship</u>

These Guidelines are subject to change when new information becomes available.

Let's be Informed, be prepared, be smart, and be safe!

