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திகதி } 30 .09.2021  
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## Press Release

### Controlled relaxation of public and work activities from 1st October 2021

The country experienced a very high transmission of COVID- 19 and the Government had to impose strict restrictions to public activities over an extended period (since 20<sup>th</sup> August 2021). This has resulted in reduction of transmission, however the daily cases and deaths reported is still significant. Poor public compliance is noted with longer periods of restriction. The continued imposing of severe restrictions has caused significant economic hardship to many.

With the continued threat for transmission, it is important to adopt a strategy of controlled relaxation of restrictions, with continued adherence to precautions, giving more responsibility to local Medical Officer of Health (MOH) in decision making in consultation with Director General of Health Services (proper authority in respect for the whole of Sri Lanka)

Controlled relaxation is focused on following key aspects:

- Strongly advocating to all on continued practices to prevent spread ( Distancing (D) , Respiratory etiquette ( Re) , Aseptic techniques – hand hygiene and disinfecting surfaces ( A) , wearing of Mask in public (M) - D Re A M )

All formal work places/ establishments should provide a conducive environment to practice DReAM, including better procedures to reduce sick people/ clients attending.

As current adoption of D Re A M is seen to be inadequate, all formal sectors, business sectors and local authorities should fully understand the health guidelines and appoint responsible officers to oversee the implementation of COVID- 19 precautions.

Refresher awareness programs should be conducted online or using other suitable safe mechanisms.

Continuous risk communication supported with free media coverage is required to sustain public awareness and engagement in taking precautions.

- b. Getting 100% coverage of vaccination for recommended target groups.
- c. Interprovincial travel restrictions to continue with exemptions for essential activities.
- d. Not permitting all non-essential travel from 10pm- 4am daily.
- e. Safer transport methods should be used/ provided. Improving availability of transport facilities that are less crowded.
  - Trains will not function. Buses to operate within the province only.
  - Only seated passengers in public transport
  - Public and shared transport should preferably be non-air-conditioned and windows should be opened
  - All passengers should wear a mask properly during travel
- f. All work settings should reduce the number of employees coming to work at a given time and where possible adopt work from home. Essential services and industries are exempted and others should function with minimum required numbers, as decided by the Head of the Institute.
- g. Public gatherings are not allowed until further notice
- h. There should be a sensitive monitoring system for public and work settings on their adherence to precautions. If not all gains from restrictions imposed over a one-month period would be lost. Therefore, all public and work settings will be under the direct supervision of the MOH supported by the village, divisional and district/provincial implementation committees for COVID 19.

The MOH is to be supported by the local committees including the community police force in supervising the public and work settings.
- i. The MOH, based on local monitoring of disease transmission situation will inform the DGHS for clearance on closure or functioning of public or work settings as per the guidelines issued by Ministry of Health.
- j. Despite the prevailing risk the gradual relaxation still permits many activities and work settings to function. It is the responsibility of the head of the organizations to ensure that the operations are carried out without any public health risk to the community.
- k. The permitted numbers for public settings will be as follows

#		1 <sup>st</sup> October – 15 October	16 <sup>th</sup> Oct- 31 <sup>st</sup> October
1.	Persons permitted to leave home	For employment purposes, to obtain healthcare and other essential services including groceries and medicine	
2.	Physical official meeting /events (Virtual meetings are strongly encouraged )	Maximum 25% of usual capacity , not exceeding 25 persons	Maximum 25% of usual capacity , not exceeding 50 persons
3.	Parties/ Private gatherings (indoor/outdoor including in house gatherings)	Not allowed	Not Allowed
4.	Economic centres	Open for wholesale business , under strict supervision of local authorities and area MOH	
5.	Sathi pola/ open markets	Open under strict supervision of local authorities and area MOH	
6.	Restaurant (in dining)  Outdoor arrangements encouraged	Not allowed	30% of capacity not exceeding 50 persons  No consumption of Alcohol on premises  If outdoor – 60 persons allowed
7.	Restaurant (take away and deliveries)	Allowed	
8.	Mobile vendors	Allowed under supervision of local authorities and area MOH	
9.	Shops, groceries, Pharmacies Supermarkets	10% of capacity at a given time Number to be displayed	20% of capacity at a given time Number to be displayed
10.	Financial institutes ( banks, financing companies, pawning centres)	Open. Should be restricted to 5 persons inside at a given time. Remaining customers to queue outside maintaining physical distance of one metre. Function with minimum required staff.	
11.	Construction sites	Normal functions according to the health guidelines.	
12.	Agriculture / plantations	Allowed	
13.	Barbers, salons, tailors	Two customers at a time on appointment	

14.	Schools	Preparations to open Schools with total students below 200 will open as decided by Ministry of Education	
15.	Day Care	Open	
16.	Preschools	50% of the capacity attending	
17.	Higher education centres including universities	Commence functions as per guideline ( reduce attending numbers, combine with virtual methods	
18.	Vocational training institutes	50% of capacity at a given time	
19.	Courts	To function under the guidance of Judiciary Services Commission adhering to health guidelines.	
20.	Cinema/ Theatres	Closed	
21.	Gymnasiums	Operate with only 5 persons at a given time. Adjacent equipment should not be used.	Operate at 30% capacity to a maximum of 10 persons
22.	Sports activities ( refer guideline on Sports and sporting activities issued jointly by Ministry of Health and Ministry of Sports)	Not allowed	Category 1 and 2 sports allowed With no spectators
23.	Walkways , beach	Open	
24.	Wedding (Open spaces encouraged )	Registration of marriage with maximum of 10 participants	Max 25% of usual capacity , not exceeding 50 persons  open space is encouraged no liquor to be served
25.	Funeral should be held within 24hrs of releasing the dead body	10 at a given time	15 at a given time
26.	Religious places	NO collective activities or gatherings	
27.	Exhibitions and conventions	Not allowed	
28.	Examinations ( in Physical attendance)	Permitted with strict adherence to health guidelines	
29.	Tuition classes	closed	
30.	Industries	Normal functions according to the health guidelines.	

- l. Any organization or person/s that pose a threat to the control of disease by non-adherence to the guidelines should be strictly dealt under the existing legal provisions.
- m. The situation will be reviewed and at the end of 31<sup>st</sup> October appropriate guideline on the permitted level of functions will be issued.

**\*\*\*Sports and sport events categorization**

Risk categorization	Sport/Game
Category I – Low risk	Table tennis, Tennis, Badminton, Ball badminton, Athletics , Rowing and canoeing Aquatic games – Swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo Open water swimming , Surfing, Sailing , Gymnastics, Aerobics – individual Rifle shooting , Weight lifting and power lifting Wushu – Thawulu, Karate – kata, Taekwondo - Pumse Fencing , Archery, Body building, Motor racing, Cycling, Mountaineering Roller skating , Equestrian , Golf, Billiard and snooker , Board games (scrabble, chess, carrom) and bridge Lifesaving (individual events without CPR/person to person contact)
Category II - Low Medium risk	Cricket including softball cricket , Hockey, Elle, Squash , Beach volley ball

This guideline is issued by the Director General of Health as the proper authority under the Quarantine and Prevention of Diseases Ordinance No.3 of 1897 as amended and the provision made there in.

Sports and Sporting events full categorization and guideline can be obtained from the Ministry of Health web site.

Web link for guidelines:

[http://www.health.gov.lk/moh\\_final/english/article\\_read\\_more.php?id=938](http://www.health.gov.lk/moh_final/english/article_read_more.php?id=938)



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