

Service Industry Newscast

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New rules for Hotels, Restaurants and Shopping Malls

The Home Ministry announced "Unlock-1" that rolled out across the country from June 1, 2020 and the nationwide lockdown which came into effect from March 25, 2020 will be relaxed to a great extent starting June 8, 2020, including gradual opening of shopping malls, restaurants, hotels and religious places, though strict restrictions will remain in place till June 30, 2020 in the containment areas. The Health Ministry guidelines - standard operating procedures (SOPs) for these services are as follows.

Retail/Shopping malls:

- Mandatory temperature screenings at entrances
- Visitors will be allowed only if they use face cover or masks, to be worn at all times inside.
- Cinema halls, gaming arcades and children play areas in these establishments to remain closed
- Physical distancing of a minimum of 6 feet when queuing up for entry and inside should be maintained as far as feasible while the number of people inside shops in malls should be kept at a minimum
- Number of people on elevators should also be restricted and use of escalators with one person on alternate step is to be encouraged
- Frequently touched surfaces like door knobs, elevator buttons, hand rails, benches and washroom fixtures should be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Toilets should be deep cleaned at regular intervals
- Posters/standees/AV media on preventive measures about COVID-19 to be displayed prominently
- Proper crowd management in the parking lots and outside the premises
- Required precautions while handling supplies, inventories and goods in the shopping mall shall be ensured. Proper queue management and disinfection shall be organized
- Specific markings may be made with sufficient distance to manage the queue and ensure social distancing in the premises

Restaurants:

- Only asymptomatic staff and customers shall be allowed in the restaurants
- Encourage takeaways and deliveries instead of dine-in
- Home delivery staff must be thermally screened before setting out for a delivery
- No direct handing over of food packet to customer, delivery personnel to leave the food packet at customer's door
- For restaurants and food courts in malls, the ministry has limited the seating capacity to 50%
- Disposable menus are advised to be used

- Use of disposable paper napkins instead of cloth napkins should be encouraged
- For air-conditioning and ventilation, the ministry said the guidelines of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) shall be followed which emphasises that the temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30 degrees celsius, relative humidity should be in the range of 40-70% and intake of fresh air should be as much as possible and adequate cross ventilation should be followed
- Contactless mode of ordering and digital payments to be encouraged
- Tables to be sanitized each time customer leaves
- Posters/standees/AV media on preventive measures about COVID-19 to be displayed prominently

Hotels & Hospitality services:



- Ensure a proper record of the guest's travel history and medical condition, along with ID and self-declaration form must be provided by the guest at the reception
- Disinfecting luggage before sending it to rooms
- For room service, communication between guests and in-house staff should be through intercom/ mobile phone and room service (if any) should be provided while maintaining adequate social distance
- Proper crowd management in the parking lots and outside the premises
- Required precautions while handling supplies, inventories and goods in the shopping mall shall be ensured. Proper queue management and disinfection shall be organized
- Staff should additionally wear gloves and take other required precautionary measures
- Valet parking, if available, shall be operational with operating staff wearing face covers/ masks and gloves as appropriate. A proper disinfection of steering, door handles, keys, etc. of the vehicles should be taken up
- Preferably separate entry and exits for guests, staff and goods/supplies shall be organized
- Posters/standees/AV media on preventive measures about COVID-19 to be displayed prominently
- Hand sanitizers must be kept at the reception for guests to use. Guests to sanitize hands before and after filling relevant forms including A&D register
- Hotels must adopt contactless processes like QR code, online forms, digital payments like e-wallet etc. for both check-in and check-out
- Detailed guidelines issued for restaurants shall be followed
- Effective and frequent sanitation within the premises shall be maintained with particular focus on lavatories, drinking and hand washing stations/areas

CARE Ratings view:

- While the move is positive for these industries, many States have not yet started operations for non-essentials goods and services on account of high number of the corona virus cases, or have started operations zone wise with restrictions and the laws vary from State to State
- In case of restaurants, the government has allowed restarting operations with a maximum of 50% capacity as of now. It is to be noted here that the fixed costs for any restaurant such as labour, power, raw materials, and rentals remains quite high and getting the desired footfalls to maximise cost benefit from operations currently looks unlikely
- In case of Hotels, with limited domestic airlines operating, demand is expected to remain low. Also, people are expected to avoid travel without purpose. Demand in Q1 and Q2 FY21 is expected to continue remain negligible despite services being operational while some traction can be expected post September-October 2020.

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