



PANDEMIC POLICY

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APPROVED BY	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
POLICY OWNER	Senior Manager Human Resources
POLICY CUSTODIAN	Human Resource Unit
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All official correspondence must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer

1. Background Information

A number of pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola, SARS and influenza have caused regional and global epidemics that resulted in high mortality rates or economic losses. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that “*emerging and re-emerging pandemic diseases pose an on-going threat to global health security.*”

Population growth and increased interaction between people, animals and the environment over the coming decades is all expected to increase the emergence of new pandemic threats which have the potential to impact both the employees and customers of NIDA in particular, and the Namibian population in general.

2. Policy Purpose

This policy outlines precautionary measures to minimise the exposure of the Coronavirus to NIDA employees and the broader community and to effectively respond to this threat should an incident occur at NIDA.

3. Policy Statement

NIDA is committed to provide its staff, visitors and customers with a safe working environment that is free of health hazards, inclusive of pandemic diseases. We assign the highest priority to identifying, minimising and managing the risk to our employees and the Namibian community of being exposed to the Coronavirus.

4. Mode of transmission

- 4.1 Infected people coughing and sneezing
- 4.2 Touching an infected person’s hands or face
- 4.3 Touching things such as doorknobs that infected people have touched
- 4.4 Rarely, faecal contamination

5. Clinical symptoms for nCoV

- 5.1 Chills
- 5.2 Cough
- 5.3 Sore throat
- 5.4 Shortness of breath
- 5.5 Vomiting
- 5.6 Diarrhoea

5.7 Body pains

5.8 Fever over 38°C

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 NIDA will:

- 6.1.1 Abide by all communications/directives issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Services and will assess and manage the risks that are identified in these communications.
- 6.1.2 Comply with directives issued by the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation with regards to travel restrictions to countries identified as high risk as well as any other destinations as determined by the Agency.
- 6.1.3 Comply with current guidelines for minimising exposure to the Coronavirus, as communicated by the Ministry of Health and Social Services in Namibia.
- 6.1.4 Notify state health departments if there is a significant risk that any of our staff members, visitors and/or customers have been affected with the Coronavirus.
- 6.1.5 Keep record of all interventions, action plans and employees showing symptoms of coronavirus and those placed on personal isolation, and/or under quarantine.
- 6.1.6 NIDA will comply with any Government requests to supply the personal information that is associated with these exposures.
- 6.1.7 Implement risk management measures in the event of the Virus having an impact on supply of goods from our suppliers.

6.2 Staff members and customers will:

6.2.1 Consult recent guidelines issued by Ministry of Health and Social Services of Namibia, and other services to assess and manage the risks of travelling to high-risk locations.

6.2.2 Comply with the Agency's directive on travel restrictions, engagements with public and any directives issued from time-to-time.

6.2.3 Ensure that they protect themselves from the Coronavirus and be aware of their health status.

6.2.4 Notify the Human Resources Department of NIDA of any actual or possible incident, symptoms and exposure to the virus.

6.3 NIDA Covid response team will:

6.3.1 Provide first-hand support and advice to all employees

6.3.2 Participate and support their managers in employee briefing sessions

6.3.3 Assess and manage the risks associated with the Coronavirus and ensure open communication channels to and from employees.

7. Precautionary Measures and Action Plan

7.1 Create awareness about the symptoms and modes of transmission of the Coronavirus by using posters and e-mails communications.

7.2 Insist that employees with flu-like symptoms stay at home and rather go to a medical practitioner to get a full medical examination.

7.3 Encourage employees to minimize/desist from hand and body touch when greeting each other.

- 7.4 Implement a strict mask wearing rule, no mask – no entry.
- 7.5 Insist that all employees practise physical distancing (2 metres / 3 steps) at all times.
- 7.6 Create awareness about hygiene precautions/practices every employee should take when using NIDA's facilities.
- 7.7 Provide all employees with hand sanitisers and other applicable protective items at NIDA.
- 7.8 Regular cleaning with disinfectants of multi employee's workstations, counters, tables, bathrooms, kitchens and chairs.
- 7.9 Avail hygiene disinfectant liquid, bathrooms, and at every entrance point.
- 7.10 Provide only disposable paper towels
- 7.11 Encourage water hydration.
- 7.12 Minimize local travel for work assignment
- 7.13 Reduce meetings to the absolute maximum of 5 people for a period of not more than 2 hours, and replace it with video conference and calls.
- 7.14 Informing employees that disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who attends at the office knowing they tested positive with Covid-19, or are awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.
- 7.15 Allow employees to work from home whenever that is possible. (Jobs that don't require face to face interaction and can be done over calls and emails).
- 7.16 Create a designated office space/training room with the necessary first aid kits in order to isolate employees with the coronavirus symptoms until medical assistance is provided.
- 7.17 While respecting individual choice and preferences, employees are encouraged to take vaccinations

8. Absence from work and leave

8.1 An employee who was in close contact with a confirmed Covid-19 positive person will be in self-quarantine/isolation for a period of 7 days only and will be granted special leave for the 7 day period, proof of a Covid-19 test will be required to qualify for the special leave.

8.2 An employee who tested positive for Covid-19 will be granted "Special Sick Leave" upon proof of the positive test result being forwarded to the H-R department, the employee must provide proof of undergoing a Covid-19 test 14 days after the first positive test result unless certified otherwise by a medical doctor.

8.3 Employees on medical aid can make use of their medical aid benefits

8.4 Employees will be required to work from home during their isolation period for 7 days and provided with requisite tools.

8.5 An employee who claims to have been in contact with a person with a positive Covid-19 test result should first inform his/her Supervisor about the incident, self-isolate him/herself, subject him/herself for medical examination and only return to work upon submission of a negative test result.

9. Communication

9.1 All internal communication and liaison will be done by the Chief Executive Officer or with delegated authority by the Snr Manager Corporate Services.

9.2 No other employee will be in contact with the public and /or disseminate information to the employees or other stakeholders without the approval of the CEO on behalf of the Agency.

10. Contingency Plan

10.1 All Senior Managers and Heads of Departments are responsible for business continuity in their respective areas of responsibility.

- 10.2 In case of any employee confirmed as Covid-19 positive in a department, such department will be closed for disinfection for a period of 24-hours
- 10.3 The Agency/Department will be re-opened after a day and all employees will return to work.
- 10.4 Employees who were in close contact with a positive confirmed person will be subjected to mandatory testing and will only return to work after 7 days of self-isolation.
- 10.5 Skeleton staff will be available to attend to critical customer queries and complaints, in person or remotely during the complete shutdown of the business unit.
- 10.6 A “Work-from-Home” principal will apply for all employees with internet and server connections provided by the IT department.
- 10.7 Outbreak of the virus in other towns in which the Agency is represented will be monitored and applicable contingency plans will be implemented, depending on the directives from the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

11. Procedure if an employee shows all the above-mentioned symptoms

- 11.1 Use hygiene, masks, eye protection and gloves for yourself and the employee in question.
- 11.2 Take the employee to the dedicated office/room
- 11.3 Remove all the consumables and equipment from the room beforehand
- 11.4 Make the employee comfortable
- 11.5 Immediately call the health emergency operation centre:

Ministry of Health and Social Services

Centre of Diseases Control

24/7 Toll Free Number

0800100100

Restrict access to that dedicated room.

11.6 NEVER TRANSFER/MOVE A SUSPECTED PERSON ANYWHERE IN THE AGENCY UNTIL PROFESSIONAL HELP ARRIVES.

11.7 Suspected cases should be discussed with the Head of the business Unit/ Manager and HR.

11.8 Head of the Business Unit/ Covid-19 Response team will arrange for an ambulance and the patient will be transported to the Hospital's Isolation Unit.

12. Application of Policy

The policy applies to all employees, customers and visitors of NIDA.

13. Policy Review

In the absence of the government policy on guidelines to follow when an employee tests positive for Covid-19, this policy will remain in place subject to review as necessary.

14. Further Assistance

If you require further information about this policy, you are encouraged to have an initial conversation with your supervisor. If you require additional information, please contact the HR department.

15. Conformance

In the best interest of all employees and preventing the spread of this disease, compliance to the policy directive is mandatory.

16. Glossary of Terms

Noval Corona Virus (Ncov): Coronavirus (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-COV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS

CoV). A novel coronavirus is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

17. Definitions

Special Sick Leave, in this context, means sick leave granted by the employer to an employee who has returned with a positive Covid-19 test result and therefore not required to return to place of work for a specified period.