



ABSTRACT

Disaster Management Act, 2005 –COVID-19 - Visitors entering into the Eco-tourism of Tiger Reserve/ Wildlife Sanctuary/ National Park/ Bird sanctuary and other protected areas - Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) - Orders - Issued

REVENUE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT(D.M-IV) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Ms.No.17

Dated: 08.01.2021

சார்வரி, மார்கழி 24

திருவள்ளூர் ஆண்டு 2051

Read :

1. G.O.Ms.No.673, Revenue and Disaster Management (D.M.IV) Department, dt.30.11.2020
2. G.O.Ms.No.820, Revenue and Disaster Management (D.M.IV) Department, dt.31.12.2020
3. From the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, letter No.WL4/34390/2020, dated 23.12.2020

XXX

ORDER:

On the recommendations of the expert team of Doctors and Public Health specialists and based on the directives of Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, State-wide lockdown was extended from time to time and lastly extended up to 31.01.2021 under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 with certain restrictions and relaxations along with guidelines vide G.O.Ms.No.820, Revenue and Disaster Management (D.M.IV) Department, dated 31.12.2020.

2. In GO.Ms.No.673, Revenue and Disaster Management (DM.IV) Department, dated 30.11.2020 among other things Tourist Places were allowed for public purposes by following Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

3. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden has stated that considering the necessity of employment opportunities for members of Eco Development Committee/Village Forest Committees, has requested to permit the resumption of Eco-Tourism in all the 15 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 15 Bird Sanctuaries, 4 Tiger Reserves and other Forest area of the State. He has also requested to allow the trekking

Routes which do not involve night halt because social distancing can not be ensured during the night halt of the Trekking group in dormitories etc and also to permit one day trek (morning to evening) and sent Standard Operating Procedures for Government approval.

4. The Government hereby accept the proposal of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden at para 3 above and issue the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) as in the Annexure.

(By Order of the Governor)

K.SHANMUGAM
CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT.

To

The Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner of
Revenue Administration, Chennai -5

The Additional Chief Secretary, Environment and Forest Department
Chennai -600 009

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief
Wildlife Warden, Panagal Maaligai, Saidapet, Chennai -15

The Commissioner, Greater Chennai Corporation, Chennai

All the District Collectors,

Copy to:

The Hon'ble Chief Minister Office, Chennai-09.

The Private Secretary to Chief Secretary to Government,
Chennai-9.

/Forwarded By Order/

Shanmugam
8/1/24
SECTION OFFICER

ANNEXURE**Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)****Guidelines for visitors entering into the Eco-tourism of Tiger Reserve/ Wildlife Sanctuary/ National Park/ Bird sanctuary and other protected areas.**

1. Visitors will be screened by the Thermal Scanner before stepping into Eco-tourism areas. Symptomatic visitors with respect to fever, cold and cough shall not be allowed.
2. Visitors will be screened jointly by the Transport, Health and Family Welfare, Police Department in coordination with the Reserve Management round the clock at all entry level check posts of the Reserve to take precaution to follow protocol in dealing with patients and symptoms.
3. Face Masks are mandatory for entering into the eco-tourism areas.
4. As per G.O.Ms.No.673, Revenue & Disaster Management (DMIV) Department, dated 30.11.2020, under 'Protection of Vulnerable Persons' – Persons above 65 yrs of age, persons with co-morbidities, pregnant woman and children below the age of 10 yrs are advised to stay at home and hence shall avoid the visit.
5. Visitors should wash their hands/sanitize at entry to the ticket counter and maintain social distancing at ticket counter queue.
6. Social distancing will be maintained strictly in the Eco-Tourism area.
7. Visitors shall give exact amount for the purchase of entry ticket to avoid further contact with ticket counter staff.
8. All Visitors shall pass through dis-infection foot-mat at the entrance and hand- sanitize before entering into Lake area.
9. Visitors shall show the entry ticket to staff for checking. Handing over of entry ticket to staff shall be avoided.
10. Visitors shall co-operate for existing checking like plastic/pan/gutka/alcohol, etc., and to avoid any sort of infections. Additional luggage to be avoided

- 11.** Visitors shall avoid touching of barricades and other surfaces so as to avoid chances of any infection.
- 12.** Visitors shall have minimum interaction with staff with respect to details on birds, sanctuary, etc by maintaining social distancing.
- 13.** Carrying capacity for Vedanthangal Sanctuary Eco Tourism area is 600 at a given time. In case, number of visitor's increases beyond 600 at a given time (For Example; during general holidays or festivals), visitors entry will be regulated until few visitors leave the Lake area.
- 14.** Carrying Capacity for Guindy National Park Eco Tourism area/permitted nature trails is 3500 at a given time. Visitor's strength shall not exceed the same.
- 15.** Use of face cover, mask and frequent hand washing will be maintained for both staff and tourists.
- 16.** Spitting has been strictly prohibited in the Eco-Tourism area.
- 17.** Normal limit of 12 passengers per boat will be restricted to 6 per boat (only 50% of the capacity) for maintaining social distance in boating
- 18.** Usage of the cafeteria shall be restricted to 10 members in a time.
- 19.** Eco- tourism area authorities who are residing in COVID -19 Containment zone shouldn't be allowed to Eco- tourism area.
- 20.** Entire infrastructure including boats, cafeteria, kayaks and life jackets will be sanitized frequently.
- 21.** The interior of the Boat, life jackets, cafeteria chairs and tables will be disinfected by using 1% sodium hypo chloride solution in each trip.
- 22.** Only Healthy staff are allowed for boat driving and rescuing.
- 23.** Testing with contactless thermometers of all visitors, drivers and guides and staff deployed for tourism at Reception centre as precaution measure. In case of individual has a temperature higher than the normal, shall be immediately isolated in the nearest health centre.

- 24.** All visitors/ crew shall submit their self reporting form.
- 25.** Regarding Sorimuthu Ayyanar Kovil, the pilgrims will be allowed Papanasam Check post from 08.00 A.M to 03.00 P.M and the maximum number of pilgrim vehicles will be permitted upto 3.00 P.M at the check post.
- 26.** Regarding Korakkanathar Kovil the pilgrims will be allowed every Friday from 08.00 A.M to 12.00 Noon.
- 27.** Regarding Nambikovil the pilgrims will not be allowed to enter Nambikovil check post for 3 days in a week i.e) Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- 28.** All visitors should carry sanitizer and age proof documents
- 29.** A penalty of minimum of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 per head will be imposed against violators of the guidelines
- 30.** For healthy services the existing control room on 24 x 7 basis will be utilized for contacting District administration and getting technical guidance and support.
- 31.** Regarding Ambasamudram Range Manjolai area maximum 5 vehicles per day will be allowed.
- 32.** Food items will not be allowed in the tourism area.
- 33.** In respect of Suruli falls and Chinna suruli falls, 50% of average tourists shall be allowed to visit the falls and shall not be allowed to take bath the falls.
- 34.** In respect of Kumbakaranai falls, 50 % of average tourist shall be allowed.
- 35.** In respect of Agasthiyar falls, Manimuthar falls, the visitor shall not be allowed.
- 36.** Elephant safari shall be temporarily deferred
- 37.** Arogya Setu App will be mandatory.

Guidelines for the Departmental staff with visitor interface in Eco-Tourism area:

1. All staff shall ensure the highest level of personal hygiene.
2. The Eco Development Committee members, Forest officials shall be screened by the thermal scanner before stepping into the Eco-tourism area.
3. Staff with symptoms of COVID-19 like cough, cold and fever should take leave after getting prior permission from his superior.
4. Details of the visitors, Travel history, medical condition, thermal screening data and Id-proof will be mandatory for every visitors/tourists.
5. Information about the persons who travelled from other States/ Districts shall be maintained separately.
6. Close contact with captive animals and sick animals will be avoided.
7. Awareness will be created among the visitors on hand washing, including demonstration of hand washing with trained eco guides.
8. Mike announcement and display mechanism at the Reception Centre to direct the visitors with symptoms like fever, cough and breathing difficulties to their health help desk/ nearest medical screening camp.
9. Cleaning of all vehicles deployed for eco-tourism with disinfectants to be done before and after each visit
10. Ensuring wearing of triple layer mask, N-95 mask, etc by the Visitors as well as the staff.
11. Public conveniences in the reserve will be disinfected at regular intervals.
12. Social distancing will be strictly adhered between each person especially at Reception Centre and Elephant camp by marking circles at 2 meter distance so that close gathering is avoided, and continuous monitoring will be ensured by the staff.
13. Only 50% of the seating capacity of the safari vehicle will be made available for the eco tourists to ensure social distancing.
14. All booking will be encouraged through online as far as possible.

15. All Rest houses will be occupied with maximum 2 persons per suite.
16. All dormitories will be allowed only with 50% occupancy.
17. Hand wash and Hand Sanitizers are to be placed at wash rooms and water points
18. All rooms are to be cleaned before and after use by tourists.
19. All rooms are to be sprayed with sanitizers at the end of day after all the visitors home vacated.
20. All waste, especially face masks discarded by Departmental staff and visitors are to be handled very deftly and disposed off a bio medical waste.
21. Visit to Elephant camp will be restricted to maximum 30 persons with maintaining social distance on each occasion.
22. Mattress cover and pillow cover should be changed with reusable covers for each individual
23. The overall carrying capacity of the Reserve will also be restricted to 50%.
24. Monitoring report will be submitted on weekly basis by the Reserve Management.
25. Social distancing will be ensured by creating awareness to the visitors and devotees.
26. Capacity of tourists staying in cottages may be reduced to 50%.
27. Awareness exhibits will be placed in the entry point of Eco Tourism places.
28. Wearing masks will be ensured at the check post
29. Awareness will be created to the buffer area of Tiger Reserve regarding impact of COVID - 19
30. Vaccination to the cattle which are reared near to the Tiger Reserve should be carried out.
31. Awareness notices regarding COVID - 19 will be distributed to the school children falling in the buffer area of Tiger Reserve
32. Testing of all eco-tourist, drivers and guides for temperature using contactless thermometers shall be carried out at the entry point. In case any individual has a temperature higher

than normal, he/ she shall be immediately isolated in a dedicated room identified for this purpose and evacuated to the nearest health facility by team and vehicle kept for the same.

33. Vehicle tyre path with appropriate disinfectant shall be installed at all entry points.
34. To ensure social distancing, seating capacity should be reduced by 50% in vehicles.
35. Lavatory facilities at entry and exit points need to be ensured to disembark within the tiger reserve.
36. Person with health problem like cough and fever will not be allowed in the tourism area.
37. All staff on duty at ticket counters and bird watching area to wear masks, sanitize and ensure follow-up of Covid-19 preventive procedures like social distancing and personal hygiene. Existing temperature screening and general screening of staff to continue before duty.
38. Staff to maintain social distancing while on duty and all other general guidelines of Covid-19 prevention protocol to continue.
39. Staff to avoid visitor's interaction except on enquiry, emergency or help. Vedanthangal brochures to be provided to visitor's for identification of birds instead of personal interactions.
40. Spotting Scope handling staff to strictly wear gloves, masks and maintain social distancing. Dis-infection of Spotting Scopes, Binoculars to the visitors to be mandatory after each use.
41. Ticket Counter Staff to wear mask, gloves strictly and to insist for actual amount for the entry fee to avoid further contact with visitors. E-ticketing system will be introduced for visitor's choice shortly.
42. Staff at entrance to check entry ticket visually or by mechanical punching and avoid collecting the ticket from visitors for checking.

43. Staff at entrance to ensure usage of the dis-infection mat and hand sanitization by visitors before moving towards Lake area for bird watching.

Guidelines for Forest Range Officers in-charge for Eco-Tourism area:

1. Concerned Forest Range Officer to exclusively monitor and ensure follow up of guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures on opening of the Eco- Tourism Zone to the visitors during pandemic un-lockdown phase.
2. Stock of 1% Sodium hypochlorite solution, KMnO₄ solution should be ensured for disinfection of barricades, foot mat, spotting scopes, binoculars, etc. Sufficient stocks of sanitizers, hand wash to be ensured for staff/visitors.
3. The Concerned Forest Range officer should maintain stocks of protective kits procured based on the No. of staff planned to be deployed for work.
4. Signage's and Awareness Boards for Covid-19 prevention and social distancing to be placed at appropriate location.
5. Two-meter social distancing signs on the bird-viewing path and other view point to be painted or marked with reflective stickers.
6. Designated Way-in and Way-out follow-up to be ensured.
7. Entry of visitors without mask should not be allowed and provision for sale of masks at MRP to be ensured near ticket counter.
8. Public Addressing System to be in place to alert visitors on social distancing and Covid preventive guidelines.
9. Dis-infection of Barricades, Ticket counters, Wash rooms, Watch Tower and other important public congregation areas to be ensured on regular basis. Cloak Room may be closed to avoid handling of luggage's between staff and visitors
10. Barricades to be placed at appropriate location for maintaining social distancing and periodically sanitized if visitor's strength is maximum.
11. Arrangements to be made for waiting area with social distancing, in case the visitor's strength increases beyond

carrying capacity of eco-tourism areas at a given time and waiting visitor's to be let-in only after existing visitor's phase out of the Eco-tourism areas.

12. In respect of Guindy National Park, which is a pristine wildlife habitat and has highly restricted entry for visitor's, carrying capacity to be strictly enforced with respect to visitor's inflow.
13. Concerned Range officers should ensure Front line staff who are at higher risk like older and underlying medical conditions to be taken extra precautions (or) to be stopped from their regular duties.
14. A separate vehicle will be set apart by the Department exclusively for Covid-19 monitoring and mitigation
15. Training programme will be restricted to less than 50% of the total capacity.
16. In the event of unfortunate demise of any patient with Corona virus infection, the protocol to dispose the mortal remains be communicated to all Government and Private hospitals, health workers, ambulance personnels. The local body must be educated on the protocol to be followed for cremation in crematorium.
17. Ensuring availability of disinfectants like Lyzol for wet mopping and soap/sanitizer in Reception centre, Elephant camp, and in all Rest houses.
18. Inter State co-ordination on Covid -19 will be ensured on real time basis.

All measures taken under the above SOP by each unit should be documented on day to day basis.

K.SHANMUGAM
CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT.

/True copy/

20/11/2021
SECTION OFFICER.