



საქართველოს სახალხო დამცველი
PUBLIC DEFENDER (OMBUDSMAN) OF GEORGIA

Information on Rights and Responsibilities of Employees and Employers

For the purpose of enforcing the decree of the President of Georgia on the state of emergency, the Government of Georgia issued Decree No. 181 “On Approval of Measures to Prevent the Spread of Novel Coronavirus in Georgia”. According to Article 7 (4) of this decree, any permitted economic activity, regardless of its form and type, must be carried out in accordance with the recommendations issued by the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. Implementation of these recommendations is mandatory.

Given the binding nature and importance of the above recommendations, the Public Defender of Georgia considers it expedient to provide the public with more information about them (the full text of the recommendations is available at: <https://www.moh.gov.ge/ka/741/>)

In case of non-implementation of the above recommendations, you can contact the **Ministry of Health (hotline – 1505)**, the **Disease Control Center (hotline -116 001)** or the **Ministry of Internal Affairs (hotline – 112)**. You can also contact the **Public Defender's Office (hotline 1481)**, if your rights are violated.

General recommendations that are mandatory for everyone and applies to all sectors of the economic activity

Employers are responsible to:

- Develop an infectious disease preparedness and response plan (emergency plan), which will assist them in carrying out protection measures against COVID-19. These plans should indicate the level of risks associated with particular workplaces and assignments (very high, high, medium and low);
- Develop policies and procedures for the immediate isolation of persons with signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19 and train staff to carry out these procedures;
- Disinfect the workplaces and adhere to sanitary-hygiene standards that vary according to the risk levels;
- Provide employees with personal protective equipment needed for their safety while performing duties;
- Ensure the development and implementation of a flexible work regime, flexibility of the sick leave policy and their compliance with public health guidelines;
- Ensure monitoring of public health statements/information on the COVID-19 recommendations and employees' access to this information;

- Facilitate handwashing by supplying relevant soap and other hygiene products in the workplace. Provide employees with at least 70% alcohol-based handwashing fluid, if it is not possible to wash hands;
- Provide disposable wipes and trash cans for customers and public;
- Install physical barriers, such as transparent plastic shields against sneezing, in the medium-risk workplaces,¹ if possible.

Employees are responsible to:

- Observe the sanitary, hygiene and safety norms, as well as social distance, in the workplace;
- Do not go to work if they: had left the country or had been in close contact with the coronavirus carrier(s) for the last 14 days; have symptoms of respiratory infection (coughs, fever, sneezes, shortness of breath, weakness, etc.); are over the age of 70, have chronic diseases (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, bronchial asthma and other respiratory diseases).

Employers in the construction sector are responsible to:

- Apply remote working mode as much as possible for the employees who can remotely do their job (administrative staff);
- Put a special doormat at the entrance of the lounge/dining room, with the appropriate sign on it;
- Provide employees with necessary personal protective equipment (special suits, special shoes, helmets, gloves, respirators) based on the specifics of the job and establish control over their use.

Recommendations for checkpoints, to protect the staff responsible for border control/thermo-screening

- Check the health condition of the staff before they start working;
- Apply transparent physical barriers to separate border guards and other workers from passengers;
- Use special separated areas, such as special, isolated rooms with a lockable door, to isolate passengers who are likely infected with COVID-19, including those who confirm that they have symptoms and/or signs of infection.
- If workers conduct passenger thermo-screening, they should use contactless (thermal sensor) thermometers to avoid contact with sick passengers and maintain maximum distance;

¹ Where employees are required to have frequent and/or close contact (with a distance of less than 2 meters) with people who are not infected or suspected of being infected with COVID-19. For example, crowded/close-distance workplaces, retail trade or other facilities, where a lot of customers gather.

- Use mandatory conditional signs to protect distance among passengers (mark floors with stickers);
- Regulate passenger flows in closed areas;
- Place relevant containers for biologically hazardous waste at places where employees take off special clothes and equipment and ensure that the waste is removed by the relevant person/service.

Recommendations for hotels

- Provide guests with information on preventive measures against COVID-19 upon arrival;
- Put up posters developed by the World Health Organization in hotel areas accessed by all guests;
- If any guest of the hotel has any of the above symptoms, isolate him/her and inform competent authorities of it immediately;
- Dispose the used hygiene products in closed containers and ensure their timely removal by the relevant person/service;
- Install a temporary transparent barrier in front of the registrar's desk in order to minimize the risk of infection through droplets.

Recommendations for the service provider sector (banks, pharmacies and trade facilities)

- Monitor the health condition of staff before they start working;
- Use the remote work method, if possible;
- Periodically ensure natural ventilation of closed areas/storage places, several times a day, as well as wet cleaning and disinfection of workplaces;
- Establish sanitary breaks during the work day. Assign a person to prepare the work platform according to the rules;
- Try to find ways to reduce the use of cash; encourage remote payments;
- Periodically clean the cell/landline phones according to the rules;
- Restrict customers' access to the facilities, or allow them to enter only a specific area. Develop a proper scheme and control the entry of limited number of customers into the facilities;
- Install temporary, transparent protective barriers in front of desks, where employees are in contact with customers, to minimize the risk of the spread of the infection through droplets, or in case of emergency, equip the staff with face shields, gloves and respirators;
- Use mandatory conditional signs to protect distance among customers (by using stickers/drawings on the floor).

Recommendations for the transport sector

- Monitor the health condition of employees before they start working;
- Place closed containers for used wipes and other hygiene waste;

- Ensure timely removal of used hygiene products by the relevant person/service;
- Install temporary protective barriers around drivers.

General recommendations for the mining sector

The employer is obliged to:

- Monitor the health condition of employees before they start working;
- Provide employees with personal protective equipment (respirators, gloves, face shields and goggles, if needed) and control their use;
- Apply remote working method as much as possible for the employees who can remotely do their job (administrative staff);
- Establish limits on working hours as much as possible; apply employee rotation;
- It is recommended that the number of people working in a closed area be no more than 10, with a distance of at least 2 meters between them;
- Ensure that the medical personnel check employees for virus symptoms before the start of the work process;
- Train staff for proper use and storage/removal of personal protective equipment and hygiene products.