



MANAGEMENT OF UN PERSONNEL WITH SYMPTOMS OF ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTION IN THE UN WORKPLACE

29 July 2020

In the course of their daily work, UN personnel may come into contact with someone with symptoms of acute respiratory infection (ARI) such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. This guide provides **basic steps to minimize risks of spreading infection – whether it is COVID-19 or any other respiratory illness** such as influenza. These steps should be modified for each workplace based on guidance from UN medical services and local authorities, and personnel should be encouraged to be familiar with them to ensure a safe, consistent response.

STEPS TO TAKE

Any UN personnel **who appears to have symptoms of an acute respiratory infection (i.e. cough, shortness of breath)** while in the workplace should:

- **Immediately isolate (separate) themselves from others - at least 1-2 meters away from others (or in a separate room).**
- **Be advised to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).**
- **Put on a medical mask as means of source control.**
- **If the UN personnel has shortness of breath/trouble breathing or is otherwise feeling moderate-severely unwell they should consult with a health care practitioner (See below) immediately as urgent/emergent medical attention may be required.**
- **If not then go home immediately and consult with a healthcare practitioner according to the available services at your location, (or a UN healthcare practitioner if available), first by telephone to let them know of symptoms and any relevant travel or exposure. The healthcare practitioner will advise of any testing or treatment required. Depending on the diagnosis healthcare practitioners will advise on when isolation can be discontinued as this differs for COVID-19 and other ARI causing pathogens.**
- **Advise their supervisor/HR by telephone or email in accordance with standard requirements for absence and sick leave.**

The immediate area and the surfaces where the ill person has been likely to spread infection by contact or droplet spread should be cleaned by being wiped down with disinfectant.

COVID-19 COMMUNICATION

All UN personnel at your duty station/office should be provided with a written plan adapted for your location – who to inform if a colleague is unwell, the steps above and important phone numbers and contact points. Information should be available on COVID-19 generally, and the measures being undertaken in the workplace to keep everyone safe and healthy. In order to minimize stigma, the risk of COVID-19 should be based solely on symptoms and exposure - determinations of risk based on race or country of origin are inconsistent with UN standards.

Resources: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>