

PUNJAB GOVT. ORDERS STATEWIDE LOCKDOWN, SEC 144 IMPOSED FROM MARCH 23 TO 31 TO COMBAT COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**CAPT AMARINDER APPEALS TO PEOPLE NOT TO LEAVE HOME EXCEPT IN ACUTE EMERGENCY, LIMITED PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO PLY**

**CHIEF SECY DIRECTS DCs TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTRICTIONS, DGP ORDERS DEPLOYMENT OF EXTRA FORCES**

**HOSPITALS, PHARMACIES, BANKS, ATMS, MEDIA, PETROL PUMPS, GROCERIES, E-COMMERCE EXEMPTED BY HEALTH DEPT.**

**INTERNET, TELECOM, COURIER SERVICES, FOOD, TAKE-AWAY RESTAURANTS & HALWAIS TO ALSO REMAIN UNAFFECTED**

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 22:

The Captain Amarinder Singh led Punjab Government has ordered a statewide lockdown from tomorrow morning till March 31, 2020, as an emergency measure to tackle the worsening COVID-19 situation.

All essential services will be available during the shutdown, which will take effect from 6 a.m. on Monday and will remain in force till 9 P.M. on March 31.

Even as the Chief Minister appealed to all residents of Punjab to observe all health safeguards, especially frequently washing hands, and to avoid leaving their homes unless there is an acute emergency, Chief Secretary Karan Avtar Singh clarified that there will be no curfew during the lockdown period but restrictions under Section 144 shall remain imposed, thus preventing more than 10 persons from getting together in a public space at any given time.

In addition to Electricity, Water and Municipal Services, Banks and ATMs, Print and Electronic Media including social media, Telecom/ Internet and Cable operators and concerned agencies, Postal services, courier services, essential IT services, along with E-Commerce and its home delivery, Shops of Food, Groceries, Milk, Bread, Eggs, Fruit, Vegetable, Meat, Poultry, Fish etc.(including departmental stores and supermarkets) and all other daily needs shall remain open. Restaurants/ bakeries, halwais, tea shops, eateries shall remain open for take-away or home delivery only (no seating or dine-in shall be permitted). Also, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Doctors, Vaidis,

Hakeems, Homeopaths, Chemist shops, Optical stores and Pharmaceuticals manufacturing, Petrol pumps, LPG gas, Oil agencies & godowns, petroleum refineries & depots, petrochemical products shall be exempt from the lockdown. Veterinary hospitals and gaushala will also be exempted from the lockdown.

The DCs of all the districts have been directed to ensure strict implementation of the restrictions. The Health Department made it clear that all persons are required to stay at home, and they may leave home only if necessary for obtaining essential services / items or for employment / duty.

To ensure strict implementation of the restrictions under Section 144, DGP Dinkar Gupta said extra forces were being deployed in all the districts. The police personnel shall take all precautions for their own safety and those of the people in whose contact they shall come during this period, he added.

“You can play the most vital role in preventing further transmission of the disease by not stepping out,” Captain Amarinder Singh said in his appeal to the people, adding that “During this period, all commercial establishments and shops shall remain closed except those dealing in essential commodities like food, grocery, medicines, etc. All essential services such as water supply, sanitation and electricity shall be maintained. Restrictions on public transport imposed earlier will continue till March 31st.”

Pointing out that the COVID-19 pandemic had emerged as the foremost global threat, the Chief Minister assured that his Government was fully prepared to face the challenge and had taken all possible precautionary measures so far. “However, we may be required to take more measures including imposing tougher restrictions to save our State and people from any major harm,” he added.

The Chief Minister further said that those residents who have recently returned from abroad are required to undergo home quarantine and report to the nearest Government health facility in case there is onset of any symptoms of the disease. The local community must also assist the administration in enforcing this in larger public interest, he further appealed.

Captain Amarinder also appealed to trade and businesses not only to ensure adequate supplies of essential commodities but to avoid hoarding and profiteering of any kind. It is important that we provide these commodities to our people at reasonable prices, he said, warning that the government “will not allow anyone to take undue advantage of the situation for their personal gains.”

Seeking the cooperation of the people in these testing times, the Chief Minister pointed out that a State Control Room had already been established for ensuring a coordinated effort amongst different departments of the State. Similar Control Rooms have also been established at all District HQs. People can reach out to the

Government on 181 and 104, he said, assuring of “an adequate and prompt response.”

Meanwhile, in his official notification issued in accordance with the Chief Minister’s orders, the Chief Secretary ordered shutdown of all establishments to break the transmission chain of contagion of COVID-19 “for which it is necessary to prevent/minimise close contact amongst all persons.”

“Henceforth, all the Deputy Commissioners/District Magistrates would issue orders under section 144 of CrPc or under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 for shut down of all establishments except those providing essential services/items in the districts from Monday March 23 March (6 am) till Tuesday i.e. March 31 (inclusive),” the Chief Secretary notified. The notification was followed by individual notifications by the respective DCs of all the districts.

The Chief Secretary’s notification said: “The Department of Food a Civil Supplies has already issued a list of essential commodities / items to all the Deputy Commissioners vide Letter no. IFD (1455-2020/866, dated 21-03-2020. In addition, eggs, poultry feed, media, e-commerce and essential IT services will also come under the category of essential items/services. Each DC may add any other essential item / service to this list as per local requirements to minimise disruption and ensure essential supplies.”

“All items / services mentioned in the notification includes production, manufacturing transport, storage, wholesale, retail etc, and they shall be included as essential items / services,” as per the notification. Further, all goods vehicles including those carrying the essential items are exempted under the notification, which, however, requires drivers and other work force involved in loading and unloading of the material to take all precautionary measures.

It has been clarified that the DCs will allow all ancillary activity for each item of essential services, such as delivery of newspapers by hawkers.

The Health Department has clarified that during the lockdown period, all private establishments such as shops, offices, factories, workshops etc. but excluding godowns & warehouses, shall remain closed. Further, no public transport services (passenger) including operation of taxis/ auto- rickshaws etc. shall be permitted except transport of all kinds to and from hospitals, airports, railway stations, bus terminals/ bus stands. In this context, it said specific routes to be allowed in the districts shall be decided by respective DCs. The Department of Transport may operate essential skeleton services of State Transport Undertaking to ensure essential services, it added. All inter-state commercial passenger transport (buses) shall be closed.

The Health Department has made it clear that strict home quarantine, for 14

days (excluding the day of arrival in India), shall be observed by all foreign returnees (who landed in India on or after 07.03.2020) and their contacts/ other persons at risk, as decided by the District Administration. All such foreign returnees shall also mandatorily contact the District Administration (104/112) and register themselves for home quarantine and download the COVA Punjab Mobile App), failing which they shall be liable for legal action.

An official spokesperson said that as per the orders issued by the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, the following services shall be considered as 'Essential Services', unless specifically ordered to be restricted by the appropriate authority in the Government.

Any postal, telegraph or telecom operators services, including any service connected therewith;

Any railway service or any transport service for the carriage of essential commodities.

Any service connected with the operation or maintenance of aerodromes, or with the operation, repair or maintenance of aircraft, or any service in the International Airports Authority of India constituted under section 3 of the International Airports Authority Act, 1971;(43 of 1971).

Any service in any establishment of, or connected with, the armed forces of the Union or in any other establishments of installations connected with defence;

Any service in any establishment or undertaking dealing with the production of goods required for any purpose connected with defence;

Any service in any section of any industrial undertaking pertaining to a scheduled industry on the working of which the safety of such undertaking or the employees employed therein depends.

(For the purposes of this sub-clause, the expressions "industrial undertaking" and "scheduled industry" shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in clauses (d) and (i) of section 3 of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951;(65 Of 1951).)

Any service in, or in connection with, the working of any undertaking owned or controlled by the State Government or Central Government being an undertaking engaged in the purchase, procurement, storage, supply or distribution of foodgrains;

Any service in, or in connection with the working of any system of public conservancy, sanitation or water supply, Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API), Bulk drugs and its intermediaries for hospitals or dispensaries in the state, cantonment area or undertaking owned or controlled by the Central or State Government;

Any service in connection with or in relation to Banking and Insurance ;

Any service in any establishment or undertaking dealing with the production, supply or distribution of coal, power, steel or fertilizers;

Any service in any oilfield or refinery or in any establishment or undertaking dealing with the production, supply or distribution of petroleum and petroleum products;

Any service in any mint or security press;

Any service in any establishment supplying food products including fruits, vegetables, meat and poultry.

Agrochemicals

Any other item as deemed essential and so declared by the concerned District Magistrate/District Commissioner, as per the clause xvi or xvii of section 2 (1) (a) of the aforesaid act.