

Procedures to be followed for loading/unloading and for transport of goods in international and domestic transport

Measures for the prevention of the spreading of the COVID-19 contagion must be applied by all participants in the chain of supply of goods to end users with a view to implementing all recommendations for personal and collective responsibility in preventing the spread of the virus, considering that the transportation process is a fundamental precondition for alleviating the consequences of the current pandemic. The transportation of goods is a precondition to maintain the normal functioning of the economy in a crisis situation. The measures shall be applied by the following groups of participants in the transpiration chain as follows:

1. Warehouses of recipients or suppliers of goods within production or retail companies, and customs warehouses where goods intended for transportation are loaded and unloaded:

- Warehouses shall be fully disinfected every 24 hours;
- Devices for personal disinfection of employees shall be installed; furthermore there shall be sufficient quantities of medical gloves and single-use masks provided and places shall be designated where the protection equipment shall be disposed of;
- Access to warehouses by persons who do not perform tasks directly related to the warehouses shall be limited;
- An isolated place shall be designated to place a counter for receipt and issuance of documents accompanying the goods if there are technical possibilities in the facilities; documents shall be placed in plastic folders or transparent paper folders and shall be given to persons placed in such folders (which gives the possibility to disinfect the surface of the folders). After the completion of the procedure of loading/unloading, documents for drivers shall be placed at the previously designated place/counter wherefrom drivers shall be able to pick up the documents upon the completion of the procedure, without having any contact with the person having processed the documents;
- Sanitary facilities shall be designated for use by employees working in warehouses and separate sanitary facilities for external persons (drivers and other persons participating in the goods transportation chain);
- The loading and unloading shall be performed by persons employed by the company, and drivers shall be excluded from the loading and unloading process; drivers shall stay in their truck cabins for the entire duration of the loading and unloading procedure, while the supplier of goods shall make a note in section 13 of the CMR form that the driver shall not attend the loading of the goods;

- Every employee shall be informed about the situation, measures undertaken at the national level and at the level of the company; they shall be furthermore informed about telephone numbers to be used for communication with in-line health authorities, while all communication shall be conducted electronically, this being a measure to reduce direct contact between employees.

2. Transporters engaged directly in transportation by freight vehicles in road transport:

- As employers, transporters shall ensure that all their facilities where they perform their primary activities are subject to special hygiene and disinfection procedures; the same special hygiene and disinfection procedures shall be applied also in the sanitary facilities of the transporters' places of operation;
- Gathering of larger groups of drivers in the facilities of the transporters shall be banned, documents shall be delivered by drivers by placing documents at a counter, if there are technical possibilities to install a counter; in other cases there shall be a special regime of presence of only one driver at a time in the office to deliver the transportation documents in possession of drivers relating to the transported goods (travel order, CMR form, bills for cash payments, and similar);
- Special folders or transparent paper folders shall be provided to be used by drivers to place in such folders documents relating to drivers and documents relating to the transported goods, which allows for the possibility to disinfect the surface of such folders;
- Vehicles used for transportation of goods, especially the truck cabin, must be disinfected every 24 hours, and drivers must be equipped with medical gloves, masks and antiseptic preparation for personal disinfection of the driver;
- Drivers shall use main transportation corridors in every country through which or in which the transportation is performed, without unnecessary stops at places with large groups of people; when filling the vehicle with fuel or when buying food drivers must wear medical gloves of which they shall dispose at designated places after use; drivers must have garbage bags in the truck cabin, which drivers will dispose of at every available garbage disposal place in the course of the transportation;
- In case drivers have any doubts that they have certain symptoms or when feeling weak, they must immediately report with a competent body in order for their health status to be checked;
- Every employee shall be informed about the situation, measures undertaken at the national level and at the level of the company; they shall be furthermore informed about telephone numbers to be used for communication with in-line health authorities, while all communication shall be conducted electronically, this being a measure to reduce direct contact between employees.
- Drivers who have been tested for COVID-19 and whose tests prove that they have not been infected and do not carry the virus shall be relieved of the obligation for a 14-day quarantine; if

drivers come back from risk regions in Europe, upon their return, they must report themselves with designated health centres according to the place of their residence in order to be tested. In case it has been established by the medical facility that drivers have no symptoms, drivers shall be issued a document confirming that they have been examined.

3. Forwarding agents performing activities at border crossing points and at customs terminals

- As employers, forwarding agents shall ensure that all their facilities where they perform their primary activities are subject to special hygiene and disinfection procedures; the same special hygiene and disinfection procedures shall be applied also in the sanitary facilities of the forwarding agents' places of operation;
- Forwarding agents shall limit visits by their clients in their offices to one or two clients at a time at the most, depending on the size of their facilities and the possibility to keep a safe distance of at least 1.5 m between persons or they shall introduce counters if technical conditions allow for placing a counter for contacts with clients;
- Special folders or transparent paper folders shall be provided in which documents issued to drivers shall be placed; they shall forward documents to in-line authorities placed in such folders for purpose of documents being processed under customs procedures and similar.

4. Border Control Authorities (customs officers, border police, and inspection authorities):

- Premises of state authorities at border crossing points, customs terminals and customs warehouses shall be disinfected every 24 hours, and personal hygiene is to be kept at all times;
- The personnel shall be equipped with medical gloves, medical masks, and disinfectant for personal use;
- Direct contact with participants in the transportation chain shall be conducted at a certain distance with a professional demeanour, both in regards to personal contact and in the execution of professional tasks;
- Each professional driver (domestic or foreign) must be interviewed in order to ascertain their route of movement, the protective measures undertaken and the manner of their implementation at the location of the loading of goods, as well as have their body temperature measured and, in the case of any cause for suspicion, undergo other types of medical examinations in accordance with the prescribed measures;

- Determine deadlines for transit transportation of foreign transporters passing through the territory of the country with a determined route of movement of their vehicles, for the purposes of avoiding any delays on the territory of the country (from the customs office of entry to the customs office of exit). In cases in which customs officers detect any unreasonable deviation from the expected travel times, they shall inform the On-duty Customs Centre, and in turn, the On-duty Customs Centre shall inform the relevant inspection services for the purposes of a detailed identification of the transporters and taking appropriate measures;

- In cases in which professional drivers (domestic or foreign) show symptoms of a disease, they shall be immediately put into quarantine and tested for the presence of COVID-19 in accordance with the prescribed procedures, and they shall be provided with a confirmation / permission (both in the Macedonian and in the English languages) as evidence that the person has been the subject of the appropriate tests. This confirmation / permission will be of further use in the process of transportation of goods as long as symptoms of the virus do not present themselves;

- In the context of a determined route and time for vehicles exiting the territory of our country, should there be a deviation from the rules on drivers' working hours in accordance with the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR), and the Law on Working Hours, Mandatory Vacations of Mobile Workers in Road Traffic, and on the Recording Devices in Road Traffic, police officers are obliged to issue a certificate for having enforced mandatory measures on drivers who use analogue tachograph, i.e. place a stamp, date, and record the time period describing the deviation from the rules on the tachograph tape, or, on the record of a digital tachograph.

5. Recommendations for transporters travelling to medium and high-risk countries

Persons travelling across COVID-19 medium and high-risk countries while operating heavy motor vehicles transporting food and other products are advised to adhere to the following measures for personal and collective protection over the course of their transit and stay in those countries:

1. Contacts and movements outside travel routes from point A to point B shall be limited, except for buying food and going to the toilet;

2. Contacts with other persons shall be banned;

3. When necessary to buy food or go to the toilet, the drivers shall be obligated to use the following means of personal protection:

- Single-use disposable medical gloves;
- N 95 or single-filter FFP 3 protective face masks;
- There is no obligation to wear protective coats or medical protective goggles and medical galoshes.

When parking and staying in motels, hotels, and restaurants, due to the possibility of coming into direct respiratory contact with persons infected with COVID-19 in such facilities, drivers are advised to take the following measures:

- sleep in the cabins of their vehicles.

When returning to the Republic of North Macedonia, drivers are advised to contact the Centre for Public Health, as the relevant epidemiological service, in order to receive further instructions on measures and procedures to be taken should they develop symptoms of the disease.

During travel:

- **After each contact in any supermarket, store, toilet, or similar, drivers are obligated to disinfect their hands;**
- **Drivers must explicitly avoid remaining in contact with other persons for longer than 10-15 seconds (especially with persons showing symptoms of the disease);**
- **Drivers must ventilate their cabins as frequently as possible during travelling by allowing fresh air inside;**
- **While in their cabins, drivers shall not be required to wear personal protective gear;**
- **Drivers shall be banned from taking any stowaway passengers on board their vehicles;**
- **Drivers shall be obligated to carry alcohol-based hand disinfectants for their personal use during travelling.**

Associations of licensed transporters of goods are hereby required **to henceforth inform transporters to prepare operating plans to rotate drivers**, i.e. the manner of alternating individual drivers when travelling to medium and high-risk countries.

Important notice:

The regulations for transporters and warehouses listed herein shall also apply to domestic transport of goods during the distribution of goods to companies delivering goods to end users.

Scheduled and chartered transport of passengers to and from high-risk countries shall be banned, whereas precaution measures, disinfection of buses and minivans, as well as carrying disinfectants for passengers to be used when boarding vehicles, shall be introduced in domestic transport of passengers.

