

NATIONAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS MARKET PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES DURING CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 is primarily a public health pandemic which will have far-reaching effects on Kenya's economic and social fabric. To mitigate the effects of the health crisis on the economy, it is prudent that markets (important links in distributing essential goods during this period) operate within safety standards while observing the public health measures that the Government has put in place.

The Kenya Constitution 2010 vested the management of markets to the County Governments. However, the National Government is expected to provide guidelines and collaborate with County Governments to ensure full enforcement especially in times of crises as the one being experienced currently.

Therefore, National Government has developed standardised guidelines to enhance operational efficiency in the markets during this emergency period. They aim to create order in market operations to allow essential goods to reach the end consumer safely.

There are two categories of markets in the country: (a) those with built-up and well-established infrastructure, particularly those in major cities and towns across the country, and (b) open air markets including (vibandas) spread across many rural and urban trading centres. Whereas the urban based markets operate daily, most of those in rural trading centres operate once a week except the vibandas, at most. Those in cities and towns tend to deal mainly in food products – fresh produce and cereals while those in rural centre tend to deal in mixed products. Often, those in rural centres will have separate areas for livestock.

Government/Regulators Responsibility

Appoint market management committees comprising officers from the Department of Interior and Coordination of National Government (Chiefs and Sub Chiefs); Directorate of Domestic Trade of the State Department for Trade and the respective County Government (departments like Trade, Agriculture & Livestock/Fisheries, Department of Public Health/Meat Inspectors, office of the Governor - County Askaris) – these officers should be provided with the health-related gadgets and clothing (PPE). Their role will be to coordinate security and compliance with restrictions arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of importance to the County Emergency Response Committee is to device an effective way to manage human traffic (and effect social distancing) so as not to compromise livelihood and health of those at the markets whether they are administrators, traders or buyers (Consumers).

Markets with built-up infrastructure

These have entry and exits to the market, overseen by market masters/superintendents, public health officials, security and a leadership structure for the tenants/sellers (market committees). These structures are to be used to:

- i. Fumigate the markets well before the traders set up their wares.
- ii. Designate and manage entry/exit points and set up hand-washing and hand sanitation facilities at the gates.
- iii. Set up hand washing points at vantage locations within the market so that the vendors can regularly wash/sanitize their hands
- iv. Make use of the traders' leadership during laying out of wares to ensure adequate space between vendors is provided for. (partition stands to allow for social distancing)

- v. Display wares on raised platforms/stands/tables.
- vi. Ensure that bags/items carried by customers are disinfected
- vii. Make use of the security to control entry into the markets as a congestion management system.
- viii. Regular collection of garbage to enhance hygiene.
- ix. Ensure availability of temperature testers and undertake random tests on buyers and sellers at the markets.
- x. Designated places should be identified for those sellers and buyers doing businesses just outside the structured markets by the respective country authorities.
- xi. Encourage the use of hand gloves and face masks among the market operators where necessary or ensure that the market users strictly and regularly wash their hand and or use sanitizers on gloves during market operations.
- xii. Develop a COVID – 19 safety message to be passed to market operators.
- xiii. Discourage more numbers from the same family going to the market at the same time.
- xiv. Discourage payment in cash except when the buyers and sellers use hand gloves
- xv. Make use of the existing market structure such as market masters, market superintendent, and askaris to enforce the recommendations or engage county trade officers in collaboration with market committees and structures to enforce the guidelines
- xvi. Sensitize the market users on COVID-19 to let them know that this is a catastrophe and not the time to take opportunity to make fortune. Sensitize sellers on the dangers and effects of hiking prices. This can be done through local FMs a long side COVID-19 awareness campaigns.

Open-air markets

- i. For congested open-air markets, Counties should prepare a new layout plan with markings on the floor separating sellers from each other and a line demarcated for buyers to maintain social distancing to curb the spread of the virus
- ii. Establish additional markets in underutilized open spaces within the area to further decongest overcrowded markets. The County administration in collaboration with the Ministry of Devolution should temporarily use open spaces such as stadia to allocate traders space for selling food and vegetables while taking into consideration social distancing measures as recommended by the Ministry of Health.
- iii. Disinfect and clean the open grounds used as temporary markets before every market day;
- iv. Fruits and vegetables should be sold on a raised platforms/stands in open air markets;
- v. Collaborate with owners of water bowzers to provide water for hand washing/sanitization at vantage points across the open market;
- vi. Promote proper hygienic conditions through the provision of proper washroom facilities;
- vii. Employ proper garbage and waste disposal mechanisms to avoid the spread of the Corona Virus;
- viii. Turn distribution trucks into mini stores by directing the trucks into residential estates from where people can buy directly from the trucks to reduce overcrowding in established open markets;
- xvii. Encourage the use of hand gloves and face masks among the market users where necessary or ensure that the market users strictly and regularly wash their hand during market operations.
- ix. Discourage the cutting of vegetables at the market place and let the buyer prepare the vegetable on his own;
- x. Discourage the sale of salads at the market place;

- xi. Handle vegetable and fruits hygienically by ensuring clean and disinfected gloves all the time by the seller or ensure strict hand washing throughout the market operations;
- xii. Develop covid-19 awareness creation message to be passed to the market users;
- xiii. If possible discourage the handling of hard cash by hand except when both buyer and seller use hand gloves.
- xiv. Make use of the existing market structure to enforce the recommendations or engage county trade officers in collaboration with market committees or structures to enforce the guidelines
- xv. Sensitize the market users on COVID-19 to let them know that this is a catastrophe and not the time to take opportunity to make fortune. Sensitize sellers on the dangers and effects of hiking prices. This can be done through local FMs alongside COVID-19 awareness messages.
- xvi. County Governments to collaborate with market service providers and set up systems to monitor food prices and report prices of key commodities in major markets on daily basis. In addition, they should organize market operations to facilitate movement and selling of agricultural produce in major markets.
- xvii. Food supply chain service providers to provide real time data on marketing of food commodities as an early warning system for food shortages.
- xviii. County Governments to collaborate with the National Police Service and National Government Administration to facilitate security in designated markets and food marketing premises for smooth operations during the period
1. All guidelines issued by Ministry of Health on COVID 19 must be adhered to (*see Annex I and II*).

ANNEX I: MINISTRY OF HEALTH GUIDELINES ON COVID-19 MANAGEMENT

Considering that the COVID-19 disease has now been classified as a pandemic we are taking precautionary measures. All Kenyans should observe the following:

- i. Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ii. Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter (5 feet) between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- iii. Persons with a cough or sneezing should stay home or keep a social distance, but avoid mixing with others in a crowd.
- iv. Maintain good respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth and nose while coughing and sneezing with a handkerchief, tissue, or into flexed elbow.
- v. Stay at home if you feel unwell with symptoms like fever, cough and difficulty in breathing.
- vi. Suspend all public gatherings, meetings, religious crusades games events etc. Normal church services can go on provided they provide sanitizing/and hand washing.
- vii. Suspend all inter – school events, but keep schools open.
- viii. Public transport providers are directed to provide hand sanitizers for their clients and regular cleaning of the vehicles. Matatus should carry the required passengers to maintain social distance, provide sanitizers and their vehicles should be disinfected regularly.

- ix. Temporary suspension of prison visits for the next 30 days.
- x. Kenyans must not abuse social media platforms or indulge in spreading misinformation that can cause fear and panic.
- xi. Travel restrictions outside the country unless absolutely necessary and no travel to disease epicenter countries.
- xii. All persons visiting public places such as supermarkets, open air markets, public transport should at all times wear a face mask to reduce the chances of transmission of the virus.
- xiii. Utilize the call line facility number 719 to report on any cases regarding the disease and *719# to receive the correct messages.

Annex II: East African Guidelines of Free Movement of Cargo

The Guidelines are to facilitate the movement of cargo across official border points as follows:

- 1.1. Fumigation of all containers and trucks at point of departure in line with Ministry of health existing directives.
- 1.2. Monitoring of Cargo Crew moving cargo across the border -
 - a) All trucks to have a maximum of two (2) cargo crew consisting of the Driver and the Loader.
 - b) Designating Government recommended hotels/ Lodges within designated trading centers along the transit route for the Cargo Crew.
 - c) Fumigation of Designated hotels/ Lodges and its environments.

- d) Provision of sanitizers, disinfectant and clean water to enhance hygiene.
 - e) Screening of the Cargo crew from the point of departure, designated screening points along the transit route and point of exit by Port Health officials or such other designated officials.
 - f) To address the fourteen (14) day quarantine requirement and facilitate a quick turn-around of the Cargo crew, designate hotel destinations in other countries.
- 1.3. Designation of fuel collection points from Kenya to other countries destinations shall be limited to Kisumu and Eldoret fuel depots.
- 1.4. Ensure Twenty-Four (24) hours operations at all official border points and enhance resources of the Agencies at the borders for increased efficiency. Where possible, agencies are encouraged to undertake advance processing and clearance of cargo.
- 1.5. In collaboration with the private sector, ensure training of cargo crew on safety precautions to be taken to avoid any spread of Corona (COVID 19), self-monitoring of symptoms and reporting mechanisms.
- 1.6. Enhance information dissemination strategies on Corona (COVID 19) through various media platforms.
- 1.7. Ensure strict enforcement of relevant Health Declarations by Ministry of Health especially for COVID 19 at all official border points.

Transporters and loaders/porters

- i. Ensure the trucks transporting produce are disinfected prior to loading;
- ii. Regularly test the loaders and porters for the virus as they often mingle with the traders and buyers and are potential carriers of the virus;
- iii. Discourage over crowding around the trucks at the loading area by vendors;
- iv. Encourage use of protective gears, gloves and masks.

Other measures to employ

- i. Encourage use of random temperature check at supermarket entrances;
- ii. Supermarkets to manage human traffic within the shopping aisles in order to minimize crowding around the shelves;
- iii. Customers and suppliers providing supportive distributive networks for essential products must adhere to the one-meter social distancing rule;
- iv. Operators/traders of essential goods across the country are responsible for managing the number of clients at their premises, always adhering to the social distancing measures.