
GUIDELINES – SUMMARY

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF INFECTION IN IFRC VEHICLES

Covid-19 Pandemic



1. Introduction

This guideline has been developed as part of the IFRC ongoing commitment to promote optimal standards of Infection Control within the organisation and working to support the effort of the National Societies in the fight against Covid-19 Pandemic. It promotes the use of 'Standard Principles of Infection Control' with the principle that every passenger is a potential risk of Covid-19 virus infection as the status of most people is unknown.

The guideline encourages physical distancing and use of personal protective equipment, which will support staff in minimising the risk of contracting Covid-19 virus. Every staff member and NS volunteers have the responsibility to reduce such risks, and adherence to the procedures contained in this guideline will help ensure a safer environment for all concerned.

2. Scope and purpose

This document is intended for all users of IFRC vehicles, loaned or rental vehicles used for the movement of IFRC staff/volunteers in a sitting position in their duty care activities. The aim to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 through IFRC vehicle used for the transportation of passengers or dead body management for burial activities.

3. Standard precautions of infection control

3.1. Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is the single most effective measure in the prevention of the spread of infection. Regular Hand washing has been shown to play a very important role in the prevention of healthcare associated infections.

Soap and water or alcohol hand sanitizer are an effective and rapid means of hand decontamination, used on visibly clean hands. They are useful in situations where hand-washing facilities are inadequate, or where frequent hand cleansing is necessary. Hands must be decontaminated before and after each activity performed in the use of IFRC vehicles or whenever been in contact with suspected soiled surfaces or objects.

3.2. Personal Protective Clothing and equipment

The wearing of PPE is one of the standard precautions for preventing and controlling the spread of Covid-19 virus that should be practised by all staff working in high risk setup and involved in dead body management activities. For the PPE usage in different context, please refer to the IFRC Personal Protective Equipment Guide COVID-19, in following link.

<https://www.preparecenter.org/resource/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-health-help-desk-covid-19/>

3.3. Non-Touch Seating Allocation in vehicle (Physical Distancing) and ventilation

The most effective way to protect oneself and others from Covid-19 is to practise physical distancing in a vehicle while sharing with other passengers. The design layouts with specific seating arrangement in a vehicle with additional partitioning measures can contribute in reducing the risk of transmission.

- The space and distance between people must be considered to minimize, at least 1-meter distance between each person on board.
- Driver separation partition with passengers may be attainable through local modification.
- Maximum of 3 people per vehicle (driver + 2 x passenger/patient) in a Land Cruiser HZJ76 or HZJ79 "Double Cabin" or a city vehicle.

- Maximum 1 person (driver) per vehicle in a Land Cruiser HZJ79 "Single Cabin" and maximum 1 person per seat when using a minibus.

3.4. Special precautions

In addition to the usual barrier gestures in the context of Covid-19 (safety distance, coughing/sneezing in the elbow hollow or a disposable handkerchief thrown immediately after use, hand hygiene...) it is important to respect the following gestures:

- Daily cleaning of vehicle using the cleaning procedures
- Hand washing while getting in/out the vehicle and maintaining distance.
- Roll window open: The front and rear window should be opened to create negative pressure and air flow
- Use of heating and air conditioning only if windows are closed; never activate inside air recycling option of the A/C.

4. Vehicles and equipment

Vehicle use will be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, so it must be included in the strategy of movement and use of vehicles. It is therefore essential to assess the real need and the capacity of your fleet of vehicles by considering the following:

- Reduction of HR capacity due to confinement context.
- The reduction in transport capacity per vehicle due to the reduction in available seats (respect for distances between passengers).
- The time it takes to clean-disinfect vehicles.

4.1. Standard Vehicle - Passenger transportation

Preparation

- Clean and disinfect the vehicle using the "daily" and "weekly" procedure
- Remove from the vehicle anything that is not necessary.
- If possible, protect the vehicle's seats with machine washable or waterproof protective covers.
- Make on-board access plans, determine the number of passengers and seats to be occupied, display them.
- Display available prevention signs inside and outside the car.

On-board equipment

Chlorine disinfectant sprayer, soap or hydro-alcoholic gel, disposable wipes or fabrics and garbage bags.

4.2. Ambulance and Mobile Health Units – Patient transportation

Ambulances are used to respond to medical emergencies as such with COVID-19 Pandemic. The IFRC provides technical support to the National Societies operating Emergency Medical Services with ambulance specifications design to have adequate patient transportation units to treatment referral centres. These ambulances transport paramedics and other first responders from NS volunteers to the scene, carrying equipment for administering emergency care. The provision of adequate equipment and tools will prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus and minimise the of risk of infection. The specific IPC procedures for ambulance usage, cleaning and decontamination are clearly defined in PAHO's EMS guidance, reference below links:

<https://www.preparecenter.org/resource/clinical-andprehospital-health-help-desk-covid-19/>

<https://www.paho.org/en/documents/recommendations-prehospital-emergency-medicalservices-ems-covid-19>

4.3. Management of the dead body

4.3.1 Transportation of secured bodies

Vehicles directly involved in transporting secured bodies (in decontaminated body bags or coffins) in COVID-19 Response, in particular the Toyota Land Cruiser Pickup units, should be disinfected as per standard protocols for regular vehicles transporting other people. Special precautions are not required.

4.3.2 Transportation of unsecured bodies

Vehicles directly involved in transporting unsecured/unprepared bodies in mass fatality scenarios in COVID-19 Response, in particular the Toyota Land Cruiser Pickup units, should be first cleaned with regular household soap or detergent and then, after rinsing, disinfected with regular household disinfectant containing 0.5% sodium hypochlorite or with 0.5% free chlorine solution. PPE should be worn while cleaning, including mask, goggles, a fluid-resistant apron, and gloves, and hand hygiene with soap and water should be performed after removing PPE.

In order to address the issues of potential damage to the original vehicle paint and consequential rusting of the vehicle, it is recommended to protect the cargo bed with an epoxy marine paint and a hard top canopy with internal compartments to enable easy access and handling during loading/unloading of Covid-19 victims must be fitted on the cargo body.

Preparation

- Clean and disinfect the vehicle using the "daily" and "weekly" procedure
- Remove from the vehicle anything that is not necessary.
- If possible, protect the vehicle's seats with machine washable or waterproof protective covers.
- Display available prevention signs inside the cargo bed canopy

On-board equipment

Chlorine disinfectant sprayer, soap or hydro-alcoholic gel, disposable wipes, and garbage bags.

5. Vehicles cleaning and decontamination procedures

To ensure effective disinfection of vehicles and equipment, detergents, disinfectants and cleaning materials are available for use a daily routine cleaning.

- All visible surfaces to be wiped over with detergent and water. (take care with any electrical equipment)
- Start at the back, inside the vehicle and then move to the outside.
- All frequently touched interior surfaces (seats, harm rests, interior/exterior door handles, belt buckles and driver controls, interior dashboard and door panels, radio) shall be sprayed with a 0.5% bleach solution and left in the open air to dry for 10 minutes.
- The vehicle floor to be mopped with detergent.
- The cab area should be cleaned separately - attention to steering wheel, gear leaver, indicators and hand break.

6. Waste Management

Common waste: (wipes, disposable seat covers...) are deposited in a a solid garbage bag. This garbage must be destroyed according to the same procedures as medical waste from a health care structure if they are used in a patient interaction.

7. Appendix and reference document

For further IPC detailed processes applicable to IFRC vehicles, please refer to the IFRC Vehicle Covid-19 guideline – annexe to this summary.