

Maharashtra Lockdown Extension guidelines

As the nation begins to lift lockdown from non-containment zone areas, every state has its own formula and set of guidelines. Here are Maharashtra's rules.

Maharashtra, the worst-affected among COVID-19 pandemic-hit states across India, gears up for what it calls 'Mission Begin Again'. The state has issued strict guidelines about how it plans to achieve the same so as to end the pandemic soon.

As Lockdown 5.0 comes into implementation across India, barring containment zones, all other zones will see a phased lift-off of restrictions imposed to stall the march of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Centre has agreed to allow playroom to states as the pandemic is playing out differently in individual states. There is a rider there, though. The states cannot arbitrarily lift or impose restrictions without paying impetus to the Centre's key guidelines.

The Maharashtra government on Monday announced rules for passengers travelling through the airports in Mumbai and others in the state amid the coronavirus lockdown. Limited domestic air travel resumed across the country on Monday amid disarray after some states restricted the number of flights hours before departure, causing last-minute cancellations and leaving hundreds of passengers stranded.

Airlines, including IndiGo, India's biggest carrier, SpiceJet and Vistara had been preparing to resume operations from Monday with about a third of their capacity amid strict rules. But new restrictions at major airports, including Mumbai and Chennai, forced airlines to scramble late on Sunday to revise schedules.

Worst-affected by the coronavirus pandemic in India, Maharashtra, which said it will allow 25 flights to Mumbai for now, announced a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines for travellers coming into the state. These include:

- All passengers will be advised to download the Aarogya Setu app.

- They will have to declare that they are not coming from any containment zone and don't have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- They will also need to declare that they have not tested coronavirus positive in the last two months and are not under quarantine.
- Anyone travelling without meeting the required conditions will face action.
- Airlines and airports will ensure social distancing at all times and thermal screening.
- All passengers, crew and other staff will have to wear masks and follow sanitation rules.
- All passengers will be stamped on their left hand and be under home isolation for 14 days.
- Local officials will be authorised to give exemptions to isolation rule for important work.
- Passengers who are coming to the state for less than one week will be exempt from home isolation.
- Passengers will not be allowed into containment zones of hotspot areas.
- Authorities need to be informed of where a passenger is staying if other than their homes.
- Passengers are permitted to travel in their personal vehicles to the airport as long as they don't travel from a containment zone.

For offices and workplaces

Since more offices are likely to go operational in the near future, the state has issued guidelines for its employees. In a public health department order dated May 30, it has asked the employees to effectively use e-office regime, avoid travelling in groups, sanitise working places regularly.

It has also mandated for the regular checking of the employees with an infrared thermal scanner, use of three-layer masks, etc.

The order also stated that any employee found with a temperature more than 100.4 degrees should be institutionally quarantined and

workplaces found with more than 5 positive patients to be fumigated and sealed.

Meanwhile, Madhav Sathe, former microbiology professor at Nair

Hospital said, "We should hope India has reached the peak of the coronavirus graph and cases will slowly decrease over the next 3 to 4 weeks. Recovery rate has also increased to around 41 to 42% This may improve if the best treatment strategy gets emerged in the next few weeks in India."

Sathe added, "By mid-July most cases will be milder." On whether Mumbai can get ride of lockdown by July, Sathe said crowding still may have to be avoided. "With maximum precautions, mask, eye shield, washing hands after reaching office and maintaining good immunity is all that will be needed, and crowding still will have to be avoided," he said.

maintaining good immunity