

No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A)
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs

North Block, New Delhi-110001
Dated 26th March, 2020

To

Chief Secretaries/Administrators of
All States/Union Territories
(As per list attached)

Subject: Ref: Ministry of Home Affairs Order no. No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) Dated 24.03.2020; and 25.03.2020 – issue of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for maintaining supply of Essential Goods.

Sir/Madam,

Please refer to Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)'s Order No. 40-3/2020-D-I(A) dated 24th March, 2020 under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 regarding measures to be taken by Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, State/Union Territory Governments and State/ Union Territory Authorities for containment of COVID-19 Epidemic in the Country.

2. The purpose of these measures is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 epidemic by ensuring social distancing while maintaining supply of essential goods, including health infrastructure and home delivery of food. Accordingly, the guidelines annexed to the said Order, under exception to lockdown measures, specify shops, including ration shops, dealing with food, groceries, fruits and vegetables, dairy and milk products, meat and fish, animal fodder, seeds and pesticides and home delivery of these essential goods shall be encouraged. It is also provided that delivery of all essential goods including food, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment through eCommerce will remain operational. Further, para 15 of the Guidelines provides that all enforcing authorities to note that these strict restrictions fundamentally relate to movement of people, but not to that of essential goods. It is therefore, important that availability of essential goods is ensured to relieve the hardship faced by people during the period of lockdown. In this regard, Standard operating procedure (SOP) for smooth supply of Essential Goods, is annexed, which may be followed.


(Ajay Kumar Bhalla)
Home Secretary

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**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for maintaining supply
of Essential Goods.**

The availability of essential goods takes place through small local retail shops, large organized retail stores and e-Commerce companies. In order to ensure smooth functioning of these three types of operators, it is important that following constituents of the supply chain, are also allowed to operate:

- a) Suppliers of essential goods, including restaurants supplying home delivery of cooked food items;
- b) Facilities for storage of such essential goods which, may be known as warehouse, godown etc.;
- c) Transporters/ drivers/ loaders etc. of essential goods from the place of manufacture to wholesalers and/or retailers. Such transportation may involve intra-city, inter-city in same state/UT or inter-state movement of essential goods;
- d) Manufacturing units of essential goods including drugs, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, their raw material and intermediates.

3. Accordingly, the following standard operating procedure is suggested for ensuring smooth availability of essential goods:

- i. All facilities in the supply chain of essential goods, whether involved in manufacturing, wholesale or retail of such goods through local stores, large brick and mortar stores or e-Commerce companies should be allowed to operate, ensuring strict social distancing.
- ii. All such facilities as registered with the State Government/UT under the Shops and Establishment registration regime, which can be used to randomly verify the veracity of documents produced.
- iii. While warehousing facilities with wholesalers and retailers of essential goods might have non-essential goods, they should not be closed down for the fact that non-essential items are also stored.
- iv. The retail end of the supply chain shall operate only in essential goods as specified in the orders of MHA. They will provide an undertaking to this effect and also allow subsequent audit of their records with a view to ensure compliance.
- v. The employees or persons engaged in the supply chain shall be allowed to commute on the basis of e-pass or any other certification issued by the concerned local authority (ies). In addition, the said employee/ person shall carry a valid photo identification card.

- vi. In case of unorganized sector, persons engaged in supply of essential goods may be allowed based on approval/ authorization issued by local authority (ies).
- vii. These commercial entities will ensure that they engage only bare minimum staff to supply essential goods only.
- viii. These facilities shall carry out regular health and sanitation check-up of employees engaged and will provide them with proper protective gear.
- ix. The State Government shall open a 24X7 control room to register complaints/grievances and share these numbers widely.
