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Home Secretary
भारत सरकार
Government of India
North Block,
New Delhi

D.O. No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A)

03rd April, 2020

Dear **Chief Secretary,**

Kindly refer to the consolidated guidelines on the lockdown 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, as notified by Ministry of Home Affairs on 24.03.2020 and further modified on 25.03.2020, 26.03.2020 and 02.04.2020.

2. **Vide the above guidelines, "laboratories" have been exempted from lockdown restrictions. This includes the testing laboratories in the private sector for Covid-19 samples. These samples are collected through various collection centres, and thereafter transported to the aforesaid laboratories. The opening up of temporary collection centres, movement of lab technicians and transportation of samples from the collection centres to the laboratories is to be allowed and exempted from any lockdown restrictions on movement.**

3. Additionally, exceptions to sale (including through eCommerce), production, warehousing and transport of essential goods such as food, groceries, fruits and vegetables, dairy and milk products, meat and fish, animal fodder, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, agriculture produce, drugs, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, their raw material and intermediaries have been specifically mentioned in the aforesaid guidelines. In my letter dated 29 October, 2020, it was clarified that grocery would include hygiene products such as hand washes, soaps, disinfectants, body wash, shampoos, surface cleaners, detergents and tissue papers, toothpaste / oral care, sanitary pads and diapers, charger and battery cells etc.

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4. At the ground level different interpretations are being made on the items given exceptions, which hinder smooth flow of supply chain of these essential items. Suggestions have been received from some quarters in regard to these Guidelines. In order to further streamline supplies of essential goods, following clarifications are issued:-

- i) Queries have been received as to what constitutes food and grocery. Since it is neither feasible nor desirable to mention each item of food and grocery in the guidelines, the State/UT Governments are advised to interpret these terms to mean all items of food and grocery that are usually consumed by people on day to day basis.
- ii) Production, warehousing and transport of essential goods are included under exceptions in the guidelines and the district authorities are issuing individual passes to businesses covered in the exempted category. Difficulties in getting passes are, however, being faced by businesses having nation-wide supply chains of essential goods. In order to address this concern, the State/UT Governments are advised to issue authorization letters to companies/ organizations having nation-wide supply chains of essential goods, allowing them to issue regional passes for easy movement of critical staff and workers in order to maintain their national supply chains. The numbers of such authorisations should be kept to bare minimum.
- iii) While operations of Railways, Airports and Seaports for cargo movement, relief and evacuation is allowed under the guidelines, difficulties are being faced in obtaining passes from district authorities in some cases. In order to address this and to accelerate unloading and mobility of goods across the country, the designated authorities under Railways, Ports and Airports be allowed to issue passes for a critical mass of staff and contractual labour that are essential for such operations.

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- iv) Finally, inter-state and intra-state movement of all trucks and other goods / carrier vehicles with one driver and one additional person is allowed as long as the driver is carrying a valid driver's license. If the truck/ vehicle is travelling empty, invoice, way-bill etc. for delivery or pick up of goods may additionally be carried by the drivers. Movement of driver and one person from their place of residence to truck should also be facilitated by local authorities.
- v) All movement of persons with the passes shall be subject to strict adherence to norms for hygiene and social distancing as is required in the context of COVID19.
5. District authorities and field agencies may please be informed on the above accordingly, so as to avoid any ambiguity at the ground level.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Ajay Bhalla)

Chief Secretaries of All States
(As per Standard List attached)