



Standard Operating Procedures in case of Pandemic

Recommendations on measures to be
considered in pandemic-type situations



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Background

During the COVID-19 outbreak and its spread around the world and throughout wider Europe, countries directed their attention and efforts to limiting its further spread among their populations. Countries undertook a variety of practices and measures in hopes of resolving the issue as soon as possible. These actions and practices involved measures such as police curfews, limitations on movement, bans on border crossings, etc.

To be able to ensure the continuity of work and the provision of their regular services (e.g. criminal investigations, border surveillance, etc.), law enforcement services (LE), as part of “first response organizations”, needed to adapt to the new circumstances in real time, thus facing new challenges and additional pressure.

The main challenges of police organisations during this time were ensuring the safety of officers working in the field, continuing to provide their services with as little interruption as possible, and maintaining the highest possible respect for human rights during this state of emergency while implementing urgent parliamentary or governmental decisions in order to establish control over the spread of COVID-19.

In an endeavour to support the efforts in reducing the negative impact of potential future cases of natural and/or human-made disasters on the work continuity of LE services, on both strategic and operational level, DCAF Ljubljana (within its Border Security Programme – hereinafter BSP) engaged in preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on responding to pandemic situations.

The aim of the SOPs is to formulate a **series of steps and recommendations to be considered on strategic and operational level**, in order **to best respond to acute extraordinary situations** which may present themselves.

The SOPs are being developed through a combination of a top-down and bottom-up approach, in cooperation and coordination with expert representatives of relevant services of the BSP beneficiaries, specifically those working in the field of response planning, operational planning and risk analysis.

The recommendations listed on the following pages, on the measures to be considered when faced with a pandemic-type situation, were extrapolated from the responses obtained from the representatives of the relevant LE services of the BSP beneficiaries.

As such, they do not represent an exhaustive list of measures to be implemented and should be updated, contextualised to reflect the specific situation in each of the beneficiary.

The list does not necessarily present a final structure and division of recommendations and will be adjusted to consider the feedback received by the representatives of LE services of BSP beneficiaries.

The recommendations are grouped in the following categories:

1. General
2. Protective Equipment
3. Offices and other premises
4. Measures Within the Police - Meetings
5. Measures Within the Police – Education and training
6. Measures Within the Police – Work from home
7. Measures Within the Police – Strategic reserve
8. Measures Within the Police – Monitoring of situation
9. Procedures in case of detected infection
10. Possible operational measures (other measures not ordinarily falling within the work of police)
11. Establishment of a 24/7 operational centre
12. International cooperation
13. Interviews, interrogations, complaints...
14. Regular procedures (patrols, traffic, public order...)
15. Use of vehicles
16. Additional measures at the green/blue border – foreigners
17. Additional measures at the BCPs
18. Informing the public
19. Police call centre

SOPs

1. General

- Prepare an action plan on approaching the pandemic situations.
- Prepare instructions on safe work-performance for all employees.
 - The instructions should contain expected actions of employees in implementing preventive measures for the spread of infection. The instructions should include the following areas: the use and handling of protective equipment, safety measures in all premises, procedures and duties of employees in case of detected signs of infection or notification on contact with an infected person, adjustment of work activities and execution of powers.
- Distribute the instructions to all organisational units.
- Ensure that all employees are familiarised with the prepared instructions.
 - Establish a system which ensures that all employees in the organization are kept up to date with the instructions, regardless of the position they hold.
- Update the instructions as the situation develops.
 - Update the instructions to reflect the changes in the security situation, taking into consideration latest recommendations and developments.
- Ensure that all employees are familiarised with the changes in the instructions (with the updated instructions).
- Prepare separate instructions for the management.
 - In addition to the instructions for all employee on expected actions in implementing preventive measures for the spread of infection, instructions for the leadership and management staff at all organisational levels need to be prepared. These instructions include various organisational aspects that need to be taken into consideration and provided by the leadership and management staff.
- Establish a system of informing the employees regarding the measures in place on all levels of the police.
- Promote vaccination among employees.
 - Depending on the availability of a vaccine, the vaccination should be promoted among the employees and (if possible) organised by the Service. Depending on the epidemiological situation, periodic (weekly) testing of non-vaccinated employees should be organised.

2. Protective Equipment

- Purchase a sufficient number of protective equipment (masks, gloves, disinfectant, other).

Type of appropriate protective equipment should be identified by a professional expert body, based on the known characteristics of the spread of the viral infection.

Purchase should be done at a central level.

- Distribute the protective equipment to all units. Make sure all employees have sufficient number of items of protective equipment.

The “sufficient number of items” can be calculated based on the average daily consumption per unit. It is

recommended that each unit has sufficient number of items for the next 30 days.

- Maintain a sufficient stock of protective equipment available (o a national level).

The “sufficient number” on a national level depends on the average daily consumption. It is recommended that there is a sufficient stock of items for at least 90 days. This number should be increased when experiencing problems in delivery or when such problems are to be expected.

- Keep track of the consumption of protective equipment.
- Familiarise all employees with the instructions on the proper use of protective equipment and the proper disposal of used items.
- Equip each vehicle with the sufficient number of protective equipment (masks, gloves, disinfectant...)

A sufficient number of items should be available in each vehicle. It is recommended that the number of items in each vehicle is at least twice as is the average daily consumption of the patrol unit.

- Familiarise all employees with the instructions on the proper hygiene, on the importance of proper and regular hand washing, hand disinfection...
- Informed all employees on the importance of cleanliness and the hygiene related to the uniform and other clothing.

3. Offices and other premises

- Perform checks at all entries into our premises.
- Record every person who enters our premises.

Keeping a record of all persons who enter the premises allows for epidemiological reconstruction of contacts in case of infection.

- Measure the temperature of every person entering the premises without exception.

Depending on the characteristics of the infection, diligently perform checks of the symptoms for persons entering your premises. For measurement of body temperature, it is recommended that touch-free thermometers are used or other electronic systems.

4. Measures Within the Police - Meetings

- Transfer meetings to an online environment as much as possible.
- Organise only those meetings in person that are necessary and cannot not be postponed or organised in any other manner (e.g. online).
- Limit the duration of the in-person meetings to the minimum.
- Organise the in-person meetings in a way that allows for the minimum safety distance between the participants.
- Organise the in-person meetings in larger offices (bigger spaces).
- Instruct employees to wear the necessary protective equipment during the in-person meeting.

5. Measures Within the Police - Education and training

- Avoid conducting trainings in person. Organise only those trainings in person that cannot be postponed.
- Organised a training on the Pandemic (e.g. webinar or e-learning for all employees).

It is recommended that a training on the pandemic (or other infectious disease/virus), and associated risks and dangers, is organised for all employees, to raise the level of awareness on the necessity and effects of preventive and protective measures.

6. Measures Within the Police - Work from home

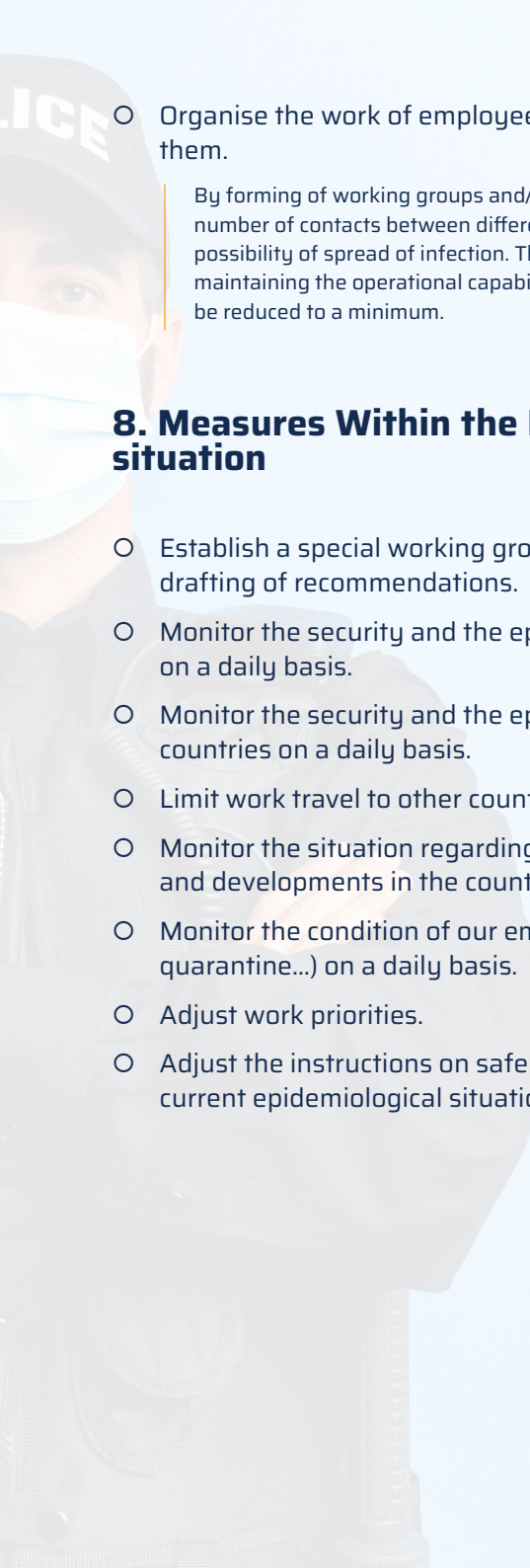
- Prepare the necessary legal acts for employees to work from home.
- Prescribe the conditions for working from home.
- Provide employees with appropriate technical equipment for working from home (e.g. laptops).
- Provide the necessary IT solutions for secure communication and work from home (e.g. VPN connection).

7. Measures Within the Police - Strategic reserve

- Establish strategic reserves through a system of police reserves (auxiliary police).
- Take a certain number of officers temporarily off work in different units.

Taking a part of the police force off work (absent from work), allows for forming of “reserves” of officers in case the number of infected among the officers increased. With this measure the continuity of work could be maintained.

- Change the duration of shifts to reduce the number of contacts between employees.

- 
- Organise the work of employees in groups, to reduce contact among them.

By forming of working groups and/or standing working teams (aka bubbles) the number of contacts between different employees is reduced, thus reducing the possibility of spread of infection. The bubbles should be as small as possible while maintaining the operational capabilities. The contact among different bubbles should be reduced to a minimum.

8. Measures Within the Police - Monitoring of situation

- Establish a special working group for monitoring of the situation and drafting of recommendations.
- Monitor the security and the epidemiological situation in our country on a daily basis.
- Monitor the security and the epidemiological situation in other countries on a daily basis.
- Limit work travel to other countries for your employees.
- Monitor the situation regarding the operational activities/capacities and developments in the country on a daily basis.
- Monitor the condition of our employees (infected, at work, in quarantine...) on a daily basis.
- Adjust work priorities.
- Adjust the instructions on safe work-performance according to the current epidemiological situation.

9. Procedures in case of detected infection

- In case of infection, instruct employees into self-isolation.
- In case of employee contact with an infected person immediately conduct a mapping of contacts of that employee as well as for additional employees with whom the first employee was in contact.
- Instruct all employees inform their superior if they start exhibiting signs of infection.
- Provide testing for employees who were in contact with an infected person regardless of whether or not they are exhibiting any symptoms.
- Instruct employees who are exhibiting signs of infection into quarantine until the results of the testing are obtained.
- In case of employee infection, disinfect all surfaces he/she came into contact with.
- Establish regular contact with the infected employees, concerning their well-being.

10. Possible operational measures (other measures not ordinarily falling within the work of police)

- Be proactive in responding to the pandemic and planning of measures intended to limit its spread.

It is expected that the law enforcement will be required to undertake additional tasks in their work, responding to the decrees and measures passed to limit the spread of infection. Proactive role and pre-emptive planning of measures and resources is advisable.

Additional measures may include:

- Additional measures at the state border (closure, limitation on crossings...);
- Various additional tasks inland (e.g. checks regarding respecting of decisions on quarantine decisions, limitations on movement, respect of curfews...);
- Support to other bodies (health workers, informing of Government or other relevant bodies, setting up of humanitarian convoys...)

11. Establishment of a 24/7 operational centre

- Establish a Centre for coordination of activities related to the pandemic within the police (the title of the centre may vary from country to country).

It is recommended that a separate, dedicated, coordination centre is established which focuses on measures aimed at limiting the spread of infection. The tasks of the Centre should include (but not be limited to):

- Coordination of work between the Police and other bodies (incl. ministries);
- Coordination of activities with neighbouring countries;
- Clarification of questions regarding the pandemic;
- Gathering and provision of information (on various activities and measures, e.g. at the border crossing points).

12. International cooperation

- Establish regular contacts with the neighbouring countries on all levels (e.g. national, regional, local).

It is recommended that regular contact is established to assure timely exchange of information on the developments and for better coordination of activities of mutual interest. Discussions should include (but not be limited to):

- Discussion and coordination of measures at the border (BCPs, green/blue border);
- Exchange of experience and practice;
- Establishment of various corridors;
- Measures related to migration management.

13. Interviews, interrogations, complaints...

- Whenever possible, conduct interviews over the phone.
- Install protective glass between the police officer and the client (different categories of persons in police procedures are included under this term) in spaces where the interviews take place.
- Instruct every client to declare if he/she is exhibiting any symptoms related to the pandemic prior to entering the premises.
- Instruct clients to disinfect his/her hands prior to entering the police premises.
- Put up signs at all entries for clients to see the requirement and measures in place.
- Have the officer at the entry check if the clients comply with the requirement and measures in place.
- Instruct clients to wear protective mask while in the premises of the police (or other protective equipment as considered necessary for limiting the spread of the pandemic).

14. Regular procedures (patrols, traffic, public order...)

- Instruct all police officers to wear protective masks both inside (in closed premises) and outside.
- Instruct all police officers to maintain the minimum safety distance during their work.
- Instruct all police officers to perform various procedures in open spaces as much as possible (e.g. taking of statements should be done outside if possible...).
- Avoid conducting procedures with clients in police vehicles (only police officers should be allowed to enter the police vehicle).
- Instruct police officers to use protective equipment (masks, gloves...) in all procedures with persons and when touching various items is necessary (e.g. checking of luggage or vehicles).

- Instruct police officers to disinfect their hands after every procedure.
- Instruct that all police officers avoid any unnecessary touching of items during procedures.

15. Use of vehicles

- Form permanent (or longer-term) teams of patrol units.

It is recommended that teams are formed for a longer duration of time to reduce the contact between the different officers, thus reducing the possibility of spread of infection.

- Implement the “one police officer per vehicle” rule.

The “one officer per vehicle rule” means that during patrols only one police officer can be in a police vehicle. With this measure the number of contacts between officers is reduced as is the intensity of the contact between officers.

- Regularly disinfect the vehicles.
- Regularly ventilate the vehicles.

16. Additional measures at the green/blue border – foreigners

- During the procedures with foreigners, check for symptoms of infection.
- Regularly ventilate the premises where the foreigners are held.
- Regularly disinfect the premises where the foreigners are held.
- Regularly ventilate the vehicles used for transportation of foreigners.
- Regularly disinfect the vehicles used for transportation of foreigners.

17. Additional measures at the BCPs

- Instruct police officers to perform border checks (checks of documents) primarily from inside the passport control cabin.
- Instruct police officers to wear protective gloves during border checks.
- Instruct police officers to wear protective masks during border checks.
- Instruct police officers to avoid any unnecessary touching of items during procedure.
- Instruct passengers to exit their vehicles during detailed border checks.
- Instruct police officers to disinfect their hands after every detailed border check.

18. Informing the public

- Set up a separate section on our police website, providing information related to the pandemic.
- Set up a separate section on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (name may vary from country to country), providing information related to the spread and limitation of the pandemic.
- Inform the public on the measures related to spread and limitation of the pandemic through media statements, replies and clarification for media.
- Inform passengers with measures related to limiting the pandemic at the border crossing points.

19. Police call centre

- Establish an information call centre for informing of public regarding the measures related to limiting the pandemic.
- Establish a single (unified) phone number for contacting the information call centre.
- Establish an email account for the information call centre.
- Provide all employees working in the information call centre with information on the current measures, instructions, and other information.
- Engage those employees in the call centres that know foreign languages.

Disclaimer

This SOP document does not present an exhaustive list of measures to be implemented or considered in response to pandemic-type situations. The document aims to provide an overview of measures that have been considered and implemented in response to the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such it serves as a list of recommendations on the measures to be considered when responding to potential future pandemic-type situations, to assure work continuity of LE services while also considering the safety of officers.



SCAN ME!

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