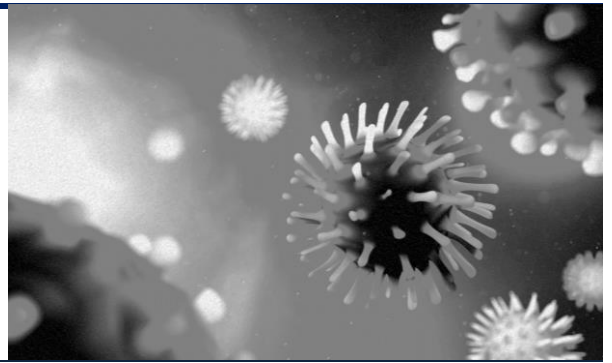


inBrief



New measures implemented by the UAE authorities in response to COVID-19

By Charles Laubach | 18 April 2020

Below is a summary of key new measures that have been implemented by various UAE authorities since 15 April 2020 and the time of this inBrief, 12:00 noon on Saturday, 18 April 2020.

Dubai's *National Disinfection Programme* extended

On 17 April 2020, Dubai's Supreme Committee of Crisis and Disaster Management extended the 24-hour *National Disinfection Programme* for another week. The programme, which began on 5 April 2020, was initially scheduled to end on 18 April 2020.

Restrictions on movement of the general public, for essential and emergency trips, will continue to apply during the extension where one member of each household may leave the residence at one time and after obtaining a movement permit prior to any departure from their residence. They must wear masks and gloves at all times and observe the safe distance guidelines.

Employees of vital sectors and support sectors, which we listed in our [inBrief](#) dated 6 April 2020, are excluded from the movement restrictions.

Movement Permits in Dubai

On 16 April 2020 Dubai officials clarified that the movement permit required by the general public for essential and emergency trips will only be granted once in three days. Those trips include:

- buying food from food supply outlets and medicine from pharmacies;
- attending to doctors' appointments at hospital, clinics and other healthcare services providers; and
- COVID-19 tests.

Movement permits in order to withdraw cash from an ATM can be obtained once in five days.

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Consumer Protection

On 15 April 2020 the Commercial Compliance & Consumer Protection (CCCP) in Dubai Economy warned merchants in Dubai against price hikes of staple foods and essentials stating that they will face a penalty if a consumer complaint is found valid.

On 1 April 2020 the Dubai Economy launched a 'Price Monitor' portal to track daily prices of staple foods and essentials making sure that consumers continue to get their basic needs at fair prices. The 'Price Monitor' allows shoppers and businesses on a daily basis to track and compare the prices of 41 basic needs including rice, bread, flour, cooking oil, meat, poultry, fish, milk, eggs, water, salt, sugar fruits and vegetables and hygiene essentials such as sanitisers and face masks.

A dedicated portal, Price.ded.ae, has been launched to strengthen communication with consumers and enable them to raise their complaints and queries on price increases faster and easier.

Dubai Economy announced it has received 784 complaints relating to prices within two weeks of launching its awareness campaign. The CCCP team verifies the accuracy of complaints related to price hikes by looking at all available evidences and comparing existing bills with previous ones. The team may also resort to field and electronic inspection of the merchant's price list and other methods.

If a consumer complaint is found to be valid, the merchant is asked to go back to the original price or risk a penalty for not co-operating.

Cost Relief by the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC)

To support retailers in response to the situation caused by COVID-19, the DIFC announced on 15 April 2020 a new support package giving its retail business partners based in the DIFC (Gate Avenue, Gate Village and Gate District) a three-month rent-free period, from 1 April 2020 until 30 June 2020, on their base rent.

This is in addition to DIFC's recently introduced business stimulus initiatives which we reported on in our [inBrief](#) dated 11 April 2020.

Preventive Measures

Emirates airline conducts on-site rapid COVID-19 tests for passengers

In coordination with the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), Emirates introduced on-site rapid COVID-19 tests for passengers before departing from Dubai. This additional precautionary measure was first introduced on Emirates flight passengers to Tunisia on April 15th.

The blood test, which is conducted by DHA staff, produces results within 10 minutes and provides confirmation for Emirates passengers travelling to countries that require COVID-19 test certificates.

Emirates is the first airline to conduct on-site rapid COVID-19 tests for passengers.

In addition to the rapid COVID-19 test for passengers, Emirates has adapted its check-in and boarding formalities with social distancing guidelines, installed protective barriers at check-in desks, and mandated all airport employees to wear gloves and masks. Passengers are also required to wear their own masks when at the airport and on board the aircraft, and follow social distancing guidelines. All Emirates aircrafts will go through enhanced cleaning and disinfection processes in Dubai, after each journey.

New procedures announced by Sharjah Economic Development Department (SEDD)

Through a circular issued on 15 April 2020, the SEDD announced a number of new precautionary and preventive measures for workers in the Emirate of Sharjah aimed at preserving public health and protecting workers' health and safety.

These measures include:

- prohibiting the transfer of labour outside of Sharjah and restricting their movement within the cities of the Emirate;
- preventing the entry of non-resident workers into Sharjah;
- restricting the number of workers being transported to half the vehicle's capacity; and
- mandating that workers wear masks and keep a safe distance of two metres when getting on and off transportation vehicles.

Workers at cleaning, food and private security establishments are excluded from the above measures. ■

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