

LaoSafe

TOURISM SITES



YOU'RE **SAFE** HERE.



FOREWORD

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was growing rapidly in Lao PDR. In 2019, international tourist arrivals increased by 14.4%, reaching an all-time peak of 4.79 million. International tourism receipts totalled \$934 million. Between 2010–2019, international tourist receipts increased faster than international arrivals, suggesting an increasing value addition from the sector. Recent reports estimate that tourism directly contributes 4.6% to GDP.

Although Lao PDR has thus far avoided severe health impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the on-going (inter)national measures taken for containment of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in tourism and hospitality being one of the most hard-hit economic sectors. Tourism has, however, shown a strong capacity to recover from adversity, return to being a source of revenue for public and private stakeholders, and a source of jobs, particularly for young people, women, and rural communities. This makes it imperative that the sector is supported appropriately during this time of crisis and as we enter the recovery phase.

In light of the increasing significance of hygiene and safety in the sector due to COVID-19, and in preparation for the re-opening of activities in the country and the opening of international borders, the LaoSafe programme has been prepared with the objective of raising hygiene standards as well as to help create a safe “travel bubble” that will bring greater safety and protection for both tourists and hospitality workers in Lao PDR.

The Tourism and Hospitality sub-sectors covered under the LaoSafe programme include: Accommodation, F&B, Tour Guides, Drivers, Tourist Sites and Airlines. To support a more comprehensive intervention and implementation plan, the implementation of these standards will be supported by training, assessment, and certification. A task force has been put together for this programme.

These standards have taken reference and incorporated good practices from international health organisations, EU Guides, ASEAN countries with national COVID-19 safe measurement programmes, Lao PDR national health and safety guides, industry best practices as well as from workshops and discussion sessions held with local industry associations and leaders.

We look forward to a successful implementation of the LaoSafe programme for the Tourism and Hospitality sector and preparing Lao PDR to be a safer place for when international tourists return.

Name

Title

Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism

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INTRODUCTION

This guide has been developed to provide practical implementation support for Tourist Attractions and, as per the Standard, covers five key areas:

- 1 Personal grooming and hygiene standards
- 2 Environment hygiene
- 3 Staff safety
- 4 Guest safety
- 5 Risk management

By adhering to these Standards, businesses are actively demonstrating that they are taking proactive actions to address risks related to COVID-19 to help create a safer environment.

Accommodation businesses seeking to be certified under this hygiene programme should use this Guide to help prepare for assessment and certification.

Note

The information contained in this set of material is developed for the purpose of raising hygiene standards and supporting the implementation of preventive measures for Covid-19 for the Tourism and Hospitality sector. The information contained may change following its release, pending local policies, international guidelines and the development of the pandemic situation. This material is made available for public use, without any representation or warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied.

Continuous improvements and updates to this standard guide may be made in response to changes as the pandemic situation evolves. Edits to this guide will be carried out under the directives of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT) and the Ministry of Health (MoH), and the oversight Taskforce.

LAOSAFE TOURIST ATTRACTION STANDARDS



Operators need to be familiar with these standards and implement them at their premises in order to pass the assessment and become certified.

No.	Outcomes to achieve	Standard
1. PERSONAL GROOMING AND HYGIENE STANDARDS		
Reduce transmission risk		1.1 Personal grooming standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep attire and uniform clean. • Keep fingernails short and clean. • Keep hair tidy and clean.
Reduce transmission risk		1.2 Personal hygiene standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear masks / face shields. • Practice proper handwashing. • Use hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs. • Things not to do to prevent spread and contamination: Spit, pick nose or ears, wipe off perspiration with bare hands.
2. ENVIRONMENT HYGIENE		
Reduce capacity and intermingling		2.1 Tourist site set up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and implement layout plan for safe distancing (1-metre). • Put in place markings of 1-metre for safe distancing. • Put up signages to encourage safe practices. • Install hygiene screens, where applicable. • Mark out seating for safe distancing (1-metre).
		2.2 Observe national guidelines for operating capacity
Reduce transmission risk		2.3 Managing tourist arrivals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place procedures to perform temperature checks and screenings for respiratory symptoms. Temperatures must not exceed 37.5°C. • Encourage tourists to wear masks / face shields.
Reduce capacity and intermingling		2.4 Prevent overcrowding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place steps to ensure safe distancing of 1-metre between groups. • Implement control mechanisms to prevent build-up of crowds.
Cleaning and disinfection measures		2.5 Cleaning regime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to national guidelines for Hygiene and disinfectant choices. Follow the cleaning guidelines for "hygiene and disinfection to prevent and control the new Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)" by MOH-DHHP. • Put in place a cleaning and disinfecting plan and schedule. Increase cleaning frequencies of high point surfaces and common areas. 2.6 Refuse Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure refuse bins are covered at all times. Plastic bags are properly tied up before disposal. • Wash and disinfect all refuse bins at the end of each day.



3. STAFF SAFETY	
Reduce transmission risk	<p>3.1 Staff to wear masks / face shields.</p> <p>3.2 Implement temperature checks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be conducted at least once a day. Records are to be kept for of the past 21 days at a minimum. Staff who are unwell should not be allowed to work and seek medical help immediately.
Reduce physical interactions	<p>3.3 Minimise socialising and practice safe distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise close interactions between tourists and staff, ensuring 1-metre distancing. Implement safe distancing at the workplace e.g., re-configure workspaces and reduce physical interactions. Greet with the traditional Lao “nop” instead of a handshake.
4. TOURIST SAFETY	
Reduce transmission risk	<p>4.1 Wearing of masks for tourists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage tourists to wear masks / face shields, except for when undertaking strenuous activities. <p>4.2 Provide hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs, especially at entrance and exit points.</p> <p>4.3 Social distancing markings of 1-metre, especially in crowded places, must be put in place.</p> <p>4.4 Facilitate contact tracing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have in place contact tracing protocols. The tour guide must have contact details of each tourist group, and each tourist group must have the contact details of the tour guide.
5. RISK MANAGEMENT	
Risk management	<p>5.1 Contact number for assistance: 166, 165</p> <p>Call the 166 or 165 hotlines, which are providing assistance in the event of a suspected case.</p> <p>5.2 Develop plan for suspected cases.</p> <p>Isolate the suspected case.</p> <p>5.3 Follow the national Health-Hygiene promotion guidelines for cleaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically, follow the cleaning guidelines for “hygiene and disinfection to prevent and control the new Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)” by MOH-DHHP.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES



1. GROOMING AND HYGIENE STANDARDS

1.1 Personal grooming standards

All staff must practice industry-specific personal hygiene. Good personal grooming practices to adopt include the following:

- Attire and uniforms
 - All staff should wear clean, proper, and tidy attire when at work. The attire should be changed daily, or if it is soiled.
- Fingernails
 - Keep fingernails short and clean. Bacteria found under fingernails can contaminate food when fingernails come into contact with food (during mealtimes).
- Hair
 - Keep hair neat and tidy.

1.2 Personal hygiene standards

All staff must ensure that clean and hygienic protocols are adhered to.

- Wear masks / face shields
 - All staff personal are to wear masks / face shields at all times, except when eating and drinking.
 - Masks and face coverings help provide some protection against the transmission of COVID-19 by capturing droplets released in the air through breathing, coughing, sneezing, and talking. Masks / face shields used together with safe distancing and other hygiene measures help to reduce COVID-19 transmission risks.
- Handwashing
 - All staff must learn and practice good handwashing techniques. Effective handwashing is important to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading from hands or arms to work surfaces and equipment etc. Hands and exposed arm portions must be washed thoroughly with soap and water for 20 to 40 seconds (preferably hot water).

Handwashing Steps

The following are the steps for effective handwashing:

- Wet hands with clean, running water and apply soap. Rub palms together to make lather.
- Scrub in between the fingers.
- Scrub the back of your hands.
- Scrub your thumbs.
- Scrub your palms.
- Scrub your nails and fingertips
- Scrub your wrists.
- Rinse and dry your hands with a paper towel.



Drying hands

While hands may be clean after washing them with soap and water, Tour staff will also have to take the following precautions when drying them:

- Avoid using towels or non-disposable cleaning cloths to wipe your hands unless you clean them daily and dry them regularly. Germs thrive on moist surfaces.
 - Do not use a common hand towel. Always use disposable towels or hand dryers in public washrooms.
- Hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs
 - Hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs that are suitable for safe and effective use against COVID-19 should be provided to tour groups to disinfect their hands regularly. It should consist of at least 70% alcohol (often listed as ethanol, ethyl alcohol, isopropanol, or 2-propanol).
 - Soiled hands need to be cleaned with soap and water before using a hand sanitiser.
 - Refer to the Guidelines for 'Hygiene and Disinfection to Prevent and Control the new Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)' by MOH-DHHP.
 - Prevent spreading and contamination
 - To prevent the contamination and spreading of germs, all staff should not do any of the following when at work and performing service:
 - Smoke.
 - Spit.
 - Pick nose or ears.
 - Wipe hands on a dirty cloth.
 - Comb or touch hair.
 - Wipe off perspiration with bare hands.
 - If unwell, stay away from fellow colleagues, report to Head Office, and see a doctor.

2. ENVIRONMENT HYGIENE

2.1 Tourist site set-up

- Where applicable, tourist sites should develop and implement physical layout plans and reconfigure spaces to ensure there is safe distancing between tour groups, with 1-metre distancing as a general guide.
- Provide floor markings in areas where queues tend to form to ensure safe distancing (1-metre) e.g. ticket counters, waiting for turns at ziplines, museums and crowded attractions etc.
- Have signages to remind tourists to practice safe distancing.
- Where practicable, install hygiene screens at human touchpoints e.g. glass or plastic dividers at ticket booths to separate tourists from staff.
- In places where there are shows, have a plan to ensure there is safe distancing (1-metre) amongst the tour groups and other people attending the spectacle. Seats can be marked



out. It is recommended to reconfigure seating areas into zones and to strictly adhere to the permissible maximum seating capacities in each zone. Refer to the national guidelines for permissible crowd sizes to determine maximum seating capacities.

2.2 Operating capacity

- Follow the national guidelines for operating capacity.

2.3 Managing tourist arrivals

- Temperature checks and screenings for respiratory symptoms
 - It is highly recommended that temperature checks and respiratory screening are to be conducted for all tourists wishing to enter tour sites or attractions. Train staff to screen customers for respiratory symptoms including coughing, sneezing, breathlessness, and a runny nose. Tourists who are unwell, with a temperature exceeding 37.5°C and / or with respiratory symptoms must not be allowed to enter the site's premises. Advise them to seek medical help immediately.
- Wearing of masks / face shields for tourists
 - Encourage tourists to wear masks / face shields at entrances to sites. Ensure masks are made easily available to tourists.

2.4 Prevent overcrowding

- Ensure there is no overcrowding on sites. Take steps to ensure there is at least a distance of 1-metre between individuals who are not part of the same group.
- Try to identify areas that are common for the build-up of crowds. Implement control mechanisms to prevent or disperse crowds e.g. staff to actively disperse crowds.

2.5 Cleaning regime

- Cleaning and disinfectant choices
 - For guides on disinfectant choices and further guides on hygiene and disinfection, refer to 'Guidelines for Hygiene and Disinfection to Prevent and Control the new Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by MOH-DHHP'.
- Cleaning plan
 - Put in place a cleaning and disinfection plan and schedule. Increase the frequency of cleaning high touch surfaces and common areas e.g. toilets, entrances, and exits.

2.6 Refuse management

- Ensure that refuse bins are covered at all times and cleared daily. All refuse bags are to be properly tied up before disposals.
- Wash and disinfect all refuse bins at the end of each day.



3. STAFF SAFETY

3.1 Wearing of masks / face shields

- It is advisable for all staff, especially tourist-facing staff to wear masks / face shields at all times, except during activities that require masks to be removed.

3.2 Temperature checks and screenings for respiratory symptoms

- Implement a temperature monitoring plan for staff. It is recommended that temperature checks be performed at least once a day.
- Temperature records must be maintained for the past 21-days at a minimum.
- Staff who are unwell, with a temperature exceeding 37.5°C and / or with respiratory symptoms must not be allowed to work. They must seek medical help immediately.
- Staff who are under quarantine / Stay-Home order must not report to work.

3.3 Minimise socialising and practice safe distancing

- Close interactions should be minimised between tourists and staff, maintaining 1-metre distance where possible.
- Implement safe distancing protocols at the workplace e.g. re-configure workspaces and reduce physical interactions.
- To reduce safe contact, all staff are encouraged to avoid handshakes but greet colleagues and tourists with the traditional Lao "nop."

4. TOURIST SAFETY

4.1 Wearing of masks / face shields for tourists

- Except for tourists engaging in strenuous activities such as hiking and kayaking, encourage them to wear masks / face shields before they enter the site's premises. Ensure that masks are made easily available to tourists.

4.2 Provision of hand sanitisers

- Provide easy access to hand sanitisers to tourists e.g. at entrance and exit points.

4.3 Safe distancing markings

- Put in place safe distancing (1-metre) markings to facilitate safe distancing in crowded places.

4.4 Facilitate contact tracing

- The establishment must put in place protocols and records to help mitigate and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. In the event that a case is found, having the necessary records can help provide information to authorities to help trace the degree of exposure and limit the spread. The following practice must be put in place:
 - Inform all site visitors that providing contact details are necessary to facilitate contact tracing by the health authorities, if required.



- Note the contact details of the Tour Guide (where applicable) of each tourist group. For convenience, Management could provide a QR code for tour guides to leave their contact details in e-Form. If that is not feasible, physical records will be sufficient for contact tracing.
- Ensure confidentiality is respected by collecting only relevant data e.g. name, time, and contact methods.
- Provide site visitors details to the health authorities for contact tracing, when required, to all tour members upon request.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 Contact hotlines

- In the event of a suspected case, call the 166 or 165 hotlines, which are providing assistance in the event of a suspected case.

5.2 Develop a plan for suspected cases

- Develop and implement a plan for handling suspected cases. Identify a suitable holding area to ensure the unwell participant is isolated from people. Also ensure that a mask is worn appropriately, and they are not leaving the attraction immediately.

5.3 Develop a cleaning and disinfection plan

- For guides on disinfectant choices and further guides on hygiene and disinfection, refer to 'Guidelines for Hygiene and Disinfection to Prevent and Control the new Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by MOH-DHHP'.

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