

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



This document gives guidance on the adaptations to programme activities and personal protective equipment (PPE) required for Oxfam staff, partner staff, volunteers and casual workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. To enable lifesaving activities to continue and knowing that different contexts are at different stages in the outbreak, requirements have been determined by a series of levels.¹

Explaining the different Levels:

- Level 1: Countries with no cases
- Level 2: Countries with one or more cases, imported or locally detected, without cases in Oxfam's area of work
- Level 3: Countries with clusters of cases, with cases in Oxfam's area of work
- Level 4: Countries experiencing large outbreaks, and community transmission

Notes on the guidance:

Essential activities are considered those that would be necessary to support a wider Covid-19 response, particularly information gathering, service mapping etc that can take place prior to movement restrictions being enforced, and that would contribute to the continuity of the programme and support a more comprehensive programme in later stages of the outbreak. Essential activities can take place at levels 1 and 2.

Lifesaving activities are considered those necessary for meeting minimum emergency requirements, at levels 3 and 4.

Notes on PPE:

While currently efforts are made to accelerate the production of masks, aprons and googles, there is a global shortage of supply. This shall however not be considered as barrier to ensure the procurement of this equipment to provide a safe working environment for Oxfam and partner staff and community-based volunteers. Oxfam and partner staff need to consider that in some contexts the wearing of PPE such as masks can exacerbate fear and misconceptions and create 'distance' in community level dialogues and interactions which are essential to support communities in preparing for the outbreak. Therefore, we have created different levels to the work of Oxfam and its partners (see the levels above) to balance these factors against ensuring safety and reassurance for our staff and volunteers

The following PPE **must** be used by any member of staff (Oxfam and partner), volunteer or casual worker interacting with the community at Level 3 and above²:

- Masks x1 per person per day (or x 5 per person where using cloth masks, plus laundry soap for washing)
- Hand sanitiser/access to handwashing devices x 1 per person per month for sanitiser³

¹ These levels have been developed taking into consideration actions for reducing spread of the disease per WHO phase of response and using guidance from other NGOs. https://www.who.int/influenza/resources/documents/pandemic_phase_descriptions_and_actions.pdf

² As recommended by WHO https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331498/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPCPPE_use-2020.2-eng.pdf

³ Instructions for locally producing hand sanitiser can be found here: https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Guide_to_Local_Production.pdf

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



In addition, community-based volunteers must carry the following additional PPE in case they are required to have physical contact with individuals in the community (for example in supporting referrals) and should be replenished once used:

- Gloves (x 5 per person)
- Additional masks (x 2 per person)
- Disposable apron (x 2 per person)

Further specific PPE items are detailed for specific workers in the table below and summarised here:

Phase/Level	Who	Sanitiser/Access to handwashing Facilities	Gloves	Mask	Goggles	Apron	Gumboots
Essential Activities: Levels 1 and 2	ALL community facing staff (Oxfam and partners), volunteers, casual workers	X					
	Specific Casual Workers	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lifesaving Activities: Levels 3 and 4	ALL community facing staff (Oxfam and partners), volunteers, casual workers	X	X (as part of additional PPE)	X		X (as part of additional PPE)	
	Specific Casual Workers	X	X	X	X	X	X

Specifications for these items and advice on alternatives can be found here <<[link to specifications and alternatives guidance](#)>>

Where staff (Oxfam and partner) are using PPE, **training must be given in how to use items properly**, and on how to put these on, take these off and dispose of them in the correct way to avoid increasing infection risks and provide a false sense of safety. Space should be made for volunteers to don and doff PPE in a well-ventilated area that allows physical distancing (and social solidarity) to be respected.⁴

⁴ Guidance on proper mask use, and proper use of PPE can be found here: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>;

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



Notes for working with volunteers:

Many staff and community volunteers will understandably have concerns about continuing to engage in activities during the outbreak. A thorough discussion of possible risks should be held, with the opportunity to bow out of volunteering if that would be preferred. Agreements such as **consent forms⁵ should be signed with staff and volunteers on their understanding of risks** if they choose to continue, with right to withdraw at any time. Note that these guidelines refer to Oxfam staff, partner staff, volunteers and casual workers.

Activity	Protection and Risk Management Strategies			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
FGDs/Small group meetings	<p>A maximum of 10-12 people per group.</p> <p>Hold in a space that allows for physical distancing of 2m between participants, and has good ventilation, preferably outside</p> <p>Where weather does not permit being outside or opening windows, ensure the space is large enough for physical distancing.</p> <p>Ensure handwashing facilities are available and ask each participant to wash hands on entering and exiting the group</p> <p>Advise participants who feel sick to remain at home and not attend the session</p> <p>Ensure that all sessions contain time for awareness raising and discussion of concerns</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1 but reduce numbers to only essential FGDs/meetings (e.g. consultation on life saving outbreak activities, perception of the disease, health seeking behaviour etc.).</p> <p>Regularly review government guidelines, balancing advice against what is happening in localised context</p>	<p>As a preventative measure, suspend FGDs/meetings; consider other mechanisms for gathering feedback and community input, including telephone, WhatsApp, text message and social media, taking into consideration access issues for different groups.</p>	<p>Suspend FGDs/meetings; consider other mechanisms for gathering feedback and community input, including telephone, WhatsApp, text message and social media, taking into consideration access issues for different groups.</p>

⁵ An example consent form can be found here (to be updated)

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



Activity	Protection and Risk Management Strategies			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	At the end of the session, clean any regularly touched surfaces with disinfectant Reduce the number of FGDs being held to a minimum			
Door to Door/ Household Visits	Do not enter the household, conduct discussions from the doorway where possible. Practice physical distancing, maintaining 2m distance between participants where possible Hold discussions with 1 or only a few members of household Avoid body contact, such as shaking hands, and practice good respiratory hygiene if required. Ensure frequent hand hygiene either by using hand sanitisers or water and soap. Avoid touching your face Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your bent elbow when coughing or sneezing	Follow the guidance for level 1 If someone in the HH is sick, stop the visit and refer to medical facilities. Only conduct essential HH visits that are required to support the Covid-19 response.	Undertake lifesaving actions house to house only, for example distributions, active case finding and referrals. Follow the advice for Levels 1 and 2, plus: Avoid contact – leave any items at the door of the household for them to collect, rather than handing over. Sanitise hands in between each 'kit' delivery If discussion is needed, maintain 2m distance; if this is not possible, discuss through the door. <i>The following PPE should be worn: mask</i> <i>Staff (Oxfam & partner) and volunteers conducting household visits should have access to hand sanitiser or handwashing spaces to use regularly</i>	As for level 3, however, if proper PPE is not available, suspend household visits
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	Hold in a space that allows for physical distancing of 2m between participants, and has	Follow the guidance for level 1 but reduce numbers to only essential KIIs and consider	As a preventative measure, suspend face to face KIIs and hold these over the phone,	As for level 3.

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	<p>good ventilation, preferably outside</p> <p>Ensure handwashing facilities are available and ask each participant to wash hands on entering and exiting the interview</p> <p>Advise participants who feel sick to remain at home and not attend the session</p> <p>Ensure that all sessions contain time for awareness raising and discussion of concerns</p> <p>At the end of the session, clean any regularly touched surfaces with disinfectant</p> <p>Reduce the number of KIIs being held to a minimum</p>	<p>holding these by phone where appropriate.</p> <p>Regularly review government guidelines, balancing advice against what is happening in localised context</p>	<p>video conference or other remote communication.</p>	
Distributions	<p>Arrange distributions for small numbers at a time, beginning with those that are most vulnerable; manage registration processes with the help of local leaders to keep numbers attending in each distribution 'slot' low.</p> <p>Undertake distributions in open spaces, with plenty of room for people to wait in shaded areas</p> <p>Encourage people to space out in queues, using markers on</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1 but reduce distributions to those items required to prevent transmission at home and community level only.</p> <p>Undertake house to house distributions for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and those with underlying health problems.</p> <p>Regularly review government guidelines, balancing advice against what is happening in localised context</p>	<p>Suspend large scale distributions.</p> <p>Undertake distributions house to house only, for example distributions, active case finding and referrals. Follow the advice for Levels 1 and 2, plus:</p> <p>Avoid contact – leave any items at the door of the household for them to collect, rather than handing over</p> <p>Ensure hands are sanitised between handling each 'kit'</p>	<p>As for level 3.</p>

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



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	<p>the ground to indicate where possible.</p> <p>Pre-package kits or items so that recipients can collect these without contact with distributors</p> <p>Have handwashing facilities available and encourage each person attending the distribution to use these on entering and exiting.</p> <p>Where possible and markets are functioning, use electronic voucher or cash systems to allow people to purchase items</p> <p>Utilise mechanisms of recipient confirmation that do not require multiple people to touch the same object; for example, a bucket into which recipients can put a uniquely coded voucher may serve in place of a signature or thumb print.</p> <p>Advise recipients who feel sick to remain at home; organise alternative deliveries for these households</p> <p>Ensure that all distributions have awareness materials displayed and staff available for people to ask questions and discuss concerns</p>		<p>If discussion is needed, maintain 2m distance; if this is not possible, discuss through the door.</p> <p><i>The following PPE should be worn: plastic apron, mask</i></p> <p><i>Staff (Oxfam & partner) and volunteers conducting household visits should have access to hand sanitiser or handwashing spaces to use regularly</i></p>	

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	<p>At the end of the distribution, clean any regularly touched surfaces with disinfectant</p> <p>Reduce the number of distributions to a minimum</p>			
Large group meetings (20+)	<p>Reduce the number of these events being held to a minimum</p> <p>Hold in a space that allows for physical distancing of 2m between participants, and has good ventilation, preferably outside</p> <p>Ensure handwashing facilities are available and ask each participant to wash hands on entering and exiting the interview</p> <p>Advise participants who feel sick to remain at home and not attend the session</p> <p>Ensure that all sessions contain time for awareness raising and discussion of concerns</p> <p>At the end of the session, clean any regularly touched surfaces with disinfectant</p>	<p>As a preventative measure, suspend group meetings; consider other mechanisms for gathering feedback and community input, including telephone, WhatsApp, text message and social media, taking into consideration access issues for different groups.</p>	<p>As a preventative measure, suspend group meetings; consider other mechanisms for gathering feedback and community input, including telephone, WhatsApp, text message and social media, taking into consideration access issues for different groups.</p>	<p>As a preventative measure, suspend group meetings; consider other mechanisms for gathering feedback and community input, including telephone, WhatsApp, text message and social media, taking into consideration access issues for different groups.</p>
Mass events (100+)	<p>As a preventative measure, suspend mass events; consider other mechanisms for gathering feedback and community input, including telephone, radio, WhatsApp, text message and social media, taking into consideration access issues for different groups. When using mobile and digital technology bear in mind access issues for different groups.</p>			

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



Activity	Protection and Risk Management Strategies			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Workshops/Training	<p>Reduce the number of these events being held to a minimum</p> <p>Hold in a space that allows for physical distancing of 2m between participants, and has good ventilation, preferably outside</p> <p>Ensure handwashing facilities are available and ask each participant to wash hands on entering and exiting the interview</p> <p>Advise participants who feel sick to remain at home and not attend the session</p> <p>Ensure that all sessions contain time for awareness raising and discussion of concerns</p> <p>At the end of the session, clean any regularly touched surfaces with disinfectant</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1 but reduce numbers to only essential workshops and trainings.</p> <p>Consider undertaking webinars, remote conferences or online training for staff and volunteers where connection allows.</p> <p>Regularly review government guidelines, balancing advice against what is happening in localised context</p>	<p>As a preventative measure, suspend any workshops or training not relating to the provision of lifesaving aid.</p> <p>For staff (Oxfam & partner) undertaking lifesaving activities, undertake training/briefing daily, whilst donning PPE, and debrief whilst doffing.</p> <p>For essential workshops and training consider undertaking webinars, remote conferences or online training for staff and volunteers where connection allows.</p>	<p>As for level 3, however, if proper PPE is not available, suspend any in-community briefings or training.</p> <p>For essential workshops and training consider undertaking webinars, remote conferences or online training for staff and volunteers where connection allows.</p>
Visits to Partners/Other NGOs	<p>Hold in a space that allows for physical distancing of 2m between participants, and has good ventilation, preferably outside</p> <p>Ensure handwashing facilities are available and ask each participant to wash hands on entering and exiting the interview</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1 but reduce visits to only those that are essential for Covid-19 response preparation and consider holding these by phone, webinars or remote conferences where connection allows where appropriate.</p> <p>Regularly review government guidelines, balancing advice</p>	<p>As a preventative measure, suspend non-lifesaving related visits, and communicate over the phone, video conference or other remote communication.</p> <p><i>Where visits involve lifesaving tasks and will take place in communities, the following PPE should be worn if available: mask</i></p>	<p>As for Phase 3</p>

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	<p>Advise staff and partners who feel sick to remain at home and not attend the session</p> <p>Ensure that all sessions contain time for awareness raising and discussion of concerns</p> <p>At the end of the session, clean any regularly touched surfaces with disinfectant</p> <p>Reduce the number of visits to a minimum</p>	<p>against what is happening in localised context</p>	<p>Staff (Oxfam & partner) and volunteers conducting such visits should have access to hand sanitiser or handwashing spaces to use regularly</p>	
Community Meeting Spaces	<p>When using the space, ensure a maximum number of people relevant to the space is adhered to, to allow for physical distancing of 2m between people.</p> <p>Ensure handwashing facilities are available and ask each person to wash hands on entering and exiting the space</p> <p>Advise those who feel sick to remain at home and not utilise the space</p> <p>Ensure that all sessions held in the space contain time for awareness raising and discussion of concerns, and display appropriate awareness raising materials</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1 but reduce events to only essential events only and reduce the maximum number of participants.</p> <p>Regularly review government guidelines, balancing advice against what is happening in localised context</p>	<p>As a preventative measure, close the use of the space for anyone other than Oxfam Staff and Oxfam partner staff.</p> <p>If there is need to repurpose these spaces (for example as additional shelter etc) ensure that the space has been thoroughly cleaned, particularly surfaces that are often touched, before using for other purposes</p> <p>Specific SOPs should be developed for the use of the space after repurposing. The guide to SOPs can help you create these: << link to SOP guidance >></p>	As for Phase 3

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	<p>At the end of each session, clean any regularly touched surfaces with disinfectant</p> <p>Reduce the number of events being held in the space to a minimum</p>			
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation / Data Collection (market monitoring, registrations etc)</p>	<p>Do not enter the household or shop and conduct discussions from the doorway where possible.</p> <p>Practice physical distancing, maintaining 2m distance between participants where possible</p> <p>Hold discussions with 1 or only a few members of household or shop</p> <p>Avoid body contact, such as shaking hands, and practice good respiratory hygiene if required.</p> <p>Ensure frequent hand hygiene either by using hand sanitisers or water and soap.</p> <p>Avoid touching your face</p> <p>Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your bent elbow when coughing or sneezing</p> <p>Utilise mobile data collection methods where possible and have one note taker only touching the device. Each device should be wiped with a</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1</p> <p>If someone in the household or shop is sick, stop the visit and refer to medical facilities.</p> <p>Only conduct essential monitoring/data collection visits that are required to support the Covid-19 response.</p>	<p>Undertake monitoring or data collection for lifesaving actions only, for example registering for distributions, active case finding and referrals.</p> <p>Follow the advice for Levels 1 and 2, plus:</p> <p>Avoid contact – utilise mobile data collection methods where possible and have one note taker only touching the device. Each device should be wiped with a disinfectant wipe at the end of each day</p> <p>If discussion is needed, maintain 2m distance; if this is not possible, discuss through the door</p> <p>Explore possibilities for collecting data remotely such as through SMS systems, social media or phone calls.</p> <p><i>The following PPE should be worn: mask</i></p> <p><i>Staff (Oxfam & partner) and volunteers conducting household visits should have access to hand sanitiser or</i></p>	<p>As for level 3, however, if proper PPE is not available, suspend face to face data collection and use remote collection methods only</p>

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	disinfectant wipe at the end of each day		handwashing spaces to use regularly	
Operation and Maintenance – WASH Facilities	<p>Ensure operation and maintenance staff and workers maintain physical distance of 2m from others during work; where necessary, provide workers with signs or barrier tape that allow them to work maintaining this distance</p> <p>Ensure that the usually required PPE is in good stock and that those who require to wear this (most notably those working in and with sanitation facilities, such as FSM workers) are trained on how to use it and strictly abiding by its use</p> <p>Provide spaces for workers to wash their hands on a regular basis, including at the beginning and end of each shift. For mobile teams, provide sanitiser</p> <p>Provide areas where workers can safely dispose of used PPE</p> <p>Facilities should be cleaned regularly with disinfectant</p> <p>Scale up maintenance teams where possible to complete as many outstanding tasks in</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1, and introduce a risk prioritisation mechanism to ensure facilities that pose the greatest public health risk are serviced quickly</p>	<p>Follow the guidance for level 1;</p> <p><i>The following PPE should be worn for ANY worker during operation and maintenance work at this stage of the outbreak:</i></p> <p>Gloves, plastic apron, Mask Goggles Gumboots</p> <p>Staff (Oxfam & partner) and workers undertaking operational and maintenance work should have access to hand sanitiser or handwashing spaces to use regularly, and spaces to safely don and doff PPE</p>	As for Phase 3

RESPONDING DURING COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY FACING STAFF



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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	case of movement restrictions. Ensure those facilities that pose the highest public health risk (latrines and sanitation facilities) are serviced as a priority.			