

Harmonized Sub-Regional Essential Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) services at Points of Entry and within-country IPC Interventions for Transnational Truck Drivers within East African Community

I. Introduction

The countries within East Africa, including Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are all experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, with some countries more affected than others. Within the East African Community, DRC, Tanzania, and Kenya have the highest number of recorded cases (705, 535, 480 cases respectively as of 5th May 2020), while Rwanda Uganda, South Sudan, and Burundi have relatively lower cases (261, 97, 58, 19 respectively as of 5th May 2020). Currently, Tanzania, Kenya, and DRC are experiencing community transmission of COVID-19.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the countries have implemented different non-pharmaceutical interventions including nation-wide lockdown in Uganda and Rwanda, partial lockdown in Kenya, among others. However, due to the need to maintain supply of essential goods, cross-border ground transportation of goods using trucks has been maintained between the East African countries. Typically, the trucks are driven from Mombasa or Dar-es-Salaam to Uganda through several Points to Entry; some trucks proceed to South Sudan, Rwanda, and DRC from Uganda through designated Points of Entry. After delivery of goods to the respective countries, the trucks are then driven back to countries of origin. The transnational movement of truck drivers poses a risk of cross-border transmission of COVID-19 as they could possibly be infected, especially if originating from a country with community transmission or clusters of cases.

In order to prevent or minimize the risk of cross-border transmission of COVID-19 by the truck drivers the following is a recommended package of Infection Prevention and Control of interventions for truck drivers at different stages of their journey (pre-departure, at Points of Entry, and within the different countries they traverse).

A. Pre-departure

1. [Before departing from city of origin of the cargo truck, the truck driver and his assistant driver should undergo COVID-19 test by an approved laboratory in the country, using the PCR test.](#)
 - The driver should be issued with a certificate indicating the test results. If the truck driver is negative, the certificate issued should be valid for only 2 weeks. Drivers with positive results should not travel; instead they should be isolated for treatment and a second test conducted 14 days after, if the test is negative, repeat the test again and if it is still negative and the driver is asymptomatic, then discharge the driver from the treatment centre.

2. The truck cabin should be equipped with a COVID-19 kit including the following:
 - A box of masks (box of 50 non-medical masks)
 - Bottle of sanitizer
 - A box of disposable gloves
 - Box of tissues
 - Sealable plastic bags for rubbish disposal (at least 5)
 - Disinfecting wipes or clean rags for using to clean and disinfect cabin and a disinfectant e.g. chlorine/bleach/Jik and water for mixing it when necessary, if no disinfecting wipes available. See Annex 1 for steps in mixing chlorine/bleach/Jik
 - Digital thermometer for self-temperature monitoring.
 - A list of numbers to call in case of development of COVID-19 symptoms or any other emergency

B. During within-country travel

1. Before starting journey, truck drivers should practice hand hygiene and disinfect the truck door handles with disinfecting wipes or rag with 0.1% Jik solution. If 0.1% Jik solution is used, apply to the handle, leave it on for 10 minutes, then wipe it off the handle with another rag soaked in water.
2. To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among truck drivers, apart from the assistant driver, who should have also been tested for COVID-19, no other individuals should be allowed to ride in the cabin of the truck.
3. Truck drivers do not need to wear masks while driving in the cabin of the vehicle. However, at any stop where the driver needs to get out of the car, they should wear a non-medical mask.
4. Truck drivers should practice hand hygiene before exiting the cabin, before eating, and after using the toilet.
5. While on the journey, truck drivers should maintain at least 1-meter distance from other individuals, especially during stops along the way (i.e. truck stops, weighing-stations, border crossing). Truck drivers should avoid close interactions with other people along their journey and observe social distancing at all resting areas.
 - All official resting areas for truck drivers, should have hand washing stations, and rubbish bins with covers for the drivers to dispose off their plastic bags with rubbish. Temperature monitoring using non-touch thermometer should be conducted by a designated member of the COVID-response team, who should be wearing a medical mask and should keep at least 1-meter distance from the truck drivers at all times.
 - Any driver found to have temperature of 38°C or higher should not proceed with the journey; instead should be handed over to the rapid response team in that location for further investigation.
6. If truck drivers become symptomatic at any point along their journey, they should put on a mask and alert the appropriate authorities for guidance on where to go for medical care.
7. All masks, tissues, and any other waste should be disposed off in the sealable plastic bags.

C. At Points of Entry (Ground Crossing Points)

1. At Points of Entry, the truck drivers and their personal and vehicle documents should be screened routinely before they are admitted into the country.
2. In the context of COVID-19, the truck drivers should be sampled again at the Point of entry for COVID-19 testing. As the points of entry will have to screen many drivers in a single day, it is important that they have the basic equipment and supplies to ensure infection prevention and control.
3. Every Point of Entry (PoE) should have the following equipment and supplies in place to ensure infection prevention and control:
 - No touch thermometers
 - Boxes of non-medical masks
 - Boxes of medical masks should be available for potential COVID-19 suspects at all PoEs and for the PoE staff
 - Boxes of tissues, boxes of gloves, and adequate supply of sanitizers
 - Hand hygiene stations and/or alcohol hand rub or sanitizer bottles at different parts of the PoE
 - Waste bins with covers for tissues and rubbish in different locations at the PoE.
 - Sets of PPE for personnel that handle isolated COVID-19 suspects including gowns, medical masks, gloves, and eye protection, especially, if suspect is symptomatic.
 - Dedicated cleaning and disinfection kit/agents for use by cleaners
 - Utility/heavy duty rubber gloves, closed-toe shoes, impermeable aprons (for cleaners)
 - A space at the PoE should be identified where COVID-19 suspects (along with their social networks accompanying them) can be interviewed and maintained until further care can be obtained. The isolation area/room should have chairs/beds; hand hygiene and toilet facilities.
4. Every Point of Entry (PoE) should have the following equipment and supplies in place to ensure infection prevention and control:
 - (a). **Administrative staff**
 - Wear non-medical mask; maintain at least 1-meter distance from others;
 - frequent hand hygiene
 - (b). **Screening staff**
 - First screening process: Wear non-medical mask; maintain at least 1-meter distance from travellers
 - Second screening process: Medical mask and gloves; perform hand hygiene; maintain at least 1-meter distance from travellers

- Direct, physical traveller contact/care: medical mask, gloves, long-sleeve gown, eye protection;
 - Frequent hand hygiene
- (c). **Cleaners**
- Non-medical mask, heavy duty/utility rubber gloves, eye protection (in case of splashes), gown/work coverall, closed-toe boots/shoes;
 - Frequent hand hygiene
- (d). **Police officers**
- Non-medical mask and gloves; maintain 1-meter distance; frequent hand hygiene
- (e). **Immigration/Customs staff**
- If possible, a plastic glass divider should be placed in-between the immigration/custom's staff and the travellers.
 - If plastic divider is present, then no PPE is required. Hand hygiene should be performed after each traveller's documents have been reviewed. Thus, it is critical that alcohol hand rub or sanitizer is available at immigration/customs areas.
- (f). **Cargo personnel**
- No PPE required (unless disinfecting pallets/supplies; see PPE for cleaners);
 - hand hygiene should be performed after handling/disinfecting cargo
5. **The PoE staff should assess and screen the truck drivers for COVID-19:**
- (a). **Self-report, observation, and/or temperature assessment.**
PoE personnel should inquire from the truck driver about any COVID-19 like symptoms, any history of contact with a confirmed case, and review the certificate of testing from the country of origin. Any traveller or truck driver with a temperature of 38°C or higher should be isolated, and relevant authorities informed to conduct further assessment of the traveller. POE personnel should not conduct a physical exam on any traveller.
- (b). **Safely taking specimens for COVID-19 testing.** This should be done in a separate room or space, accessed by one truck driver at a time. The specimens should be taken by trained laboratory personnel, dressed in full PPE.
- (c). **While waiting for assessment, all travellers at the PoE including the truck drivers should be encouraged to maintain at least 1-meter distance from each other, observe respiratory hygiene/etiquette, and practice hand hygiene.**

- (d). **Potential COVID-19 suspects should be isolated in the designated space for isolation of suspect patients.** COVID-19 suspects in this space should wear medical masks and maintain at least 1-meter distance from each other.
 - (e). **Ensure that adequate ambulance systems and policies are established** (including how to disinfect the vehicle after a potential COVID-19 suspect has been transported to a health care facility)
6. **Toilets and bathrooms at the Points of Entry should be cleaned and disinfected every 2 hours or more frequently depending on the circumstances at the PoE.**
7. **Cleaning and Disinfection of truck cabins**

The cabin of the truck should be disinfected upon each driver change (at PoEs when relay driving is implemented) and/or when a final destination has been reached:

- (a) **Cloth seating should be vacuumed;** any sticky substances should be scraped off the seating
- (b) **Steering wheels, radios, and dashboards should be wiped down with disinfecting wipes or a rag with an appropriate disinfecting agent.** An appropriate disinfecting agent can comprise of 0.1% chlorine/bleach/Jik or 70% ethanol. This disinfection should occur before the next driver enters the cabin. For terminal cabin cleaning at final destination, disinfectants such as 0.1% chlorine should be used to disinfect surfaces. See Annex 1 for instructions on how to mix 0.1% chlorine/bleach or Jik solution.
- (c) **Waste should be removed from the cabin at each stop and the sealable plastic bags disposed of safely in dust bins.**
- (d) **Toilets inside truck cabins should be disinfected using the appropriate agents (see 'b' above)**

Annex 1: How to mix 0.1% chlorine or 0.1% Jik Solutions Using liquid chlorine/bleach or Jik

<p>Formula</p> <p>% Chlorine in stock solution</p> <p>_____ - 1 = Parts of water for each part of bleach.</p> <p>% Chlorine desired</p>	<p>To make a 0.1% chlorine solution from 3.5% bleach or Jik stock</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>_____ - 1 = 34</p> <p>0.1</p> <p>Thus, to make 0.1% chlorine solution add 1 part of the bleach/Jik to 34 parts water.</p>
<p>Practical example using a standardized measure like 500mls and 1litre water bottles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Using a 20 litre bucket/container Put 17 litres of water in the container (can use a 1 litre water bottle container as a measure) Add 500mls of the chlorine/bleach or Jik (can use the 500mls water bottle) <p>Please note that once the solution is made, it should be disposed of after 24 hours.</p>	