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गृह सचिव
Home Secretary
भारत सरकार
Government of India
North Block,
New Delhi

No. 40-10/2020-DM-I (A)

23rd April, 2020

Dear *Chief Secretary,*

Please refer to MHA's Order of even number dated 15.04.2020 vide which consolidated revised guidelines on the measures to be taken by the Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, State/ UT Governments and State/ UT Authorities for containment of COVID-19. In Annexure-I of these guidelines, National Directives for COVID-19 Management have been specified, and in Annexure-II, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for social distancing and hygiene measures has been specified, which is to be followed by offices, workplaces, factories and other establishments.

2. Some apprehensions, based on wrong interpretation of the guidelines, have been raised in the media and by some companies having manufacturing facilities. Some of these are as under:

- I. States may take legal action, including imprisonment of CEO, in case a COVID-19 positive employee is found in the factory.
- II. In such a situation, the premises of the factory would be sealed for 3 months.
- III. In case of non-compliance of precautionary measures, the factory may be closed down for 2 days and may be allowed to restart after full compliance.

3. **I would like to clarify that there is no such clause in the consolidated revised guidelines and therefore there is no basis for such misplaced apprehensions.**

4. COVID-19 being a highly infectious epidemic, it is important that all workplaces take measures to ensure social distancing and follow standard health protocols as notified by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). Accordingly, appropriate safeguards at workplaces have been prescribed in the National Directives and SOP mentioned above. The workplaces and industrial and commercial establishments are required to follow these guidelines.

5. Secondly, the activities allowed under the consolidated revised guidelines dated April 15, 2020, except in containment zones, have subsumed all the earlier activities that were permitted under the earlier guidelines issued on March 24, 2020 (including those permitted under the addendums); in addition, certain new activities have also been permitted. Hence, it is clarified that the consolidated revised guidelines dated April 15, 2020 do not curtail the exemptions already provided earlier, unless the exempted activity falls within a containment zone. Therefore, no separate/ fresh permissions are required from authorities for industries already permitted to operate prior to April 15, 2020, in areas falling outside containment zones.

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6. Finally, it is emphasized that subject to compliance with the SOP on social distancing, no fresh license or statutory approval is required for resumption of permitted activities during the lockdown period. For example, an industrial activity, allowed to operate prior to the lockdown, needs no fresh statutory approval, once it has been included as a permitted activity under the consolidated revised guidelines, and has complied with the SOP on social distancing.

7. In light of the above, I would like to request all State/ UT Governments that the industrial field establishments and field offices may be apprised of the guidelines of lockdown measures which should be followed to prevent the spread of epidemic. These should not be misused to harass the management of any manufacturing/ commercial establishments.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


23/04/2020
(Ajay Bhalla)

Chief Secretaries of all States
(As per standard list)