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Covid Management Protocols

Transparency International Zambia

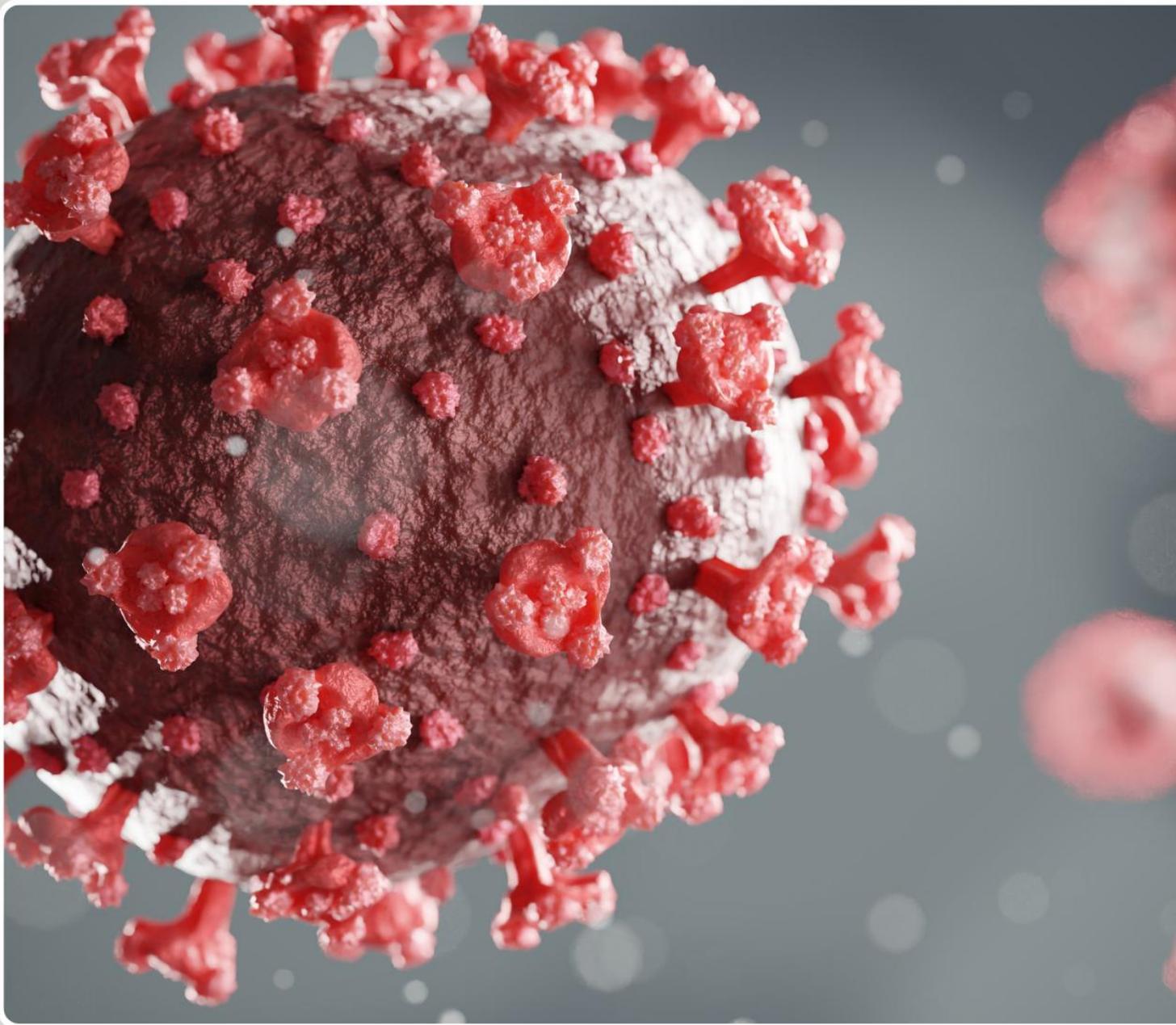


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1. RATIONALE FOR THE TI-Z COVID-19 MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

The Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected all parts of the world, with significant impact on many facets of society. Zambia has not been spared, and by mid-October 2020, the country had well over 15,000 cases with 346 deaths. The government of Zambia through the Ministry of Health has been responding to the pandemic, with different interventions being put in place in a bid to reduce the spread of the pandemic and provide adequate care for those who get infected. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with different stakeholders has developed a COVID-19 “Message Guide for Responders in Zambia” as one of the tools that can be used for managing the pandemic across different sectors of the economy.

TI-Z’s COVID-19 Management Protocols are primarily based on the Ministry of Health guide, and are intended to provide staff and members with comprehensive information about the pandemic. In developing these protocols, TI-Z also adapted and contextualized guidelines from several other sources such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Centre for Disease Control (CDC).

2. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19

1.1 What is Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19)?

- ❖ Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by a new Coronavirus. The virus causes a respiratory illness, similar to a common cold or the flu, and in severe cases leads to pneumonia, kidney failure and can result in death.
- ❖ The virus was identified in China in 2019 and has since spread to other countries including Zambia.
- ❖ The “incubation period” meaning the time between being infected or “catching” the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease ranges from 1-14 days.

1.2 What are the signs and symptoms?

Patients who are infected with the virus show a wide range of symptoms. In most cases the disease is mild. However, in some cases the disease is severe and can lead to pneumonia, respiratory failure or death.

The common signs and symptoms include:

- ❖ Fever or Chills
- ❖ Cough
- ❖ Shortness of breath or Difficulty breathing
- ❖ Tiredness
- ❖ Muscle or body aches
- ❖ Headache
- ❖ New loss of taste or smell
- ❖ Sore throat
- ❖ Congestion or runny nose
- ❖ Nausea, vomiting and/or Diarrhoea

1.3 How does the disease spread?

COVID -19 is spread from one person to another. The main ways in which the disease is transmitted include:

- ❖ Being in close contact with a person who is infected with the virus.
- ❖ Breathing in small droplets, which come from the nose or mouth, when a person with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes.
- ❖ Touching an object or surface contaminated with the virus and then touching the eye, mouth or nose.
- ❖ Not following careful infection control measures when caring for an infected patient.

1.4 Who is at risk of getting the disease?

- ❖ Everyone is at risk for getting COVID-19- the young, adults and the elderly.
- ❖ COVID-19 knows no age, sex, tribe, colour, race, religion or country, everyone is at risk.
- ❖ The COVID-19 virus can be transmitted anywhere, regardless of climate. This includes areas with hot and humid weather.
- ❖ Anybody in close contact with a person infected with the virus (e.g. workmates, family members or friends caring for the sick) are at risk for getting the disease.

- ❖ Older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease, or diabetes) are at a higher risk for serious COVID-19 complications.
- ❖ Persons who have been in contact with someone who is infected, is sick or has died as a result of COVID -19 are at greater risk for getting the disease.
- ❖ Health care workers, who are often in contact with sick patients, are at increased risk for contracting the disease.

3. BASIC GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING COVID-19 AT TI-Z

TI-Z's protocols for managing COVID-19 are premised on three aspects: prevention of contraction and transmission; management of cases if they occur; and meetings and events.

3.1. Prevention of contraction and transmission of COVID-19

Preventing the contraction of the pandemic is the most important aspect of managing COVID-19. If you can stop it from spreading to you and others, it will save you from having to implement inconveniencing and costly measures to deal with the disease. The low-cost measures below will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at the TI-Z premises, thereby providing basic protection to TI-Z staff, members and everyone who interacts with TI-Z at the office premises and in the field.

- ❖ Staff must wash hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❖ Staff must practice social distancing at all times in the office and the field (minimum of 1-meter distance to the next person)
- ❖ As much as possible, staff must avoid social gatherings or crowded places (funerals, weddings, parties, drinking places)
- ❖ Staff must wear face masks at all times when at the TI-Z premises. In addition, staff must avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❖ When coughing or sneezing, staff must ensure that they cover their mouths and noses with flexed elbow or with tissue. The used tissue must be thrown away into a closed bin or designated place immediately after use and staff must then wash their hands.

- ❖ Each staff member must individually make it a practice to sanitize or disinfect the surfaces they frequently touch and the equipment they frequently use.
- ❖ Staff must avoid physical contact, such as hugs or handshakes, when greeting people.
- ❖ All activities requiring fieldwork must provide for the implementation of the COVID-19 health guidelines at all times. Management reserves the right to cancel any field activity that is deemed risky.

3.2. Management of suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19

Given how widespread the pandemic is, the possibility of TI-Z staff being exposed to COVID-19 cannot be discounted. If a TI-Z member of staff suspects or confirms that they have been exposed to the virus, the measures outlined here must take effect.

3.2.1. Suspected cases of COVID-19 for staff

- ❖ If any staff member feels unwell and suspects that it is COVID-19, they must stay at home in self-isolation and **immediately** inform their Supervisor, who will in turn inform Management.
- ❖ The staff member must then make arrangements to undergo a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. Evidence to this effect will need to be provided to the Supervisor.
- ❖ If the member of staff falls ill while at the office premises, they will be immediately asked to go home into self-isolation, and to make arrangements to undergo a COVID-19 test
- ❖ If the staff member falls ill during out-of-town fieldwork, they must return to their place of lodging immediately and make arrangements to seek medical attention, having also informed their Supervisor. The medical advice given will then be followed.

3.2.2. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 for staff

- ❖ If the test result for a staff member is positive, they must stay at home and separate themselves from other people. They must also inform their Supervisor **immediately**.
- ❖ This means staying in a separate room and observing hygiene measures particularly washing hands regularly and wearing a face mask when others are caring for them.
- ❖ This also entails getting lots of rest, drinking plenty of fluids, and eating a balanced diet

- ❖ Visitors should not be allowed until the patient has completely recovered and has no signs or symptoms of COVID-19.
- ❖ Use dedicated linen and eating utensils for the patient. All utensils, clothes, and beddings used by the patient must be cleaned with soap and water after use and before reuse.
- ❖ Frequently clean and disinfect the bathroom, toilet and surfaces in the room where the patient is being cared for.
- ❖ Persons (including caregivers and health care workers) who have been exposed to individuals with suspected COVID-19 are considered contacts and should be advised to monitor their health for 14 days from the last day of possible contact.
- ❖ If a member of staff is confirmed COVID-19 positive, the Executive Director will be required to brief the Chapter President and Chairperson of the Staff and Members Welfare Committee.
- ❖ If the positive result comes when the member of staff is at the TI-Z premises, they will be immediately isolated from everyone else at the premises, and be asked to go home into self-isolation, where the home measures outlined above will come into effect.
- ❖ If the positive result comes when the member of staff is on out-of-town fieldwork, they will be required to return to their place of lodging immediately, where they will go into self-isolation and seek medical advice for returning home safely and without transmitting the virus.

3.3. TI-Z meetings or events

It is important that TI-Z meetings and events take into account the potential risk from COVID-19 because:

- ❖ There is a risk that people attending the meeting or event might be unwittingly bringing the COVID-19 virus to the meeting.
- ❖ Others might be unknowingly exposed to COVID-19.

3.3.1. BEFORE the meeting or event

- ❖ Consider whether the meeting or event is necessary or whether it could be postponed or replaced with a Virtual meeting or event. Also consider if it can be scaled down so that fewer people attend.
- ❖ Check and follow the advice from the authorities in the community where you plan to hold the meeting or event.
- ❖ Develop and agree a preparedness plan to prevent infection at the meeting or event
 - *Ensure and verify information and communication channels in advance with key partners such as public health and health care authorities*
 - *Pre-order sufficient supplies and materials, including tissues, masks and hand sanitizer for all participants. Where this is not possible to arrange, ask all the participants to bring their own masks and hand sanitizers.*
 - *Actively monitor where COVID-19 is circulating. Advise participants in advance that if they have any symptoms or feel unwell, they should not attend.*
 - *Make sure all participants, caterers and visitors at the event provide contact details: mobile phone number, email and address where they are staying. State clearly that their details will be shared with local public health authorities if any participant becomes ill with suspected COVID-19.*
- ❖ Develop and agree a response plan in case someone at the meeting or event becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19

3.3.2. DURING the meeting or event

- ❖ Provide information or a briefing, preferably both orally and in writing, on COVID-19 and the measures that have been put in place to make this event safe for participants.
 - *Build trust. For example, as an icebreaker, practice ways to say hello without touching.*
 - *Encourage regular hand-washing or use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer by all participants at the meeting or event.*
 - *Encourage participants to cover their face with the crook of their elbow or a tissue if they cough or sneeze. Supply tissues and closed bins to dispose of them in.*

- *Provide contact details or the **Toll Free line 909**, which participants can call for advice or to give information.*
- ❖ Provide dispensers of alcohol-based hand sanitizer, or hand washing basins with soap prominently around the venue.
- ❖ If there is space, arrange seats so that participants are at least one meter apart.
- ❖ Open windows and doors whenever possible to make sure the venue is well ventilated.
- ❖ If anyone starts to feel unwell, follow your preparedness plan.

3.3.3. AFTER the meeting

- ❖ Retain the names and contact details of all participants for at least one month. This will help public health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 if one or more participants become ill shortly after the event.
- ❖ If someone at the meeting or event was isolated as a suspected COVID-19 case, all the participants should be informed about it. They should be advised to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days. If they start to feel unwell they should stay at home and contact the relevant public health authority.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Call centres have been activated at the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) and at the Zambia National Public Health Institute for the public to ask questions, seek help or report any suspected cases of COVID-19. The numbers to call are 0094493553 | 0953898941 | 0964638726 and the Toll Free line: 909

Further information and resources can be found on the following Websites:

- ❖ Ministry of Health Zambia COVID-19 ChatBot: <https://www.moh.gov.zm/>
- ❖ SADC COVID-19 page: <https://www.sadc.int/issues/covid-19/>
- ❖ African Union COVID-19 page: <https://au.int/en/covid19>
- ❖ World Health Organisation COVID-19 page: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1