

LaoSafe

DRIVERS STANDARD



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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.

Minister

Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism



Suanesavanh VIGNAKET

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INTRODUCTION



This guide has been developed to provide practical implementation support for drivers and transport companies to implement the Driver Standard under the LaoSafe Programme and, as per the Standard, covers five key areas:

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

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

Drivers 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 DRIVER STANDARDS



Drivers need to be familiar with these standards and to be able to implement them during their tours 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 neat and tidy. Long hair should be tied up using hair restraints.
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, wipe off perspiration with bare hands.
2. ENVIRONMENT HYGIENE – VEHICLES		
Reduce surface transmission		2.1 Disinfect luggage before loading
Reduce capacity and intermingling		2.2 Seating capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the agreed maximum capacity is observed. • Have passenger keep to the same seats throughout the journey. • Where practicable, have members of one household or friends sit in clusters. Ensure there is spacing (seat/row) amongst these clusters.
		2.3 Ensure boarding and disembarking in an orderly manner
Cleaning and disinfection measures		2.4 Cleaning regime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and disinfect vehicle before and after each tour group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase frequency of cleaning high touch areas with disinfectant throughout the day. - When cleaning, open doors and windows. - Maintain a cleaning log for the past 21-days. • Handling of cleaning materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash and disinfect all reusable cloths after every cleaning cycle. - Disinfect them by soaking in a mixture of bleach and hot water. Follow the cleaning guidelines for "hygiene and disinfection to prevent and control the new Coronavirus disease (COVID 19)" by MOH-DHHP. • Drivers are to ensure they have sufficient cleaning equipment and materials on board. Cleaning solutions cannot be reused.
		2.5 Refuse management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all refuse is covered at all times and cleared daily. Refuse should be properly sealed before disposal. • Clean up any refuse spillage immediately. • Wash and disinfect all refuse bins at the end of each day.



Cleaning and disinfection measures	2.6 Air-conditioning and ventilation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all ventilation and air-conditioning systems are inspected, cleaned and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
3. DRIVER'S SAFETY	
Reduce transmission risk	3.1 Drivers are to wear masks / face shields throughout the duration of the transportation. 3.2 Temperature checks and screenings for respiratory symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperature checks of drivers are to be conducted once a day. Temperatures must not exceed 37.5°C. Drivers must do self-screening for respiratory symptoms. Records are to be kept for 21-days. Drivers who are unwell must not work and must seek medical help immediately. Drivers who are under quarantine / stay-home order must not work.
Reduce physical interactions	3.3 Minimise socialising and practice safe distancing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers are to maintain social distancing of 1-metre between themselves and others Provide assistance to passengers boarding and disembarking in an orderly manner. Follow national guidelines for permissible group gathering sizes. Avoid handshakes and use "nop" for greetings.
4. PASSENGER'S SAFETY	
Reduce transmission risk	4.1 Ensure that masks are made available to tourists while in the vehicle. 4.2 Passengers are to be provided with hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs when boarding and disembarking. 4.3 Ensure passengers remain in the same seats throughout the tour and they board and disembark in an orderly manner.
5. RISK MANAGEMENT	
Risk management measures and disinfection measures	5.1 Contact assistance: 166, 165 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call the 166 or 165 hotlines, which are providing assistance in the event of a suspected case. Separate suspect to rear of vehicle and facilitate nearest safe drop-off.
	5.2 Provide contact tracing information to assist the authorities where necessary
	5.3 Provide assistance in separating suspected case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide assistance to tour guides to help separate suspected case from the rest of the tour group.
	5.4 Cleaning regime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Drivers must follow good industry personal hygiene practices. Good personal grooming practices to adopt include the following:

- Attire and uniforms
 - Drivers must wear clean, proper, and tidy attire when at work. The attire must 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.
- Hair
 - Keep hair neat and tidy.

1.2 Personal hygiene standards

Drivers must ensure that clean and hygienic practices are followed inside the vehicle and in the presence of passengers.

- Wear masks / face shields
 - Tour guides 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
 - Effective handwashing is important to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading from hands or arms to food, work surfaces, utensils, equipment, etc. Hands and exposed portions of arms 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 drivers 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 must be provided to staff 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, Tour drivers 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, report to Company Management / Tour Operator, see a doctor and stay away from work.

2. ENVIRONMENT HYGIENE - VEHICLES

2.1 Handling of luggage

Drivers are to disinfect the luggage before loading it into the car each time. Pay particular attention to the handles and latches.

2.2 Seating capacity

- Drivers must work with Tour Guides to ensure the maximum seating capacity of the vehicle is observed.
- Passengers are to keep to the same seats throughout the journey. This includes travel between destinations.
- Where practicable, have members of one household or friends sit in clusters. Try to ensure there is spacing (seat / row) amongst these clusters.



2.3 Cleaning regime

- Frequency of cleaning
 - Drivers are to clean and disinfect the tour vans / buses before and after each tour group. Thorough cleaning must be conducted daily before the start of the tour and at the end of the tour.
 - Cleaning with disinfectant must be performed for high touch areas throughout the day. High touch areas may include, but are not limited to:
 - Driver's driving area, especially the steering wheel, gears, and seat.
 - Tour Guide's seat.
 - Passenger seats,
 - Handrails.
 - Handles.
 - Window latches.
 - Headrests.
 - Seat belts.
 - Any tour equipment.
 - When cleaning, open the doors and windows to improve ventilation.
 - Drivers are to maintain a cleaning log with records of the past 21-days at a minimum.
- Handling of cleaning materials
 - Drivers must wash and disinfect all reusable cloths after every cleaning cycle.
 - It is recommended to use different clothes to clean different areas.
 - Good practices for washing and disinfecting cleaning cloths include:
 - Washing dirty cloths with a detergent and rinsing them thoroughly with water.
 - Disinfecting cloths by soaking them in a mixture of bleach and hot water for 30 minutes.
 - Rinsing them thoroughly with water, and air-drying them.
 - 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 equipment
 - Drivers are to ensure that they have sufficient cleaning equipment and materials (e.g., detergent, waste buckets) on board.
 - Drivers are not to reuse cleaning solutions between tour runs.



2.4 Refuse management

- Ensure that refuse bins are always covered and cleared daily. All refuse plastic bags are to be properly tied up before disposal.
- Clean up any refuse spillage immediately.
- Wash and disinfect all refuse bins at the end of each day.

2.5 Air-conditioning and ventilation

Ensure that all ventilating and air-conditioning systems are inspected, cleaned and regularly maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

3. DRIVER'S SAFETY

3.1 Wearing of masks / face shields

Drivers are to wear masks / face shields throughout the duration of the transportation services except when having a meal, drinks, or taking medication. Drivers must know how to properly wear a mask / face shield.

3.2 Temperature checks and screenings for respiratory symptoms

- Temperatures of drivers must be checked at least once a day.
- Drivers are to learn how to and have to perform self-screening for respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, sneezing, breathlessness, or a runny nose.
- Temperature records must be maintained for the past 21-days at a minimum.
- Drivers who are unwell, with a temperature exceeding 37.5oC and / or with respiratory symptoms must not be allowed to work. They must seek medical help immediately.
- Drivers who are under quarantine / Stay-Home Order must not report to work.

3.3 Minimise socialising and practice safe distancing

- Drivers are to maintain safe distancing between themselves and participants, tour guides, as well as other drivers. Close interactions must be minimised, maintaining 1-metre of safe distance where possible.
- Drivers are to assist the Tour Guide to encourage passengers to board and disembark from the vehicle in an orderly manner that minimises close interactions.
- Drivers are to observe the national guidelines for permissible group gathering sizes, including during meals, breaks, and smoking areas.
- To reduce physical contact, drivers must avoid handshakes and greet tour participants and suppliers with the traditional Lao "nop."



4. PASSENGER'S SAFETY

4.1 Wearing of masks for passengers

- Ensure that masks are available to tourists while in the vehicle.

4.2 Provision of hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs

- Drivers are to assist and co-ordinate with the Tour Guides to ensure that hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs are provided for passengers to use when boarding or disembarking from the vehicle.

4.3 Safe distancing for passengers

- Drivers are to assist and co-ordinate with the Tour Guides to help ensure that the maximum seating capacity of the vehicle is being observed.
- Drivers are to assist the Tour Guides in keeping participants to the same seats throughout the journey, including between destinations, and to board and disembark from the vehicle in an orderly manner that minimises close interactions.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 Contact hotline

- In the event of a suspected case, Tour Guides must immediately inform the Tour Operator and relevant authorities. Call the 166 or 165 hotlines, which are providing assistance in the event of a suspected case. Drivers are to provide assistance to Tour Guides, where possible.

5.2 Assist in providing contact tracing information

- Drivers are to provide contact tracing information to assist the authorities, where necessary.

5.3 Suspected cases

- In the event of a suspected case, drivers are to assist the Tour Guide to ensure unwell participants are escorted to the rear of the vehicle, if applicable. Ensure that the unwell participant is isolated from the group and that the mask worn by the participant is appropriate and properly worn. Maintain a safe distance from the unwell passenger and stop at the nearest safe drop-off point for them to seek medical attention.

5.4 Cleaning regime

- 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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