



Ministry of Home Affairs

MHA issues SOPs for movement of Indian Nationals stranded outside the country, as well as, for those persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad for urgent reasons

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Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued a Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for movement of Indian Nationals stranded outside the country and for those persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad for urgent reasons. This order is in supersession of MHA order, dated 05.05.2020, on the same subject. These SOPs would also apply to passengers arriving through the land borders.

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, international travel of passengers has been prohibited under lockdown measures. As per information available, many Indian Nationals who had travelled to different countries before the lockdown, on various purposes such as employment, studies/ internships, tourism, business, etc., are stranded abroad. Due to their prolonged stay abroad, they are facing distress and are desirous of returning to India urgently. Apart from the above cases, there are other Indian Nationals who need to visit India in medical emergencies or death of a family member. There are also many persons stranded in India, who desirous to travel abroad urgently for various purposes.

For travel of Indian Nationals stranded abroad, priority will be given to compelling cases in distress, including migrant workers/ labourers who have been laid off, short term visa holders faced with expiry of visas, persons with medical emergency/ pregnant women/ elderly, those required to return to India due to death of family member, and students.

Such persons would have to register themselves with the Indian Missions in the country where they are stranded, along with necessary details as prescribed by MEA. They would travel to India by non scheduled commercial flights as allowed by Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA) and ships as allowed by Department of Military Affairs (DMA)/ Ministry of Shipping (MOS). The cost of travel would have to be borne by the travellers. Further, only those who are asymptomatic would be allowed to travel to India.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) would prepare flight/ ship wise database of all such travellers, including relevant details and share with the respective State/ UT in advance. Further, MEA would designate their State/ UT wise nodal officers, who would co-ordinate with the nodal officers designated

for this purpose by the respective States/ UTs. The schedule (day, place and time of arrival) of the incoming flight/ ship would displayed by MEA on their online digital platform, on at least two days notice.

The Guidelines for international arrivals, including for quarantine arrangements, issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), have also been attached in the link below along with MHA SOPs. According to Health Ministry guidelines, before boarding all travellers would have to give an undertaking that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days – self paid 7-day institutional quarantine, followed by 7-day isolation at home.

For persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad, would have to apply to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) or to any agency designated by MoCA for this purpose, along with necessary details, including the places of departure and arrival, as prescribed by MoCA. The travel from India would be on non-scheduled commercial flights that have been allowed by MoCA for bringing back stranded Indian Nationals from abroad. The cost of travel would have to be borne by the travellers.

Travel to destination countries would be allowed for those who are citizens of that country; who hold visa of at least one year duration of that country; and green card or OCI card holder. In cases of medical emergency or death in the family, Indian Nationals holding six month visa can also be allowed. Before the tickets of such persons are confirmed. MoCA will ensure that the destination country allows entry of such persons in that country.

Indian seafarers/ crew seeking to accept contracts to serve on vessels abroad, can travel on the non-scheduled commercial flights departing from India under the Vande Bharat Mission or other flights arranged by their employers, subject to clearance given by the Ministry of Shipping.

At the time of boarding the flight, MoCA will ensure that all travellers undergo thermal screening as per health protocol. Only asymptomatic travellers would be allowed to board the flight. While on board the flight, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. would have to be observed by everyone on board.

[Click here to see the SOP Document and Health Ministry Guidelines](#)

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