



Ref: Kerala SLBC:COVID:ADVICE:25:160:2020

28th October 2020

To: All Member Banks

25th Advisory on Strict compliance of COVID-19 protocols within and outside Bank premises

Of late, it has been noticed that the Member Banks have not been following the strict COVID-19 protocols and SOP issued with regard to the functioning of branches in the State.

This has resulted in the District Administrations taking a very serious view which culminated in one of the branches of our Member Banks being asked to close down for six days till 2nd November 2020. Consequently the matter has been taken up with the highest level in the Government of Kerala and the District Administration concerned and the information gathered reveals a huge gathering of customers inside and outside the branch premises which according to them is a major concern regarding the spread of the disease,

While reiterating the point that the Branch Manager does not have any authority or powers to manage the crowd outside the Branch premises, it was felt that the branch ought to take minimum safety precautions to avoid crowding of the customers at the entrance of the branch.

After due deliberation, the following points have emerged to be strictly complied with by Branches to avoid any adverse Orders by District Administrations/Sectoral Magistrates:

1. There should not be more than five to six customers within the branch premises at any point of time depending upon the size of the premises.
2. All the customers and the staff within the premises have to ensure wearing of mask and social distancing.
3. Air-conditioning within the branch should not be switched on. However, wherever requirement is inevitable, considering the layout of the premises the air-conditioning shall be switched on at temperature more than 24°C as advised by the MHA GoI vide their SOP dt. 04.06.2020 (Copy enclosed. Refer point no 4. Xxii).
4. In so far as the crowd management outside the premises is concerned, the following to be strictly ensured:
 - a) All customers entering the premises should properly sanitise their hands and wearing mask. Branch to ensure proper facility for the same are made available at the entrance.

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सभी पत्राचार इस पते पर भेजें
संयोजक, रा.स्त.बैं.स, केरल
एवं महा प्रबंधक, केनरा बैंक
रा.स्त.बैं.स कक्ष, अंचल कार्यालय,
केनरा बैंक बिल्डिंग, पी.बी.संख्या:159
एम.जी.रोड, तिरुवनंतपुरम - 695001

All Communications to be addressed to:

Convenor, SLBC Kerala &
General Manager, Canara Bank
SLBC Cell, Circle Office
Canara Bank Building, PB No.159, MG Road
Thiruvananthapuram-695001

T : 2331302, (Direct)
2331051 (Extn. 608,609)
Fax: 0471-2338236, 2331355
E-mail: slbckerala@canarabank.com
Website: www.slbckerala.com
www.canarabank.com

b) To avoid crowding at the grill gate/entrance, branches should make seating arrangements by providing chairs with floor marking duly ensuring social distancing to the maximum possible area available immediately outside the branch entrance. If this is ensured and the crowd immediately outside the branch premises is so managed, the District Administration/Sectoral Magistrate will not find fault with the Branch-in-Charge.

c) Wherever possible and required, a shamiana/panthal may be erected and suitable arrangements made and ensure that the customers to the extent of chairs arranged are seated in the chairs with due social distancing so that the crowding is avoided.

d) It should be ensured that the chairs are not rearranged in a manner in which it will defeat the social distancing norms.

e) Any customers or crowd beyond the number of seats arranged will be managed by the Police/District Administration if found necessary.

f) Vide our 24th Advisory dt. 15.10.2020, we have advised staggering of account holders according to Savings Bank account numbers and it is advisable to issue tokens to identify the customers permitted to visit the branches at that particular time on that day. This will enable the Police/District Administration to identify non customers/ineligible customers from hanging around outside branch premises.

g) Since traditionally there is a surge in the footfall during the beginning of the month on account of releasing salary/pension/relief measures, it is advisable to make arrangement to deploy a security person to manage the crowd outside the branch premises during this period wherever felt necessary.

As advised earlier vide our SOP dt. 28.07.2020, wherever the branch is not able to control the crowd of customers outside the branch, the Local Administration may be requested in writing by the Branch and BCs to assist in maintaining social distancing, law and order and controlled entry into the branch premises.

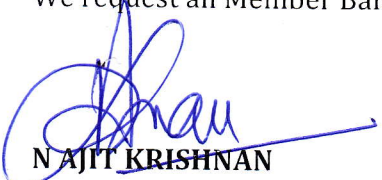
All Member Banks are requested to advise their branches to strictly follow the protocols failing which we may be unable to counter the order for closure of branches if found violating the laid down protocols in future.

It is noted that such violations are happening more in the northern Districts of the State and special care and guidance to be issued to the Regional Offices/Branches operating at these centres.

To avoid footfalls in the branches maximum customers to be diverted to the Business Correspondents and ATMs duly ensuring that the ATMs are fully operational and sufficiently loaded with cash and protocols maintained.

We request all Member Banks to take note of the above for due compliance.

BREAK THE CHAIN


N AJIT KRISHNAN

**Convenor, SLBC Kerala &
General Manager, Canara Bank**

All communications to be addressed to:

General Manager
Canara Bank, SLBC Cell
Circle Office, Canara Bank Bldg.
P.B.No.159, M.G.Road
Thiruvananthapuram -695 001



Phone : 2331302 (Direct),
2331051 Ext .608,609
Fax : 0471 2338236 / 2331355
E-mail : slbckerala@canarabank.com
Website: www.slbckerala.com