KOREA NEWS AND NATIONAL POLICY ON COVID-19

extract from Korea Centers for Disease Control & Prevention official web-site

Korean government’s response system
Korea’s Crisis Alert Level has been raised to the highest Level 4 on February 23, 2020 and has assembled the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister to bolster government-wide responses to COVID-19.

Each local government establishes Local Disaster and Safety Management Headquarters led by the heads of the local governments to secure an adequate number of Infectious Disease Hospitals and beds. If the countermeasure required is beyond the capacity of local governments, the central government may support necessary resources including beds, personnel, and supplies.

Preventing the inflow and spread of the virus
Through border screening
The Korean government introduced an entry ban on foreign nationals from Hubei Province, strengthened visa screening of travelers from China and Japan, and designated China (including Hong Kong, Macau), Italy, and Iran as ‘quarantine inspection required areas’, to tighten screening of travelers from these countries.

Special Entry Procedure
The Korean government expanded its Special Entry Procedure to all travellers from all parts of the world on March 19. All inbound and travellers receive temperature screening and fill out the Health Questionnaire and Special Quarantine Declaration in accordance with the Special Entry Procedure. All travellers subject to the special procedure are allowed to enter the nation after their contact information and address of residence in Korea is verified. They are also required to install either the ‘Self-Quarantine Safety Protection App’ or ‘Self-Diagnosis App’ on their phones to monitor if they show symptoms that indicate infection of COVID-19 such as fever during their stay in Korea. All inbound travellers must install either of the two applications, to check their health status and record if they develop any symptom on a daily basis for 15 days beginning from the day of arrival. The list of incoming travellers is provided to each local government in an effort to strengthen the monitoring system.

Stronger measures for infection prevention and control of overseas entrants
All travellers entering Korea are subject to a 14-day quarantine from the day after arrival since April 1.
For inbound travelers, testing and treatment expenses are covered by the Korean government but livelihood support are not provided. If a traveler entering Korea does not comply with the quarantine guidelines, s/he may face up to 1 year of imprisonment or a KRW 10 million fine for violating the Quarantine Act and Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act. In accordance with the Immigration Act, foreign nationals violating the regulations may face deportation or ban on entry into Korea, etc.

The Korean government allows medical institutions to access overseas travel history of patients through the system that checks health insurance eligibility of patients, International Traveler Information System (ITS), and Drug Utilization Review (DUR)

**Early detection and containment**
- COVID-19 screening stations:
Screening stations provide consultation to people showing symptoms such as cough or fever before they visit medical facilities. As of April 8, 2020, 638 public health centers and medical institutions operate screening stations, of which 95 percent (606) are equipped to collect specimens onsite. Diverse forms of screening stations have been introduced such as drive-thru and walk-thru screening station.

- Diagnostic tests
There are currently 118 testing facilities—23 public facilities, 81 medical institutions, and 14 entrusted facilities—that provide diagnostic tests. As of April, a total of five diagnostic reagents were granted Emergency Use Authorization. Since scaling up testing facilities and diagnostic reagents, the maximum daily testing capacity increased from 3,000 people in February to approximately 20,000 people as of April.

Preventing spread of the virus through epidemiological investigations and quarantine of contacts

Epidemiological investigation
Basic information including whereabouts of confirmed cases are collected through an interview with confirmed cases. If needed, interview with healthcare workers and family members may additionally take place. In case the acquired information is insufficient, more objective data (medical records, mobile GPS, CCTV footages, credit card records, etc.) may be collected and verified. The contacts identified during the investigation are required to attend healthcare education, have their symptoms monitored, and stay in self-quarantine. Information on the whereabouts of confirmed cases are uploaded on websites in order to prevent any additional infection.

Contact management
Family members, housemates, and other contacts identified by epidemiological investigation on the patient’s travel and infection routes are subject to self-quarantine for the maximum incubation period (14 days) beginning from the day after the date of contact with a confirmed patient and have their symptoms monitored. The Ministry of Interior and Safety and local governments thoroughly manage those under self-quarantine on a one-to-one basis. Those in self-quarantine are prohibited from leaving the country for 14 days regardless of their health status. Those who violate self-quarantine guidelines may face up to a 10 million KRW fine or one year of imprisonment.

Source:

10 Best Practices of the Republic of Korea for COVID-19
1. Self-Quarantine Safety Protection App
2. Self-Health Check App
3. AI Care Call Service (for active monitoring)
4. Masking Rationing System and Mask Alert Apps
5. Informing the Public of Confirmed Cases
6. Self-Quarantine
7. Screening Stations (Drive-Thru and Walk-Thru)*
8. Living Treatment Centers
9. National Safe Hospitals
10. Temporary Quarantine Facility (for short-term foreign inbound travellers)

*Types of Screening Stations (Drive-Thru and Walk-Thru)
- Container-style with air-conditioning system
- Marquee tent, open-style which wide enough for car to drive-through testing (separate marquee for wash and disinfection for staff)

Source:

- Cases in Korea (as of 00 on June 8)
Confirmed cases: 11,814
Released from Quarantine: 10,563
Quarantined: 978
Deceased: 273

Source: