



Radiology Society of Pakistan

Abbreviated guidelines for imaging departments for handling of COVID-19 patients

General precautions:

- Reduce or stop outpatient work.
- Reduce staffing levels in the department to preserve workforce. Workforce should be divided into two batches of similar skill level (senior and junior colleagues) and these batches rotated through the department weekly (one batch staffing the department and the other working from home if possible - telemedicine).
- Limit attendants/visitors to the department –scanning areas should only be accessed by staff or patients.
- Pregnant staff will not be assigned to work with known/suspected COVID-19 patients.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Isolation precautions:

- Standard + contact + Droplet precautions only – these include protective gowns, gloves, surgical mask and goggles (preferably).
- N95 respirator is NOT required (unless the operator is performing a procedure where there is risk of aerosolization of the virus)

Patient transfers to and from the department:

- Patients must not be transported to the department unless absolutely necessary.
- In event of transfer, radiology department must be pre-informed so that adequate arrangements can be made.
- Patient must wear a surgical mask during transfer.
- Healthcare staff do not need to wear PPEs during patient transfer.
- Patients with COVID-19 should be shifted directly to the scanners or procedure room and should ideally be scheduled at the end of the list if clinically possible.
- Patient transfer routes in and out of the department/scan rooms should be earmarked beforehand for ease of transfers.

Radiography & ultrasound:

- Use of portable x-ray and ultrasound is highly recommended in emergency rooms or inpatient wards/isolation rooms rather than patient transfer to the radiology department.
- A designated ultrasound suite should be dedicated for COVID-19 patients.

- Departmental x-rays and ultrasounds to be discouraged and performed if discussed with a consultant.

CT scanning:

- A dedicated CT/ultrasound unit/room should be designated for all patients with COVID-19 – this is to prevent cross-contamination of other scanners. Dedicated radiographers should be staffed in this scanner.
- Appropriate PPEs and Decontamination kits/equipment must be available outside and inside the scanner suites.

Post exposure de-contamination:

- All sheets gowns used must be discarded as per infection control policy – disposable sheets should be used. If not sheets should be sent for sterilization in designated sealed waterproof or alginate bags.
- Appropriate disinfectant solution spray (which include quaternary ammonium, sodium hypochlorite, hydrogen peroxide and alcohol based compounds) should be used to cover all contact surfaces of the scanners, work stations/desks, keyboards, monitors instrument trolleys etc.
- Appropriate concentration and contact times of the surface disinfectant should be used.
- A list of all disinfectant solutions approved for use with COVID -19 is available on the following link: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Appropriate contact times with disinfectants must be ensured.
- These precautions are to be used with all imaging modalities.
- All PPEs must be discarded appropriately in designated bins and discarded as per infection control protocols.