

# **HR Management & Recruitment of Civil Servants amid COVID-19**

**June 2020**

**Ministry of Personnel Management  
Republic of Korea**

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# 1. Current State of COVID-19 in ROK

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- (20 Jan. '20) Number of confirmed cases of people infected with COVID-19 drastically increased starting from late February since the first confirmed case identified
- (23 Feb. '20) ROK government raised COVID-19 crisis alert level to Serious, the highest level
- (29 Feb. '20) Number of daily confirmed cases reached 909
- In a stable state since April '20 with the number of daily new cases maintained at around 50
  - Cases of people infected with the virus in local communities continuing to occur plus the confirmed cases of people arriving from overseas

## 2. Progress of Countermeasures in HR Management

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- Ministry of Personnel Management set up a **task force to support responses to COVID-19** (Feb. 11)
  - Head (Vice Minister), Deputy Head (Director General for Planning & Coordination) and teams of seven areas\* organized
  - \* Overall coordination, examinations for recruitment, service management of public servants, public servants seconded overseas, HR development, media relations
- Ministry of Personnel Management set up an **Emergency Response Center against COVID-19** (Mar. 5)
  - Head (Minister), Deputy Head (Vice Minister) and task force teams for five areas\* organized
  - \* Overall coordination, recruitment, service management of public servants, HR development, compensation for damage
- **Detailed guidelines** prepared and executed in line with the changing situations of COVID-19
  - Service management, flexible working, operation of education and training, etc.
- Recruitment process simplified to promptly recruit **epidemiologists and medical staff** (from Feb.)
- Psychological consultations in the mental health care center extended in relation to COVID-19, and support provided for review of occupational accidents for compensation (from Feb.)

### 3. Improved Training and Work Conditions

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- ① Online training extended and supervision of public officials seconded overseas reinforced
  - ⇒ “Guidelines on Operation of Training” issued e.g. on **postponing opening of new courses** in 38 training institutes, **replacement of open courses with online and personal education**, etc. (4 times in total)
    - \* After transition to Daily-life Distancing, concentration of trainees minimized, and online education expanded, etc.
  - ⇒ **Real-time online education** executed using video conferencing system (from Mar. 9)
  - ⇒ Monitoring reinforced of the working conditions of **public servants trained overseas** and the **officials that have taken time off from work**, and trainees staying in risk regions brought home temporarily (from Feb.)
  - ⇒ National public servant HR development institute operated as a temporary facility to stay during the quarantine period of 173 Korean nationals returned from Wuhan, China (Jan. 31 to Feb. 15)

### 3. Improved Training and Work Conditions

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- ② Working conditions of public servants improved, procedures to compensate for occupational accidents streamlined
  - ⇒ **Telephone counselling service extended** at the mental health care center, and focused management of groups with increased mental fatigue (from Feb.)
  - ⇒ **Support provided for public servants that suffered occupational accidents while on duty in relation to COVID-19** to undergo review for compensation ahead of others (from Feb.)
  - ⇒ In case of performing COVID-19 emergency response related work, the limit to the allowable overtime work is raised (**existing 57 hours → 70 hours**)
  - ⇒ **Period** when public officials that engaged in COVID-19 prevention work can **use alternate leaves extended** (1 week → 6 weeks), and the **number of leaves increased** (5 days max. → 30 days) (notice issued on Mar. 27)

## 4. Recruitment/Exam Management amid COVID-19

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### ① Recruitment of resources for K-disease prevention

- ⇒ Need for prompt recruitment of epidemiologists, quarantine staff and medical staff to work for the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Korea Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and local medical clinics
- ⇒ Job posting period reduced, and recruitment carried out swiftly in three to four weeks, which is less than before
- ⇒ In principle, the newly recruited are supposed to be assigned after taking training first, but measures taken that they can be assigned on site first and can take mandatory training online afterwards
- ⇒ Actively accepted request for improvement to working conditions for recruitment of qualified epidemiologists

# 4. Recruitment/Exam Management amid COVID-19

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## ② K-disease prevention for public exams: progress

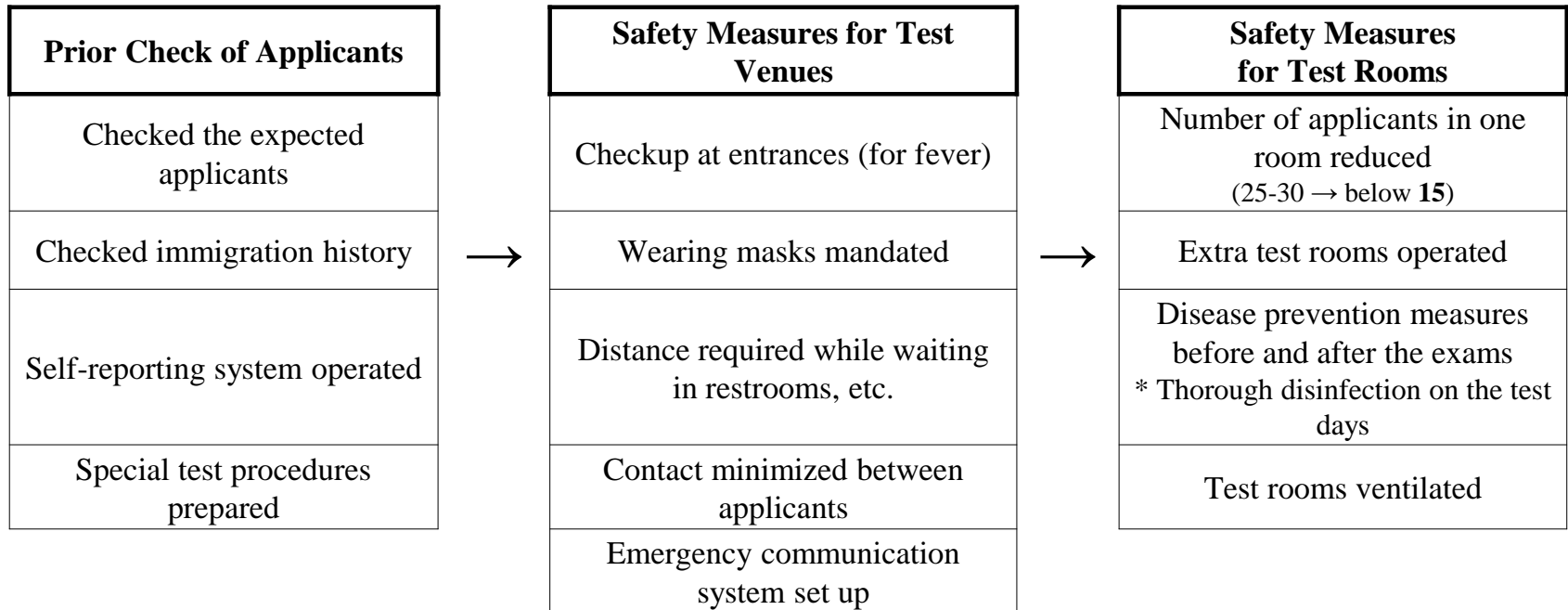
- ⇒ (Feb. 25) COVID-19 alert level raised to Serious, the highest level, and examinations announced to be postponed (originally planned for Feb. 29)
- ⇒ (Apr. 22) Changed schedules confirmed and announced after expert discussions in KCDC and review by the disease prevention headquarters
  - ※ Written exams rescheduled: Feb. 29 → May 16 (5th grade public servants), Aug. 22 → Sept. 26 (7<sup>th</sup> grade), Mar. 28 → Jul. 11 (9th grade)
- ⇒ (May 16) Written exam for open recruitment of 5th grade public servants for central government
- ⇒ (Jun. 13) Written exam for open recruitment of 9th grade public servants for local municipalities
  - ※ Written exams for open recruitments of 9th grade public servants for central government (Jul. 11) and of 7th grade public servants (Sept. 26)



# 4. Recruitment/Exam Management amid COVID-19

## ② K-disease prevention for public exams: preventive measures

Measures taken to prevent infection: top priority on protecting safety of applicants



## 4. Recruitment/Exam Management amid COVID-19

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### ② **K-disease prevention for public exams: safety management of applicants**

- ⇒ **(Prior check of the applicants)** Prior check performed to identify those infected or people under self-quarantine, etc. among the applicants
- ⇒ **(Check of immigration history)** History of entry into and departure from the country checked to prevent infection by the entry of those infected
- ⇒ **(Operation of self-reporting system)** Self-reporting system operated such as on health status, immigration history, history of visiting dangerous regions, etc. (from May 8 till the day before the exams)
- ⇒ **(Special test procedures prepared)** Applicants under quarantine required to take the exams in separate places after discussion with the disease prevention authorities

## 4. Recruitment/Exam Management amid COVID-19

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### ② **K-disease prevention for public exams: safety measures taken for test venues and test rooms**

⇒ **(Control at entrances)** Applicants required to enter the test venues using main entrances, and all the visitors to the test venues including applicants and supervisors required to undergo hand sanitization and fever check (with non-contact thermometers)

※ Applicants suspected to show signs of infection (body temperature over 37.5°C and respiratory symptoms, etc.) required to take the exams in separate places

⇒ **(Wearing masks mandated)** Wearing masks in test rooms mandated

⇒ **(Reduced number of applicants in each test room)** The number of applicants taking an exam in the same room significantly reduced from previous 25-30 to 15 or less

- Distancing between applicants doubled to ensure safety of the applicants

## 4. Recruitment/Exam Management amid COVID-19

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### ② **K-disease prevention for public exams: safety measures taken for test venues and test rooms**

- ⇒ **(Distance secured while waiting)** Distancing by over 1.5m between applicants required while using restrooms, etc. guided by assistants
- ⇒ **(Ventilation of test rooms)** Windows open frequently for ventilation during the exams and break times
- ⇒ **(Prior and post-test prevention measures)** Whole test venues disinfected before and after the exams
- ⇒ **(Emergency communication system)** Emergency communication system set up with the disease prevention authorities and local health centers

## 4. Recruitment/Exam Management amid COVID-19

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② **K-disease prevention for public exams: safe disease prevention performed**

⇒ **No cases identified of applicants developing particular symptoms or suspected to be infected after checking the health status of those who took the exams in extra test rooms for 2 weeks after the end of the exams**

## 5. Next Steps

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- To continue to cooperate to recruit resources for disease prevention including epidemiologists
- To actively share the experience and know-how in arranging written exams taken by a large number of applicants such as the one for 9th grade public servants and in executing measures to prevent spread of the virus during the exams with government agencies and public institutions
- Ways to facilitate no-contact recruitment and frequent recruitment in small volumes to be studied and executed