

Health and safety are priority as Dubai's hospitality sector commences prudent reopening

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Private beaches linked to hotels are now open to receive guests for prescribed activities, and will operate under strict health and safety protocols

Enhanced guidelines with clear deployment standards issued to all hotels. Hotels to be monitored for stringent compliance by Dubai Tourism inspectors. 'Zero-tolerance' approach in the preventive management of all prescribed hygiene maintenance and transmission control measures.

As Dubai readies itself to open its doors to visitors from around the world, the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism) is focused on assuring travellers of the city's ability to not only receive guests safely and allow for a well-rounded destination experience, but also be able to ensure that the health and wellbeing of all communities within the city remains uncompromised.

To this end, the Emirate has deployed a wide range of precautionary and preventive measures across all customer-facing high-frequency touch-points of visitor and resident interaction, including public spaces, attractions and various tourism-related activities as they come on stream and restrictions get lifted gradually. Hotels across the city that are staging their reopening are mandated to adopt a stringent set of international health and safety protocols that have been enhanced further to reinforce Dubai's reputation as one of the world's safest destinations.

Having tightly managed the immediacy of the health crisis, and even as it continues to effectively curtail the transmission of COVID-19 within its boundaries, Dubai has shifted gears to taking phased measures to reopen its economic sectors, while remaining committed to ensuring the city remains protected. Incremental to the standard precautionary parameters around social distancing and wearing of masks at all times to curtail the pace of transmission of COVID-19, very detailed reopening guidelines for both government and private establishments have been established for each industry, including the hotel and hospitality sector, acknowledging the reputational significance of this industry as a vital in-city interface for guests.

Restrictions that were recently relaxed allow for the reopening of hotel beaches and resumption of water sports activities, with more prescriptive rules including disinfection and frequent sterilisations to ensure the health and safety of all hotel guests, as well as staff. As part of enhanced social distancing guidelines,

beach-goers are required to maintain a distance of two metres between one another, along with their sun-beds, while there should be a gap of four metres between two groups of people and their sun-beds on the beach, with a defined number of people. Only hotel guests are allowed to access the private beach property, following stringent protocols to minimise any contagion risks. Other hotel facilities remain closed with gradual phased approach of reopening. All facilities will be subject to frequent sanitisation protocols in addition to strict periodic sterilisation requirements to protect all users. Dubai Tourism inspectors will be regularly monitoring the hotel beaches to ensure compliance with the safety measures.

Khalid Saeed Bin Touq, Executive Director, Tourism Activities and Classification Sector, Dubai Tourism, commented: "Dubai Tourism has introduced a range of health and safety guidelines for hotels, their guests and employees, as adherence to the highest health and safety standards will have a direct bearing on the success of our tourism industry, especially since this will be foremost on the mind of every person considering a vacation overseas. We are taking a zero-tolerance approach in the management of all health and safety protocols and are working closely with our hospitality partners for the effective implementation of these measures, as the safety of guests will be of paramount importance as we transition to the new normal."

"Dubai continues to take prudent steps under the guidance of its visionary leadership to instill confidence within our society and encourage people to return to their everyday life in a measured way. This gradual easing of restrictions relating to beaches and water sports activities at hotels is one of the more critical parts of our economic reopening plans, as it is a key component of Dubai's leisure offering and will enable to kick-start the reactivation of the tourism sector among others across the city. As we continuously assess the current situation and look beyond the pandemic, we will be guided by the expert advice of our public health authorities during the various stages of reopening the tourism sector with the aim of protecting Dubai's reputation as a global city and one of the world's safest destinations."

As part of efforts to reassure both domestic holidaymakers and travellers from overseas that Dubai is a destination that is committed to health and safety, the various hotel establishments are required to deploy stringent disinfection measures of their facilities daily and frequently, including thorough sterilisation and cleaning of all rooms, facilities, air conditioning systems, equipment, water tanks and washrooms, as well as enhanced sanitisation covering contact points in lobbies and other common areas. Elevators will have to maintain a reduced and defined percentage of the passenger capacity while entrances to hotels are being fitted with equipment for contactless screening of guests. Restaurants at Dubai hotels are allowed to serve both resident and non-resident guests with reduced seating arrangements accounting for a defined percentage of the occupancy based on the reopening phase and maintaining a distance of two metres between tables, while take-away meals and contactless payment and deliveries are actively encouraged.

With the hospitality sector being the cornerstone of Dubai's tourism industry, the gradual lifting of restrictions placed on hotels will pave the way for more people in Dubai and neighbouring emirates to enjoy a staycation in one of the city hotels, as the domestic market is expected to immensely contribute towards the revival of the city's tourism industry in the initial stages, as part of the phased mechanism adopted by Dubai Tourism to restore tourism growth while ensuring the highest safety standards to safeguard the health of residents and guests.

Dubai Tourism is also working closely with key aviation partners including national carrier Emirates, which is resuming passenger flights to nine destinations on 21 May, and Dubai Airports, in the implementation of health and safety protocols aimed at reassuring tourists that they can enjoy a safe and memorable stay in Dubai. All Emirates cabin crew, boarding agents and ground staff in direct contact with passengers are provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) which includes a protective disposable gown over their uniforms, and a safety visor, in addition to masks and gloves. At Dubai International Airport, gloves and masks are mandatory for all customers and employees while thermal scanners monitor the temperatures of all passengers and employees entering the airport.



