



## IAC Action Plan in the face of an international public health emergency caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19

**BACKGROUND:** On December 31, 2019, China reported cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause related to a fish market in the city of Wuhan in the Hubei province. On January 9, Chinese authorities identified a new type of coronavirus unlike any other seen to date as the cause of the outbreak. This coronavirus is known as SARS-CoV-2 and the disease it produces is called COVID-19.

Currently, on the recommendation of the IHR Emergency Committee (2005) or the IHR (2005), the Director-General of the WHO has declared the outbreak of the new coronavirus 2019 (nCoV) in the People's Republic of China a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

The Emergency Committee makes specific recommendations for China on the one hand and for the rest of the countries on the other. The main recommendations are:

- Set up active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, and follow-up of contacts with the aim of reducing human infection, preventing secondary transmission and international spread.
- Inform the WHO continuously and contribute to the international response through multi-sectoral communication and collaboration and active participation to increase knowledge about the virus and the disease, as well as progress in research.

All the activities proposed by the WHO and by the Emergency Committee are currently underway in Spain and coordinated with all the autonomous communities.

A PHEIC is defined in the RSI (2005) as “an extraordinary event which will constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response”. This definition implies a situation that is (1) serious, sudden, unusual or unexpected; (2) carries implications for public health beyond the affected State's national border; and (3) may require immediate international action.

So far, the source of infection is unknown and there is uncertainty regarding the severity and transmission capacity. Due to similarities with other known coronaviruses, SARS-CoV-2 is thought to be transmitted mainly by respiratory drops of more than 5 microns and by direct contact with the secretions of infected people. Other possible routes of transmission are being assessed.

The incubation period of the disease has been estimated at between 2 and 14 days. Evidence of virus transmission prior to the onset of symptoms has not been verified to date. Currently, there is no specific treatment for SARS-CoV-2.

The most common symptoms of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) are: fever, cough and shortness of breath. In some cases there may also be digestive symptoms such as diarrhea and abdominal pain. In more severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia, significant difficulty breathing, kidney failure and even death. The most serious cases generally occur in the elderly or those with underlying conditions such as heart, respiratory or immune system problems.

The COVID-19 virus is similar to other respiratory viruses and the form of transmission between humans is mainly via air and close contact with respiratory secretions from the coughs and sneezes of a sick person. It can also be contracted by touching a contaminated surface and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes. Some people may become infected but not go on to develop significant clinical symptoms.

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## 1 SCOPE

The scope of this Action Plan is the implementation and monitoring of actions aimed at guaranteeing the maintenance and operation of the IAC at its headquarters, the Teide Observatory, the IACTEC offices, CALP and the Roque de los Muchachos Observatory, during the period of International Public Health Emergency caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19. The actions are for prevention and for the protection of the health of IAC employees, collaborators and assigned personnel.

## 2. THE IAC MONITORING COMMITTEE

### 2.1. Composition

The Plan's Monitoring Committee at the IAC will be the Management Committee, comprising the following members:

Chair: Director.

Secretary: Head of General Administration.

Members: Deputy Director, Research Coordinator, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Tehcnology Coordinator.

It will have an ordinary weekly meeting via phone/video conference as well as extraordinary meetings upon the request of members made to the President.

### 2.2. Functions of the IAC Monitoring Committee

The Committee will have the following functions:

- Implement this IAC Action Plan and the planned preventive and executive measures.
- Inform staff in IAC work centers of the procedures to be followed in each case.
- Report on the development of actions and the evolution of the emergency in the IAC, incidences of the disease and incidents that may arise in the service operation during the application of the actions, and propose any additional actions deemed appropriate in relation to this alert.
- Propose those essential services that must be guaranteed in the event that Human Resources are seriously affected.
- Guarantee new chains of command and responsibility in the event that the existing ones are broken.
- Establish a procedure to control the incidence of the disease.
- Propose, where appropriate, the extension of time limits to resolve administrative procedures, selection processes, etc.
- If necessary, implement measures aimed at facilitating and improving the use of information technologies and communication systems or home working.
- Urge user institutions, external companies, contractors, etc. to establish their own contingency plans.
- Report regularly to the Health and Safety Committee and the Workers' Committee.
- Communicate functions and tasks to the relevant personnel within the framework of this Action Plan.

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CODE  
TBD

DPT. RESPONSIBLE  
ASSGG

PROCESS(ES) INVOLVED  
RRHH - UPRL

CONTACT / INFORMATION

VERSION  
12-MARCH2020



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## 3. IAC Monitoring Subcommittee

### 3.1. Composition of the Monitoring Subcommittee

The Monitoring Subcommittee will comprise following members:

Chair: Head of General Administration.  
Secretary: President of the Health and Safety Committee.  
Members: Head of Human Resources,  
OT Administrator, ORM Administrator,  
IT Services Manager,  
Research and Graduate Studies Manager,  
Operational Manager,  
IACTec Manager,  
Starlight Director,  
Production Manager,  
Head of Emergencies (IAC Headquarters),  
Head of the Telescopic Operations Department,  
Health and Safety expert.

It will have an ordinary weekly meeting via phone/video conference as well as extraordinary meetings upon the request of members made to the President.

### 3.2. Functions of the Monitoring Subcommittee

The Monitoring Subcommittee will have the following functions:

- Implement the measures in the Plan and those requested by the Monitoring Committee.
- Propose additional measures to the Monitoring Committee to improve the Plan.
- Report to the Monitoring Committee on the development of the actions.
- Carry out whatever other actions are requested by the Monitoring Committee.

## 4. PLAN FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION OF WORKERS' HEALTH. Preventive measures.

### 4.1. Staff information.

Staff are informed that the following preventive measures will be the first to be considered:

- Sudden onset of symptoms: fever, cough and/or shortness of breath. Anyone who observes these symptoms in the workplace should go home and remain there, and should contact 112 (also 900 112 061). They should inform their line manager that they are leaving the workplace. The line manager will immediately notify the Health and Safety Department ([uprl@iac.es](mailto:uprl@iac.es)).
- If suffering a respiratory infection, avoid close contact with other people.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover the mouth and nose with your bent elbow or with a tissue.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Frequent hand washing. Soapy water is better than alcohol or disinfectant solutions, which should be used when soap and water are not readily available.
- Maintain physical distance from other people: transmission of the virus by air at distances greater than 1-2 meters appears unlikely.
- Avoid any close contact with people who show signs of respiratory infection.
- Do not travel to areas with a risk of contagion.

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## 4.2. Equipment & cleaning.

The following basic measures will be taken in the various work centers, with the collaboration of – and under the responsibility of – the IAC staff:

- Availability of soap and disposable paper towels in all IAC bathrooms.
- Those areas that are far from bathrooms shall be equipped with hand sanitizer and disposable towels along with brief instructions on their use. A hand gel dispenser will be located at the security gate and at reception areas for use by occasional visitors, suppliers, couriers, etc.
- Thermometers will be made available to staff in each center so that those who suspect they have a fever can take an initial measurement. If fever is confirmed or suspected, you must proceed as indicated in point 4.1. Thermometers must be cleaned correctly before being returned.
- Frequent cleaning of surfaces, especially handrails and similar.

## 4.3. Infographics and other informative tools.

The following informative tools are accessible online and are particularly relevant:

[https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/img/COVID19\\_que\\_hacer.jpg](https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/img/COVID19_que_hacer.jpg)

<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/Ciudadania.htm>



## 4.4. Official information.

### Ministry of Health:

Website, with updated information, questions and answers and infographics:

<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/Ciudadania.htm>

Website for professionals, with technical documentation:

<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/documentos.htm>

### Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation:

Updated information on the situation in all countries via a map that directs users to country embassies:

<http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/ServiciosAlCiudadano/SiViajasAlExtranjero/Paginas/RecomendacionesDeViaje.aspx>

## 4.5. Prevention of workplace risk.

The IAC's Health and Safety Department will constantly monitor the situation in the IAC, make the appropriate recommendations and report regularly to the Chair of the Monitoring Subcommittee.

The "Health and Safety Action Plan against exposure to the new coronavirus (SARS-COV-2)" is attached as an annex to this document (version March 5), coordinated by the General Sub-directorate of Environmental Health and Occupational Health of the General Directorate of Public Health, Quality and

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Innovation (Ministry of Health). The recommendations included in this document are under continuous review, depending on the evolution of the situation and new information that becomes available. Likewise, the "Procedure for dealing with cases of infection with the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2)", updated to February 27, is attached.

## 4.6. Travels.

Trips to WHO declared risk areas should not be made if they are not essential. The IAC staff is reminded, in relation to this point, of the instructions and need for compliance of the Steering Committee for trips to risk areas (CD Acts of February 12 and 26, 2020).

- Risk areas: <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/areas.htm>

- Recommendations for trips from Spain to risk areas:  
[https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/sanidadExterior/salud/pdf/RecomendacionesSanitarias\\_MedidasPreventivas\\_COVID\\_19\\_2Marzo2020.pdf](https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/sanidadExterior/salud/pdf/RecomendacionesSanitarias_MedidasPreventivas_COVID_19_2Marzo2020.pdf)

- Recommendations for people returning from trips from risk areas:  
[https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/documents/Recommendations\\_regreso\\_area\\_riesgo.pdf](https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/documents/Recommendations_regreso_area_riesgo.pdf)

Likewise, and following the recommendations received from the Secretary of State for Territorial Policy and Public Service, on the measures to be adopted in work centers dependent on the General State Administration, on the occasion of COVID-19, it is recommended to postpone all those trips work that are not essential for normal activity.

## 4.7. Work meetings.

With regard to meetings, those that may be postponed will be avoided by promoting, where appropriate, the use of videoconferencing, with the suspension of those involving trips to another location. Avoid face-to-face meetings of more than 5 people, and with safety distance recommendations.

## 4.8. Conferences, courses and training activities.

Conferences, courses and face-to-face training activities will be postponed, valuing the use of telematic means as an alternative, when possible.

## 4.9. Selective processes.

Selective tests of the ongoing processes will be postponed, for the necessary time, especially those with massive attendance. In this sense, those in which the concurrence of candidates is 5 people or less may be carried out. In these cases, the preventive measures and recommendations indicated in this Plan will be followed, both by the candidates and by the members of the evaluation panel, which must reduce their number to the essential minimum provided by the process.

## 4.10. Attention to the public and internal users.

In attention to the public, priority will be given to telephonic and telematic attention (registration, secretaries, computer support, etc.). In the case of face-to-face attention, the necessary shifts will be established, when necessary, so as to guarantee the provision of the service.

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## 4.11. Working visits or training of external personnel.

External personnel who are going to carry out work, or periods of training, at the IAC headquarters or in the facilities of its Observatories will be subject to the same measures as for the IAC's own personnel, especially as regards non-contractual modalities.

The staff visits to facilities of the User Institutions of the Observatories must respect the Contingency Plans of these institutions, in addition to those of the IAC as the operating entity of the Canary Islands Observatories.

In any case, these external staff visits must be reduced to the essential minimum.

## 4.12. External group visits.

External visits to the IAC headquarters, in La Laguna and in Breña Baja, both from schools and from any other group, will be suspended until further notice.

With regard to visits to the Canary Islands Observatories, only visits organized by companies or guides authorized to do so may be carried out. In these cases, maximum compliance with the recommendations and instructions of this plan will be ensured. Specifically, and as an additional measure, concentrations in closed spaces, such as inside telescopes, will be avoided at all times.

The companies and authorized guides must establish their own contingency plans. They will be informed through the corresponding channels of the measures to be taken into account in the IAC.

## 4.13. Security Service.

Security services at headquarters and observatories will be maintained normally, with the presence of a single person from these contracts. These companies must establish their own contingency plans, in which they must foresee the maintenance of an appropriate level of activity for the operation of the services they provide. They will be informed through the corresponding channels of the preventive measures and recommendations indicated in this plan, in particular hygienic and safety distances, for compliance.

## 4.14. Reception service.

The reception services at Centres and Observatories will be maintained normally, with the presence of a single person from these contracts. These companies must establish their own contingency plans, in which they must foresee the maintenance of an appropriate level of activity for the operation of the services they provide. They will be informed through the corresponding channels of the preventive measures and recommendations indicated in this plan, in particular hygienic and safety distances, for compliance.

## 4.15. Cafeteria service.

The cafeteria and dining room services at headquarters and observatories will operate normally, with the presence of the minimum staff of these contractors for the maintenance of an adequate level of activity. Users and contract staff will follow the preventive measures and recommendations indicated in this Plan.

The concentration of users in these spaces should be avoided as far as possible. It is advisable to modify the timing habits for these and avoid forming queues. Likewise, the available furniture will be rearranged and spaced out. Tables should be cleaned as thoroughly as possible.

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The companies that provide these services must establish their own contingency plans. They will be informed through the corresponding channels of the preventive measures and recommendations indicated in this plan, in particular hygienic and safety distances, for compliance.

#### **4.16. Cleaning service and other services.**

Cleaning services in the IAC work centers will be maintained normally, with the presence of the minimum staff of these contractors for the maintenance of an adequate level of activity.

These companies must establish their own contingency plans. They will be informed through the corresponding channels of the preventive measures and recommendations indicated in this plan, in particular hygienic and safety distances, for compliance.

This will also apply to other external services that are carried out in the IAC work centers (electrical maintenance, etc.).

#### **4.17. Collection and delivery of merchandise and postal service.**

The formal collection and delivery of merchandise at the different headquarters and sites of the IAC will be carried out only one day a week. The units involved will organize the service for it. A storeroom will be provided for the temporary deposit of packages until their processing.

Regarding the collection and sending of documents and packages by ordinary mail, this service will be provided by the Operational Management once a week, which will organize the service.

Users will be informed about the days scheduled for these services.

#### **4.18. Invoices.**

The invoices that are brought in paper to the IAC headquarters will be collected in a single tray, at an accessible point as near to the outside as possible. The units involved in their processing will designate one day a week for their face-to-face treatment.

#### **4.19. Minimum services.**

The different units of the IAC, through the corresponding Area managers, will communicate to the IAC Management the services that cannot be provided as a consequence of these preventive measures. Likewise, they will indicate the minimum services that, where appropriate, will have to be provided physically, from the headquarters or observatories, with the indications of minimum days or time slots for the provision of said service. In determining these ranges, special consideration shall be given to the prevention and protection of the health of the workers of this entity, collaborators and assigned personnel.

In any case, and when possible, the telematic service or telephone attention will take precedence over the attendance or face-to-face service.

The operation and maintenance of the IAC telescopes will be considered as minimum service and provided continually.

#### **4.20. Connectivity.**

The IAC's Computer Services will take the appropriate measures, preferably electronically, to ensure connectivity to the center's servers and information systems. This connectivity is considered as a service that must be provided completely and without interruption.

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## 4.21. Installations.

From the Operational Management and from the Administrators of the OT and the ORM, the appropriate measures will be adopted, preferably telematic, to ensure the correct operation of all the facilities of the IAC, also guaranteeing that the necessary supplies for this are available (electricity, water, etc). In particular, the continuity of the air conditioning systems of facilities such as the AIV room, CPD or the like will be ensured. The operation of the essential facilities is considered a service to be provided completely and without interruption.

## 4.22. Non-attendance modality of work.

By Resolution of the Undersecretary of Science and Innovation, of March 10, instructions are issued for the application of the provisions of the Resolution of the Secretary of State for Territorial Policy and Public Function of measures to be adopted in the work centers dependent on the AGE with COVID-19 reason. These instructions indicate that non-contact modalities of work may be established in centers such as the IAC, through protocols that must be authorized by the Undersecretary for Science and Innovation in order to guarantee the provision of public services. The possible conditions and requirements of the provision of services in these modalities will be established in the protocols that are approved.

In order to advance in the definition of a single Protocol for the entire IAC, applicable to all its work centers, those responsible for the different units of the center, through the Monitoring Subcommittee, will establish the fundamental guidelines for it, identifying, in particular, the minimum face-to-face and telematic services, the services to be provided in continuity without interruptions, in addition to those already indicated in this Plan, as well as the availability of adequate computer equipment and software and necessary connectivity for personnel, for the purpose to de facto enable the performance of their functions remotely.

The Monitoring Subcommittee is entrusted with the elaboration of this Protocol, which will be submitted to the Commission as soon as possible for its conformity and, if appropriate, referral to the Undersecretary for Science and Innovation.

## 4.23 Chain of command.

The chains of command will be the ones established for the IAC. Regarding the Monitoring Commission and Subcommittee for this Action Plan, the chain of command will go to the next member, in order in which they have been arranged (see 2.1. and 3.1).

This Action Plan may be updated, as new developments occur in relation to this international alert. This version of it is approved by the IAC Management Committee at its meeting on March 11, 2020 (CD09 / 20), and is immediately applicable.

## 5. More information

Updated information and documentation at: <https://www.iac.es/en/coronavirus-alert>

**ANNEXES** (only Spanish version):

- Resolución del Secretario de Estado de Política territorial y Función Pública de medidas a adoptar en los centros de trabajo dependientes de la Administración General del Estado con motivo del COVID-19. 10 de marzo de 2020.
- Resolución del Subsecretario de Ciencia e Innovación por la que se dictan instrucciones para la aplicación de lo dispuesto en la Resolución del Secretario de Estado de Política Territorial y Función Pública de medidas a adoptar en los centros de trabajo dependientes de la AGE con motivo del COVID-19. 10 de marzo de 2020.
- Procedimiento de actuación para los servicios de prevención de riesgos laborales frente a la exposición al nuevo coronavirus (SARS-COV-2). 5 de marzo de 2020.
- Procedimiento de actuación frente a casos de infección por el nuevo coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). 27 de febrero de 2020.

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