

Lifting of the State of Emergency from May 15 and Relevant Measures

May 14, 2020

Oita Prefecture COVID-19 Emergency Response Headquarters

The number of new patients and patients with severe symptoms are decreasing across Japan, and the strain on healthcare services is gradually softening. Based on these observations, the state of emergency is to be lifted in 39 prefectures including Oita. Thanks to the diligence and patience of local residents, Oita has reported no new patients in the past three weeks and sickbed utilisation rate remains at around 1%. Nonetheless, with sudden bouts of cluster infections appearing in other prefecture, we remain in a volatile state that calls for prudence.

Following these lines and with cooperation from the National Governors' Association and the Kyushu Region Governors' Association, the Oita Prefecture will continue to partake in the following measures with the aim of containing the spread of infection and restart social and economic activities.

1 Further Efforts in Preventing the Further Spread of Infection.

(1) Requests to residents of Oita.

From now until Sun, May 31:

- ① Refrain from non-essential, non-urgent travel across prefectural borders.
- ② If you have been abroad or travelled to 'Specific alert areas', refrain from going outdoors for non-essential, non-urgent matters and keep a record of your health for 2 weeks. In the case of suspected infection, immediately consult the closest health centre.
- ③ Practice regular hand-washing, good cough etiquette, wear a mask when going outside and choose outdoor locations over indoor ones for leisure activities. Maintain a distance of 2m, avoid facing each other during conversations and follow the 'new lifestyle' guidelines.
- ④ Aside from taking daily walks, the prefecture no longer advises against activities such as dining in establishments including restaurants and izakaya. Nonetheless, we urge residents to be cautious of their surroundings to avoid settings where the '3Cs' (closed spaces, crowded places, close contact settings) overlap. Places that provide food and drinks with entertainment (※) and hospitality establishments in busy commercial districts where the intensity of the 3Cs are heightened should be avoided whenever possible.
※ "Places that provide food and drinks with entertainment" include bars, night clubs, karaoke, live houses and similar entertainment facilities.
- ⑤ If you are showing symptoms of a fever or cold, refrain from going to work or school and try to remain home whenever possible.

(2) Infection prevention measures at workplaces.

To reduce contact opportunities at the workplace, the prefecture urges workplaces to adhere to the following guidelines:

- ① Proactively incorporate telecommuting, staggered working hours and commuting by

bicycle.

- ② Employ alternative work arrangements such as video conferences to cut back on travel and business trips.
- ③ Thoroughly carry out precautionary measures (e.g. hand-washing, good coughing etiquette) in and out of the office and during commute.
- ④ To integrate and adopt the 'new lifestyle', promote and give close attention to formulating industry-specific guidelines.
Concerning the accommodation industry, with a focus on the Oita Ryokan and Hotel Environmental Health Association, the prefecture is facilitating efforts based on reinforced infection-prevention measures. As for the dining industry, the prefecture is backing privately run projects such as crowdfunding that support local restaurants.
- ⑤ Provide alternative work arrangements (including telecommuting) for staff showing symptoms of a fever or cold, and urge them to remain at home.

(3) Facilities including tourist attractions and entertainment spaces.

- ① To avoid the 3Cs at tourist attractions and similar establishments, operators should restrict admission and ensure visitors maintain a safe distance from each other.
- ② All entertainment facilities (mahjong parlours, pachinko parlours, game arcades, etc.) within Oita prefecture are requested to remain closed until May 31st, based on Article 24, paragraph (9) of the 'Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response'. However, facilities that employ effective and thorough measures to restrict admissions from outside of the prefecture and place efforts in avoiding the 3Cs will be exempted.

(4) Procedures for Large-Scale Events.

- ① Large-scale events across Japan that create an overlap of the 3Cs should be suspended until further notice. If the organizer deems the event essential, the prefecture requests that precautionary measures be exercised thoroughly and with utmost care.
- ② Events which have a small number of participants, and are able to specify attendance, can be conducted after taking necessary precautions against the spread of infection.

2 Procedures for Schools.

- (1) Should there be no recent major turn of events within the prefecture, the system of staggered attendance times for different year groups will end starting from Mon, May 25, with normal operations resuming from Mon, June 1. To respond to concerns related to commute to and from school, school hours will run from 09:00~16:30, and shuttle bus services will continue into June until further notice.

Concerning the conduction of educational activities, thorough infection-prevention measures will be conducted in compliance to national guidelines. Specific measures include wearing a mask at all times including during commute to and from school, using hand sanitisers, conducting daily temperature checks, regular ventilation of indoor areas and taking turns in using change rooms during P.E. lessons. Due to risks of heatstroke during P.E. lessons, students may choose to not wear a mask as long as they keep a safe distance from each other and the facility remains well ventilated.

- (2) Prefectural schools for special needs will continue to employ staggered school hours. Normal operations will resume from Mon, June 1 with considerations given to each student's condition

of disability. To avoid crowding, schools will conduct appropriate efforts such as using vacant classrooms as is needed.

Measures such as spaced seating and in-vehicle ventilation will be conducted inside school buses to reduce risks of infection. To limit passenger capacity, schools will increase the number of buses and request parents/guardians to pick up students up as is appropriate to the specific situations.

- (3) Until May 24, extracurricular activities should only be performed by students who are attending school on the day. Further efforts in reducing physical contact and avoiding the 3Cs should be continued from May 25 and onwards. Training camps and inter-school activities (inter-school trainings, inter-school matches etc.) are suspended until further notice.
- (4) Concerning school excursions with overnight stays, if organisers find it difficult to terminate a said event, excursions can still be run from June and onwards as long as utmost care is taken in avoiding the overlap of the 3Cs.
- (5) If a member of student or staff is found to be infected, said member will be requested to stay away from the school grounds in compliance to national guidelines. Partial or complete temporary closure will be enforced if necessary.
- (6) The same applies to public elementary schools and junior high schools in local municipalities, compulsory education institutions and private schools – the prefecture requests that these institutions take appropriate actions based on up-to-date, regional-specific conditions.

3 Prefectural Social Educational Facilities

- (1) The prefecture urges social educational facilities such as the Oita Prefectural Library, the Oita Prefectural Art Museum, sports facilities and driver's license centres to follow through with infection-prevention procedures. Depending on facility-specific circumstances, restrictions will be gradually lifted as operations return to normal.
- (2) Local social educational facilities would like to remind event organisers to voluntarily refrain from using the facilities where either of the following applies:
 - ① Nation-wide and large scale events
 - ② Events which cause an overlap of the 3Cs

4 Support for Everyday Life, Businesses and Employment.

- (1) To support the livelihood of those who are financially affected by COVID-19, the prefecture is providing the (no-guarantor and interest-free) Special Loan for Emergency Small Amount Funds; the Housing Securement Payments is available to those who face the possibility of losing housing.

Support will be provided to local municipalities to ensure that special benefit payments are delivered in a timely and efficient manner.

- (2) The prefecture will continue to work alongside bodies in the financial and industrial sectors to support businesses and employment. Support will be delivered in the form of employment adjustment subsidies, support packages for struggling businesses and zero-interest loans.
- ① Regarding the Employment Adjustment Subsidy, associates of small-scale enterprises can seek support from the Employment Center, located at the Oita Labor and Social Security Attorney Association.
 - ② The prefecture is working with relevant bodies in the financial and industrial sectors to deliver support packages to struggling businesses in a timely manner. Small-to-medium-scale enterprises may receive up to 2 million JPY while sole proprietors may receive up to 1 million JPY.
 - ③ As part of the financial measures geared at small-to-medium-scale business enterprises, the prefecture plans on utilising funds to provide frameworks wherein private financial institutions can provide non-secure, interest-free loans, not to mention offering ongoing support to start-up businesses.
- (3) To aid collaborative infection-control efforts between the prefecture and residents, ongoing detailed measures that incorporate both governmental bodies and the public are being reinforced to support ryokan and hotels with a focus on the Oita Ryokan and Hotel Environmental Health Association. In conjunction to reinforcing infection-prevention measures in the accommodation industry, the prefecture is corresponding with local residents who are hosting various forms of support such as crowdfunding to support the dining industry.
- (4) To realise assistance in a timely manner, continuous forms of support will be made available with cooperation from the chambers of commerce and other relevant institutions.

Inquiries for businesses affected by the spread of COVID-19
(Call centre: 0120-936-692)