

# Saudi Health Announces Full Readiness for the Hajj Season

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Makkah, Saudi Arabia- Saudi Health has announced its full readiness, including human resources and facilities, to receive and serve pilgrims during this Hajj season. Comprehensive preparations and new technologies have been implemented in all hospitals, health centers, and mobile clinics in Makkah, Madinah and various holy sites to ensure the provision of the best healthcare for the visitors.

The health authorities have indicated that more than 32,000 medical and administrative staff have been deployed across various healthcare facilities, including over 5,000 doctors from various specialties, to provide necessary healthcare and respond promptly to any emergencies on a 24-hour basis in 183 healthcare facilities. These include 32 hospitals, 151 health centers, and 6 mobile clinics equipped with state-of-the-art medical technologies, ensuring immediate and effective healthcare. The capacity of these facilities exceeds 6,400 beds distributed among all hospitals and centers, including intensive care, emergency, and heatstroke units.

Furthermore, the health authorities have emphasized that the preparations extended beyond human and material resources. The latest healthcare technologies and automated services have also been employed. This includes the continued operation of the virtual health hospital and its associated virtual clinics, which provide remote healthcare services using advanced technologies. Additionally, the "Sehati" application is being utilized to deliver advisory services and medical information to pilgrims through smartphones. Integrated electronic systems and platforms have been established to manage the health data of pilgrims and coordinate efforts among various healthcare facilities. Moreover, coordination with relevant authorities has been established to employ drones for the swift and efficient transportation of blood units and laboratory samples between hospitals in the holy sites.

To enhance integration, the Ministry of Health continues to participate in the "Road to Makkah" initiative, with roles aimed at facilitating the entry procedures for pilgrims, applying health regulations, and completing preventive measures before their arrival in the Kingdom. This coordination with participating countries ensures the compliance of pilgrims with health requirements prior to their arrival, enabling them to proceed directly to their accommodations without the need for verification procedures at the ports of entry. Simultaneously, efforts to raise health awareness among pilgrims are intensified through the distribution of educational brochures and the broadcast of awareness programs on display screens at ports, halls, and pilgrim mission headquarters. This aims to raise the level of health awareness among pilgrims and ensure their adherence to health guidelines for the preservation of their well-being and safety.

The Saudi Red Crescent Authority also has finalized its preparations allocating all of its resources, including ground and air ambulance fleet, consisting of ambulances, disaster response vehicles, and rapid response vehicles. In addition, it has deployed motorcycles, and golf carts equipped for field ambulance operations, leveraging technological aspects in its emergency response to provide high-quality ambulance services under the slogan "Facilitation and Reassurance."

The authority has provided over 2,540 medical, administrative, and female leadership personnel, distributed among 98 ambulance centers in the entry points, Hajj routes, the holy capital, the Grand Mosque in Makkah, and the holy sites. It has also reinforced its human resources with over 694 ambulances and seven air ambulances to ensure the prompt arrival to emergency cases. The authority emphasizes the importance of activating the role of first responders in providing initial medical aid before the arrival of ambulance teams and implementing volunteer roles. It underscores the significance of integration with other entities through scenario-based exercises to enhance the preparedness of ambulance teams and ensure optimal response during the Hajj season.

The Public Health Authority, "Weqaya," is actively participating in the Hajj season by conducting proactive monitoring and enhancing general readiness to respond to public health emergencies. It focuses on preventive measures against infectious and non-infectious diseases, heat-related injuries, and the issuance of preventive protocols. It monitors public health risks on the ground during the Hajj season in the holy sites and takes necessary preventive interventions.

Furthermore, it promotes awareness and education through various media channels and deployed surveillance teams in the holy sites before and during the Hajj season. The mobile infectious disease units are equipped with state-of-the-art medical technologies for immediate measures.

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Saudi Food and Drug Administration has conducted over 1,741 field visits and inspections of its regulated facilities. It collaborates with the Hajj Affairs Offices through air cargo shipments at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah and Prince Mohammed bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Madinah to inspect incoming products. So far, it has identified 69 non-compliant items out of a total of 12,193 items received from 44 countries.

The authority, in cooperation with the Municipality of the Holy Capital, the Municipality of Madinah, and relevant government entities, contributes to the awareness and training of 2,344 personnel working in the catering kitchens to ensure compliance with all health requirements. It establishes awareness pavilions in the fields of food, drugs, medical devices, and products for pilgrims, delivering informative messages in nine frequently spoken languages among the pilgrims. Additionally, it supports the awareness of mission leaders in the Hajj delegations by coordinating and integrating with relevant entities to ensure the safety and quality of pilgrims' food, medications, and medical devices.

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