

GUIDANCE ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, FIRST AID AND RIDDOR REPORTING

We understand that the continued Government restrictions relating to Coronavirus have meant new ways of working and new ways to manage employees. To help during these challenging times, we've summarised some areas you may wish to consider to help you and your employees to continue to work safely.

However, as we have not been able to visit your premises, we are unable to make explicit recommendations.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

During the Coronavirus pandemic you may find it harder to source the PPE that you usually provide to your workers, as many manufacturers and suppliers are prioritising the health and social care sectors. However, you still need to ensure that your staff are kept safe from the hazards they're exposed to at work – you cannot allow your staff to work without the correct PPE. This means you may need to adjust the way some activities are carried out.

Here are some things to consider:

- Can the job or equipment be modified so that the exposure to the hazardous material or process is eliminated or sufficiently reduced to no longer need the PPE?
- Could you use alternative equipment that offers the same level of protection?
- As the health and care sectors are using mainly disposable PPE, non-disposable respirators may still be available to purchase and may suit your needs.
- If you still have a limited stock of PPE available, can you limit the amount of people needed to do the job? It might make your stock last longer.

RESPIRATOR FACE FIT TESTING

As at any other time, to correctly provide the required protection, respirators must fit the wearer properly. To find out if a respirator fits the wearer, you need to carry out face fit testing when a specific respirator is worn for the first time or whenever there is a change of respirator type or model. Additionally, all workers who wear respirators should be trained on how to wear it properly.

Those who conduct face fit testing must follow the Health and Safety Executive's advice on minimising the transmission of the virus.

WEARING FACE COVERINGS

Correct physical distancing, hand washing and general good hygiene practices, are the most important and effective measures we can all adopt to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. Therefore, the wearing of face coverings must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions but should be used in addition to.

The Government has mandated that face coverings must be worn by retail, leisure and hospitality staff working in indoor areas which are open to members of the public unless there is a physical barrier in place between those staff and the public.

For other workplaces the use of face coverings should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Employers should support their staff in using face coverings if they choose to wear them. Either way, employers should provide guidance and instruction on using face coverings safely.



FIRST AID

With the potential changes in staffing levels - due to Coronavirus (self-isolation, furlough, sickness), it's important to review your business' first aid requirements and decide if you can still provide the level of cover needed for the workers that are present and for the activities that they're doing.

The HSE states that if you're carrying on trading at your work premises, then it's vital that you can provide adequate first aid cover for those on site and comply with the law.

If you hold a first aid certificate that expired on or after 16 March 2020 and cannot access requalification training because of Coronavirus you may qualify for an extension. This applies to: Offshore Medic (OM), Offshore First Aid (OFA), First Aid at Work (FAW) and Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW).

Contact your first aid provider to obtain further details and/or to see if you would qualify for an extension and how long the extension will be valid for. All requalification training for these certificates should be completed by 31st March 2021.

FIRST AID NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To identify adequate first aid cover you should review your first aid needs assessment and decide if you've enough cover for the number of workers that are present and the activities that they're doing.

It may be that fewer people are coming into the workplace and it may still be safe to operate with reduced first aid cover, or you may have changed your work practices and are no longer undertaking high risk activities.

If the cover you have is inadequate, you may be able to share first aider provision between you and another business. However, you must ensure they have the knowledge, experience and availability to cover the needs of your business.

Shared first aiders must:

- have the training and skills to address the type of injuries and or illnesses identified in your risk assessment
- know enough about your work environment and your first aid facilities
- be able to get to your workplace in good time if needed.

If you share your first aid cover with another business, you must make sure that it does not adversely affect your own first aid cover.

FIRST AIDER SAFETY

- Be aware of the risks to yourself and others. When approaching a casualty there is always a risk of cross-contamination – especially when you may have to get close to the casualty to assess what is wrong or to check their breathing. Don't lose sight of other cross-contamination that could occur that isn't related to Coronavirus.
- Keep yourself safe in line with Government advice. Make sure you wash your hands or use hand sanitiser, before and after treating a casualty. Also ensure that you don't cough or sneeze over a casualty when you're treating them.
- Give early treatment. Most incidents do not involve you having to get close to a casualty where you could then come into close contact with their breathing. If they're capable, your casualty may be able to help you, but treating them properly should remain a first aider's first concern.

PROVIDING CPR AND PREVENTING CORONAVIRUS INFECTION

Trained first aiders can provide CPR in the normal manner, but in the current climate should not give rescue breaths. After contact with the casualty, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or approved hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity.

REPORTING A SUSPECTED CORONAVIRUS ABSENCE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE (RIDDOR)

The Health and Safety Executive have issued guidelines for reporting cases of Coronavirus. HSE's advice is:

You should only make a report under RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) when one of the following circumstances applies:

- an accident or incident at work has, or could have, led to the release or escape of Coronavirus. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence.
- a worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 attributed to an occupation exposure at work. This must be reported as a case of disease.
- a worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to Coronavirus.

The HSE have provided examples for each of the following reporting categories:

DANGEROUS OCCURRENCE

“If something happens at work which results in (or could result in) the release or escape of Coronavirus you must report this as a dangerous occurrence. An example of a dangerous occurrence would be a lab worker accidentally smashing a glass vial containing Coronavirus, leading to people being exposed.”

EXPOSURE TO BIOLOGICAL AGENTS

“An example of a work-related exposure to Coronavirus would be a health care professional who is diagnosed with Coronavirus after treating patients with it.”

If there is reasonable evidence that someone diagnosed with Coronavirus was likely exposed because of their work, you must report this as an exposure to a biological agent using the case of disease report.

WORK RELATED FATALITIES

“If someone dies as a result of a work-related exposure to Coronavirus and this is confirmed as the likely cause of death by a registered medical practitioner then you must report this without delay and send a report of that fatality within 10 days of the incident.”

USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

General Government advice on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), First aid and RIDDOR reporting (hse.gov or hse.gov)

In addition to this, we also have guidance on a range of risk management matters on the NFU Mutual website. For further information visit nfumutual.co.uk/RMS

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This guidance is provided on the strict understanding that you accept, without limitation, that you retain sole responsibility for compliance with health and safety legislation and regulations, all other legislation and any warranties/conditions attached to your insurance policies. We have not conducted any site visits as part of producing this guidance and we have not, and are not, providing any guidance in relation to your specific set up.

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