

GUIDANCE ON SAFELY RE-OPENING YOUR BUSINESS DURING CORONAVIRUS

Many businesses are starting to re-open, with many more doing so as and when Government guidelines allow that to happen. This guidance sets out practical steps that should be considered when planning on how best to do this, whilst still safeguarding staff and others against Coronavirus. As we have not been able to visit your premises we are unable to make explicit recommendations.

1. WORK FROM HOME, IF YOU CAN

Whilst in certain parts of the country selected workplaces are now being encouraged to re-open where staff are unable to work from home and the business is not on a closure list, staff that can work from home should still continue to do so.

2. CARRY OUT A CORONAVIRUS RISK ASSESSMENT

Employers have a legal duty to protect employees and others from risks to their health and safety, including potential risks posed by Coronavirus within the workplace. Aside from the fact that it is a legal requirement, conducting a risk assessment is actually a useful tool to identify the steps that you may need to implement to minimise the risks from Coronavirus. This is for your staff and others, such as contractors, visitors, delivery drivers etc.

As part of your risk assessment you should consider the following:

- How social distancing will be maintained (and what you will do to control the risk if you can't maintain social distancing).
- Adequacy of your cleaning, handwashing and hygiene facilities and procedures.

- Adequacy of your health surveillance procedures including identification of any vulnerable individuals.
- Provision of suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

You must consider all aspects of the workplace not just the workstations or work activities, but also communal areas, welfare facilities, rest facilities, corridors and outside areas such as car parks.

The following associated risks are often overlooked and should also be considered in your risk assessment:

- Assessment and management of workloads in the anticipation of reductions in available staff through sickness / self-isolation, including lone working.
- Health and safety of home workers.
- Risks associated with individuals covering for missing colleagues, for example workers undertaking tasks they are unfamiliar with.

By law all businesses with five or more employees are required to document the significant findings from the risk assessment. You must also ensure that any new Coronavirus prevention measures do not compromise any existing Health and Safety systems and / or control measures, such as those in relation to Fire Safety.



3. MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SOCIAL DISTANCING, WHEREVER POSSIBLE

Employers need to ensure social distancing is maintained across the workplace wherever possible. Alterations to the premises may be necessary in order to maintain the required separation between persons. Options could include re-designing workspaces or reducing peak flow of movement by staggering start and finish times, creating one-way walk-throughs, opening more entrance and exit points, or changing seating layouts in break rooms. It's important that the measures you adopt are visually easy to follow for all concerned, e.g. by marking out distances and travel routes on the floor, placing clear notes on seats that are not to be used, etc.

Consideration should be given towards the management of third parties such as customers, visitors and contractors. Additional control measures could include limiting site visits, encouraging remote connections, or creating a site management policy on social distancing and hygiene standards which can be supplied to visitors in advance.

4. WHERE PEOPLE CANNOT MEET THE REQUIRED SOCIAL DISTANCING, MANAGE THE TRANSMISSION RISK

It may not always be possible to maintain the required separation distance within the working environment. In such cases, employers should consider other practical measures. These could include installation of screens in shared spaces, creating workplace shift patterns and / or creating fixed teams minimising the number of people in contact with one another, or simply ensuring colleagues are facing away from each other.

Don't forget to consider how employees travel to work as part of their job. Your risk assessment should consider avoiding the need for public transport where possible and seeking to minimise the number of people travelling together in one vehicle.

5. REINFORCE CLEANING PROCESSES

Workplaces, including vehicles, should be cleaned more frequently, paying close attention to frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles and keyboards. Employers should provide handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers at entry and exit points. Visual signage should be displayed to highlight the importance of adhering to high hygiene standards.

Additional waste collection facilities should also be considered.

6. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND FACE COVERINGS

The Coronavirus outbreak has not changed your duty as an employer to protect people in your workplace from health and safety risks. This includes making sure they are not exposed to hazardous substances as part of their work.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It includes different types of respiratory protective equipment (RPE), such as masks and respirators.

PPE for protection against coronavirus is generally only required for certain healthcare activities. In a non-clinical setting, there is no need to provide different PPE than you would normally have provided before the outbreak started.

Wearing a face covering is optional in most circumstances and is generally not required in workplaces. They are not an effective way to manage the risks from coronavirus and you should not rely on them.

The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected and have not developed symptoms.

If people choose to wear face coverings in work you should support them.

7. STAYING COVID-19 SECURE POSTER*

Upon completion of your risk assessment and implementation of your Coronavirus prevention measures you must ensure the 'Staying COVID-19 SECURE in 2020' is displayed in your workplace. This demonstrates to employees, customers and other visitors that you have followed the latest Government guidance*.

8 STAFF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRAINING

Ensure your staff receive any additional information, instruction or training which may arise from the implementation of new / additional control measures before they begin work again. Any training provided should be formally recorded.

9. ONGOING MONITORING

Once all of this is in place you need to continue to monitor the effectiveness of your measures.

This includes updating all your arrangements and documents following any future changes to Government guidance or following any incidents or changes to your activities going forward. You need to formally record these changes, e.g. in your Management Policy or Risk Assessment document.

* At the time of publication this was only applicable to England.

For further information please see:
[GOV.UK Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

And additional COVID-19 guidance for:
Scotland: [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot)
Northern Ireland: [nidirect.gov](https://www.nidirect.gov)
Wales: [gov.wales](https://www.gov.wales)

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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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