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COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance Manual

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Introduction

This guide is aimed at all employers and those who are self-employed and work with or near other people. It explains how you can protect people from Coronavirus (COVID-19) in your workplace.

All employers have a duty of care to protect anyone affected by their activities and as such, must identify foreseeable hazards and establish a plan to eliminate and control the hazards.

The guidance sets out the main elements required to achieve this, identifying the following key stages (templates are provided to assist you):

- **Identifying people at risk.**
- **Examining the working environment.**
- **Collating the information, assessing the risk and establishing safe systems of work.**



The approach uses the principles set out in current [Welsh Government COVID-19 Workplace Guidance](#) for employers and businesses in Wales, which is focused on the following key points that should be implemented as soon as it is practical:

1. Work From Home - If You Can

All reasonable steps should be taken by employers to help people work from home. For those who cannot work from home and whose workplace has not been told to close, our message is clear: you should go to work if it is safe to do so.

2. Carry Out a COVID-19 Risk Assessment, in Consultation With Workers or Trade Unions

This guidance operates within current health and safety employment and equalities legislation and employers will need to carry out COVID-19 risk assessments in consultation with their workers or trade unions to establish what guidelines to put in place. Employers should publish the results of their risk assessments on their website.

3. Maintain Two Metres Social Distancing Wherever Possible

Employers should re-design workspaces to maintain two metre distances between people by staggering start times, creating one-way walk-throughs, opening more entrances and exits, or changing seating layouts in break rooms. In Wales, Regulation 12 of the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#), sets out clear guidance in relation to the legal requirement to maintain two metre social distancing as a minimum.

In England, people are advised to stay two metres apart from those they do not live with where possible, or one metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors). Please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19> to learn more.

4. Where People Cannot Be Two Metres Apart, Manage Transmission Risk

Employers should look into putting barriers in shared spaces, creating workplace shift patterns or fixed teams to minimise the number of people in contact with one another, or ensure colleagues are facing away from each other.

5. Where Members of the Public Attend the Workplace

If members of the public attend an indoor space in the workplace, face coverings must be worn, unless the person is medically exempt or a child under the age of 11. [Welsh Government guidance on indoor face coverings](#) details the responsibilities to ensure these measures are reasonably applied.

6. Reinforcing Cleaning Processes

Workplaces should be cleaned more frequently, paying close attention to high-contact objects like door handles and keyboards. Employers should provide handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers at entry and exit points.

For information relating to COVID-19 workplace safety in England, [please click here](#).

In addition to the Welsh Government Workplace Guidance, the UK Government has issued sector-specific [COVID-19 Workplace Guides](#) to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the Coronavirus pandemic.

These guides cover a range of different types of work. Many businesses operate more than one type of workplace, such as an office, factory and fleet of vehicles. You may need to use more than one of these guides as you think through what you need to do to keep people safe:

- **Close Contact Services:** For people who provide close contact services, including hairdressers, barbers, beauticians, tattooists, sports and massage therapists, dress fitters, tailors and fashion designers.
- **Construction and Other Outdoor Work:** For people who work in or run outdoor working environments.
- **Factories, Plants and Warehouses:** Guidance for people who work in or run factories, plants and warehouses.
- **Heritage Locations:** For people who work or volunteer in heritage locations.
- **Hotels and Other Guest Accommodation:** For people who work in or run hotels and other guest accommodation.
- **Labs and Research Facilities:** For people who work in or run indoor labs and research facilities and similar environments.
- **Offices and Contact Centres:** For people who work in or run offices, contact centres and similar indoor environments.
- **Other People's Homes:** Guidance for people working in, visiting or delivering to other people's homes.
- **Performing Arts:** Guidance for people who work in performing arts, including arts organisations, venue operators and participants.
- **Providers of Grassroots Sport and Gym/Leisure Facilities:** Guidance for people who work in grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities.
- **Restaurants, Pubs, Bars and Takeaway Services:** For people who work in or run restaurants, pubs, bars, cafes or takeaways.
- **Shops and Branches:** For people who work in or run shops, branches, stores or similar environments.
- **Vehicles:** For people who work in or from vehicles, including couriers, mobile workers, lorry drivers, on-site transit and work vehicles, field forces and similar.
- **The Visitor Economy:** For people who work in hotels and guest accommodation, indoor and outdoor attractions, and business events and consumer shows.

Each business will need to translate this into the specific actions it needs to take, depending on the nature of their business, including the size and type of business, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated. To help you decide which actions to take, you need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety-related hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has also issued guidance to assist businesses in fulfilling their legal duties: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>

Test, Trace and Protect

[The Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect \(TTP\) strategy](#) has been issued in conjunction with the wider UK Government approach via the NHS COVID-19 app guidance.

If an employee develops symptoms of Coronavirus, they should take a Coronavirus test within the first five days of developing symptoms – this is when the test is most effective. If they test positive, they are:

- Someone you have had face-to-face contact with at a distance of less than one metre – this could be someone that you've had a face-to-face-conversation with, had skin-to-skin physical contact with, you have coughed on or had some other form of contact with within one metre for one minute or longer.
- Someone who has been within two metres of you for more than 15 minutes.
- Someone you have travelled in a car or other small vehicle with – or someone who has been seated near you on public transport, such as a train or an aeroplane.

This information will help the contact tracing teams to identify how quickly the virus is spreading and whether there are hotspots of infection. It is an offence to give false information to TTP about persons you have been in contact with, including where this is done, to either fraudulently claim support payments or to maliciously require a person to self-isolate. Contacts will be informed that they must self-isolate for 10 days to ensure that they do not have the virus.

They will only be advised to take a test if they are displaying symptoms – testing while asymptomatic (someone without symptoms) can generate false negatives and is not recommended for these reasons.



Mass Testing in Supporting Employees to Return to the Workplace

As we near the end of a tumultuous year for businesses, we are now witnessing the anticipated 'second wave' of the pandemic, and while it's difficult to predict when we will return to normal, a great deal of progress has been made since the early months of this year. In particular, there has been a vast improvement in our understanding of COVID-19 as a disease, and both viable vaccines and therapeutic drugs that aid recovery are in the pipeline.

These developments are grounds for cautious optimism, but we are not out of the woods yet. Rolling out large-scale vaccination will be a long-term project and we still do not know how long the vaccines' effects will last. Depending on whether this first generation of vaccines prevents COVID-19 infection, rather than reducing the severity of COVID-19 symptoms, the virus may remain present in society, and there will be a continued need for testing.

Businesses must therefore utilise the available testing methods to maintain continuity and help the economy get back on its feet.

At this point, the most effective thing that business owners can do is make sure that their employees feel as safe as possible to aid the transition back to work. After identifying 700 positive cases of COVID-19 in asymptomatic people, Liverpool's mass testing operation has prevented the hidden spread of the virus across the city. It's clear that large-scale testing is the only strategy that will help us make the transition from lockdown restrictions to mass-vaccination.

Testing Options for Businesses

Currently, there are two main types of COVID-19 testing available for the workplace: the rapid virus test and the rapid antibody test.

Rapid Virus Test: The virus test (or antigen test) is a swab sample from the mouth and nose area from an on-site healthcare professional that can find out who has COVID-19 within 20 minutes. This form of testing should be carried out on a fortnightly basis. Similarly, there is a home testing kit that the employee can use and have results back from a lab within 48 to 72 hours.

The accuracy of this test has increased tremendously since the beginning of the pandemic and we are now looking at a negative result accuracy of around 99.5%. This is even more reassuring because it means that there is a negligible risk of a false negative with people endangering their fellow employees and risking business operations by carrying the virus unwittingly.

Antibody Test: The antibody test is a finger-prick blood sample performed by a health adviser on site. It can find out if somebody has had COVID-19 in the past and is temporarily considered immune. This can have a dramatic difference in business operations as it can allow employees more freedom in the workplace and the opportunity to work in groups where necessary.

Ideally, businesses should be proactive and implement a testing programme on a screening basis rather than be reactive to an outbreak. Not only will this protect businesses license to operate, it will establish a confident line of communication between employers and employees.

Coronavirus Vaccination Strategy

A program has now begun to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to the public. This strategy has been based on the prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems. As the risk of mortality from COVID-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age. [Public Health Wales COVID-19 Vaccination Guidance](#) and [NHS England](#) details the strategy for the vaccination program. The first phase vaccination program will prioritise:

1. Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. 80 years of age and over
3. Frontline health and social care workers
4. 75 years of age and over
5. 70 years of age and over
6. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
7. 65 years of age and over
8. All individuals 16 - 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
9. 60 years of age and over
10. 55 years of age and over
11. 50 years of age and over

Once the first phase has been completed and both doses have been administered, the next priority groups will be offered the vaccine. There are currently no requirements for those who have received the vaccine to carry a vaccine card or similar evidence. Employers are not currently obliged to force staff to receive the vaccine. However, employers must continue to protect any vulnerable workers through their existing COVID-19 risk control precautions. Once employees have received the vaccine, employees must still follow the existing precautions until new guidance is produced that details any new approach to managing COVID-19 in the workplace. [Click here to read the UK Government's COVID-19 vaccination delivery plan.](#)



Consultation

You must consult, cooperate and coordinate with your employees and other businesses you work with or share premises with about how they will discharge their duties when they interact with your employees. To do this you should exchange information to find out who is doing what. For example:

- Talk to your suppliers about how to safely manage deliveries.
- Talk to other businesses that share your worksite or premises about how to manage shared areas, such as lifts, bathroom and kitchen facilities.
- Talk to other businesses that share your worksite or premises about what you will do if there is a case or suspected case of COVID-19 at the worksite or premises.
- Talk to other businesses you interact with, for example, the onsite food van or the contract cleaner.
- Work together in a cooperative and coordinated way so risks are eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable (e.g. how to manage shared areas, such as lifts and bathroom facilities).

Training should be given to ensure that all staff understand the new risks. This need not take long, but should include details about current distancing requirements, routes of transmission and the importance of hand washing and surface disinfection at key times. All staff should be instructed about not coming to work if they have a fever or new cough. They should stay at home for seven days (or for as long as prevailing guidance dictates).

Temperature Checking – Is It Required?

You may want to monitor the health of your workers through administering temperature checks as a preventative measure in managing a COVID-19 outbreak in your workplace. However, for many workplaces, there may be little benefit in conducting temperature checks on workers or others. This is because temperature checks will not tell you whether a person has COVID-19. It will only identify symptoms. It is possible that a person may be asymptomatic or be on medication that reduces their temperature. It is also possible that the person may have a temperature for another reason unrelated to COVID-19.

You should implement well published precautions, such as good hygiene measures, physical distancing, workplace cleaning and personal protective equipment (PPE) rather than only relying on temperature checks. You should also require workers to tell you if they are feeling unwell, including if they have a fever and require them to go home when they do.

Before administering temperature checks:

- Seek the advice of your local health authority on the appropriate method of temperature checking, equipment, PPE and control measures required to ensure safe testing.
- Consult with your workers and their health and safety representatives, and take their views into account.
- Provide instruction to all workers on the process for temperature checks, including emphasising the importance of maintaining the other control measures.

Hand Hygiene

You must direct your employees, visitors and others in the workplace to practise good hygiene while at the workplace. Good hygiene requires everyone to wash their hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry them completely, preferably with clean, single-use paper towels.

Hand Washing

All staff must wash their hands when leaving home and then when arriving at work immediately upon arrival, as well as before handling or eating food or after blowing noses, coughing or sneezing, or going to the toilet.

Duty managers/the appropriate person should remind everyone to wash their hands or use a hand gel at the start of every shift. That way any virus particles picked up on the way to work are removed before they can be spread to others either via direct contact or by touching hand contact surfaces (door handles, tables, kettle handles, kitchen equipment etc.)

If used, hand sanitiser needs to be anti-viral and at least 60% ethanol content.

Paper towels should be provided in all hand wash stations as they can reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 by drying the hands more thoroughly than hand dryers (hand dryers may also spread the air borne virus).

If you provide single use paper towels at your workplace, remember:

- The paper towels should be replenished as required.
- Used paper towels should be disposed of in a waste bin that is regularly emptied to keep the area clean, tidy and safe.

Waste (including used paper towels) should be double bagged and set aside in a safe place for at least 72 hours before disposal into general waste facilities. For further information regarding cleaning, please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>.

The Wearing of Face Coverings In the Workplace

Current [Welsh Government guidance on indoor face coverings](#) details the responsibilities to ensure face coverings are worn by any person in any indoor area open to the public. Managers and those in control of premises are required by the new regulation to take all reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to Coronavirus on their premises.

Employers are required to mandate the use of face coverings in other indoor workplaces where social distancing cannot be maintained, unless there are strong reasons not to. Employees may therefore be required to wear a face covering at work, even in places which are not open to the public. In premises which are only partly open to the public, face coverings are not mandatory in those parts which are not open to the public. This would, for example, cover those parts of shops, gyms or museums which are only for staff.

The legal obligation for members of the public to wear face coverings is held by them and not managers of the premises. However, managers do have some responsibilities with regards to the public and also have a legal duty of care to staff and others working on the premises. There are several exemptions for the public to this legal requirement, which must be carefully managed and monitored by workplace managers. These are children under 11, while you are out eating or drinking and where there is a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering, such as:

- You are not able to put on or to wear a face covering because of a physical or mental illness, or because of a disability or impairment.
- You are accompanying somebody who relies on lip reading where they need to communicate.
- You are escaping from a threat or danger and do not have a face covering.
- To take medication.
- To remove a face covering to avoid harm or injury, either to yourself or others – for example to get somebody's attention about a danger.

Managers and those in control of premises open to the public should provide clear information. Examples of this include:

- Company websites must detail specific information on wearing face coverings as part of the conditions of entering and may provide links to other useful websites. For example, showing how to make a face covering and this guidance on how to wear a face covering properly.
- Notices advising the public of their legal obligation to wear face coverings should be displayed in a prominent place (in both Welsh and English and other community languages as relevant), whenever feasible.
- Information may be given orally or in written form. Managers should consider the most efficient way of ensuring that all customers are made aware of the requirement in the circumstances of the particular location.
- Managers will want to consider the diverse needs of visitors to their premises and should consider whether the information should be made available in different formats, for example for people with sight or hearing impairment and, if necessary, in other languages.

The manager or premises controller are not expected to take enforcement action where a member of the public is not wearing or refuses to wear a face covering. However, if circumstances necessitate it, they may wish to call the Police to report the issue. It is an offence not to wear a face covering in indoor premises open to the public unless an exemption applies or a person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

Both the police and local authorities have powers to enforce the requirements on businesses, services and workplaces imposed by the new regulations. However, the enforcement approach will be superseded by the approach to:

- Promote and maintain sustained compliance as a preventative measure to help contain the Coronavirus.
- Ensure action is taken immediately to deal with situations in which there is a risk of Coronavirus spreading.
- Ensure that those who fail to comply are held to account.

For face covering guidance in England, please visit:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings

First Aid and Emergency Procedures

During the Coronavirus pandemic, First Aider responders may come into contact with people of unknown medical history/symptoms. Therefore, there is a risk of cross infection when administering First Aid, including that of Coronavirus, unless precautions are taken.

If someone shows signs of Coronavirus, keep them two metres away unless wearing PPE. Provide them with a mask and keep others away. The line manager must make arrangements for them to go home and keep them isolated in the agreed site isolation area until they leave site.

If the patient is significantly unwell e.g. extremely short of breath, contact the emergency services (999) and advise them of the potential Coronavirus situation.

PPE should be kept close to the point of access/use, ideally in a 'grab bag' with a copy of this guidance. It is for single use only and must be changed after each First Aid intervention and not used between patients.

Based on the requirement that distancing of two metres cannot be maintained whilst providing First Aid, the following PPE must be worn as a minimum:

- Disposable gloves.
- Face Mask – type FFP2.
- Disposable plastic apron or disposable coveralls.
- Eye protection.
- Clinical waste bag.

Provision of alcohol hand rub and masks for patients are also advised.

First Aiders are not expected to and should not try to diagnose medical conditions. However, you have a duty to minimise the risk of workers and others in the workplace being exposed to COVID-19, so far as reasonably practicable.

If you reasonably suspect someone has the virus or has been exposed, this creates a health risk at your workplace and you will need to follow the steps below. Do not wait until confirmation that a worker has COVID-19. You must act promptly to take reasonable steps to manage risks.

This information is provided to assist you in the workplace. However, you must always follow the advice of Public Health England/Wales/Scotland.

You must only make a report under RIDDOR (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm>) when:

- An unintended incident at work has led to someone's possible or actual exposure to Coronavirus. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence.
- A worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as a case of disease.
- A worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to Coronavirus.

Steps to Take When the Person You Are Concerned About Is at the Workplace

If someone is confirmed as having COVID-19 or is getting tested for COVID-19, they should already be at home. However, there may be circumstances where a person in your workplace is displaying COVID-like symptoms or shares information (e.g. they have been in close contact with someone that has the virus) that causes you to have reasonable concerns about their health and the health of others in your workplace. The person could be a worker, a client, customer or other visitor to your premises. Where this occurs:

1. Isolate the Person

If the person has serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, call 999 for urgent medical assistance. Otherwise, you must take steps to prevent the person from potentially spreading the virus by isolating them from others. You must also provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to the affected person, such as a disposable surgical mask and hand sanitiser and tissues, if available. Also, provide protection to anyone assisting the person.

2. Seek Advice and Assess the Risks

Next, to determine if it is reasonable to suspect the person may have COVID-19, talk to the person about your concerns and see what they say. Seek NHS Wales Advice (<https://111.wales.nhs.uk/>) or UK Government advice (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>). You can also contact the NHS Direct on 111 for general advice or 999 for emergency services.

Ensure that you have current contact details for the person and make a note about the areas they have been in the workplace, who they have been in close contact with and for how long. This will inform you about risks to others and areas to clean and disinfect. This information may also assist local authorities or Public Health Wales/UK if they need to follow up with you at a later time.

3. Transport

Ensure the person has transport home, to a location where they can isolate or to a medical facility if necessary. Wherever possible, if a person is unwell or travelling to a location for mandatory isolation, they should use a personal mode of transport to minimise exposure to others. They should not use public transport unless there is no other option.

If the person needs to use a taxi or public transport, then the person should avoid contact with others including the driver to the extent possible. This includes:

- Wearing a surgical mask, if available.
- Avoiding direct contact with the driver, including sitting in the back seat to achieve as much separation as is reasonably possible.
- Practising good hand hygiene and cough/sneeze hygiene.
- Paying by card.

4. Clean and Disinfect

Close off the affected areas and do not let others use or enter them until they have been cleaned and disinfected. Open outside doors and windows, if possible, to increase air flow.

All areas used by the person concerned, for example offices, toilets, kitchens and common areas and equipment or PPE must then be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Further information on how to clean and disinfect can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Cleaners must wear appropriate PPE, for example disposable gloves or gloves appropriate to the cleaning chemicals being used, and safety eyewear to protect against chemical splashes. If there is visible contamination with respiratory secretions or other body fluids in the area, the cleaners should also wear a disposable apron.

5. Identify and Inform Close Contacts

You must consider who the affected person may have had recent close contact with. If instructed by health officials, tell close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and the requirements for quarantine. You must maintain the privacy of all individuals involved.

Seek information about the areas that close contacts have been in the workplace, who they have been in close contact with in the workplace and for how long. This will inform you about possible risks to others and additional areas that may also need to be cleaned and disinfected.

6. Review Risk Management Controls

Review your COVID-19 risk assessment and precautions in consultation with your workers and their representatives, and assess and decide whether any changes or additional control measures are required. You must continue to meet your duty of care to eliminate or minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of workers and others in the workplace (such as customers) contracting COVID-19.

Workers who have been isolated after having tested positive for COVID-19 can return to work when they have fully recovered and have met the criteria for clearance from isolation.

Workers who have completed a 14-day quarantine period (either after returning from travel or because they were a close contact with a confirmed case) and who did not develop symptoms during quarantine, do not need a medical clearance to return to work. You should not ask these workers to be tested for COVID-19 in order to return to work.

Ventilation and Air Movement

Poorly ventilated premises will potentially expose occupants to a higher concentration of airborne pathogens. The risk will increase the longer the time spent in such an environment. The risk of airborne COVID-19 infection to staff and customers can be reduced by:

- Minimising the numbers of people inside the premises at any one time.
- Ensuring working areas have a natural air flow where possible – keep windows and ventilation points open as much as possible.
- Reducing risk of contact spread through regular handwashing, surface cleaning and reducing deposition of infectious particles.

General advice is to increase the air supply and exhaust ventilation, supplying as much outside air as is reasonably possible. The underlying principle is to dilute and remove airborne pathogens as much as possible, exhausting them to the outside air and reducing the chance that they can become deposited on surfaces or inhaled by room users. Recirculation/transfer of air from one room to another should be avoided unless this is the only way of providing adequately high ventilation to all occupied rooms.

In areas and zones where there is no direct supply of outside air then consideration should be given to prohibiting access to these spaces by building users, especially where it is likely that they would be occupying such a space for considerable lengths of time (longer than 30 minutes). This may include basement rooms or storage areas which rely on infiltration of air from other spaces. The key actions are:

- Understand your ventilation system.
- Run your ventilation at higher volume flow rate; this may require changes to CO₂ set points (for both mechanical ventilation and automated windows).
- Avoid recirculation/transfer of air from one room to another unless this is the only way of providing adequately high ventilation to all occupied rooms.
- Recirculation of air within a single room through the use of ceiling and desk fans, where this is complemented by an outdoor air supply, is acceptable where no other form of ventilation is possible.

If you are unsure, seek the advice of your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineer or adviser.

Deliveries, Contractors and Visitors Attending the Workplace

- Non-essential visits to the workplace should be cancelled or postponed.
- Contact your delivery suppliers and understand what systems are in place for identifying if their employees are unwell and what actions are taken.
- Develop a plan for deliveries to minimise the interaction of delivery drivers with workers and customers and communicate this to delivery suppliers, drivers and employees.
- Minimise the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible.
- Delivery drivers and other contractors who need to attend the workplace to provide maintenance or repair services or perform other essential activities should be given clear instructions of your requirements while they are on site.
- Ensure handwashing facilities, or if not possible, alcohol-based hand sanitiser, is readily available for workers after physically handling deliveries.
- Direct visiting delivery drivers and contractors to remain in vehicles and use contactless methods, such as mobile phones to communicate with your workers wherever possible.
- Direct visiting delivery drivers and contractors to use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before handling products being delivered.
- Use and ask delivery drivers and contractors to use electronic paperwork where possible to minimise physical interaction. Where possible, set up alternatives to requiring signatures. For instance, see whether a confirmation email or a photo of the loaded or unloaded goods can be accepted as proof of delivery or collection (as applicable). If a pen or other utensil is required for signature you can ask that the pen or utensil is cleaned or sanitised before use. For pens, you may wish to use your own.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. My risk assessment and procedures state that staff must 'follow government guidelines', is that enough?

No. Your risk assessments should refer to the elements of government regulations and guidelines which apply to your organisation. Your safe working procedures should outline precautions that will be required to be followed by staff, including the circumstances when this would apply (as identified by your risk assessment). This would include legal requirements or precautions recommended in government guidelines.

For example: The legal requirement to wear face coverings on public transport and taxis would apply for staff commuting to work or required to travel for work purposes.

2. A member of staff has been in contact with someone who has tested positive, what should we do?

You should have clear and documented procedures for self-isolation, which should outline what staff should do if they:

- Are displaying symptoms of Coronavirus – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste.
- Live in the same household as someone who has symptoms or has tested positive.
- Have been in close contact with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive.
- Have been notified by government Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) to self-isolate.
- Have returned from overseas travel and are required to self-isolate.

This includes procedures on what an individual should do if they develop symptoms, or are notified by TTP whilst at work, i.e. who they should report this to, requirement to leave the workplace immediately and avoiding further spread through travel where possible.

Procedures must outline that if there has been contact with a positive COVID-19 case (including if notified by Test, Trace and Protect) individuals must self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of a negative test result as it can take up to 10 days for symptoms to develop. Staff must not be permitted to return to work until their self-isolation period is completed.

Procedures must also outline that anyone with symptoms should obtain a test within 5 days of developing symptoms and must self-isolate:

- If individuals test negative, providing they have no further symptoms and have not been in contact with a positive case in the last 10 days, they would be permitted to return to the workplace.
- If individuals test positive, they must continue to self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms.

You may require proof of test booking and test result confirmation as part of your procedures. If so, this should also be documented.

3. A member of staff has developed symptoms whilst at work, what should we do next?

As part of risk assessments, you should have emergency procedures documented on the steps to be taken to prevent further spread within the workplace. You should consider:

- If the symptomatic individual could not leave the workplace immediately, is there an area or room that could be used to segregate the person from the rest of the workforce until safe travel home can be arranged?
- Could you identify the areas in which the infectious person has been, including work areas and communal areas (staff room, kitchen, toilets, etc.) to arrange for the area to be closed off until deep cleaning can be arranged or until 72 hours has passed?
- Do you have information of everyone in the workplace on that day/time to be able to establish those who will need to be notified to self-isolate? This should include staff, visitors and contractors.
- Does information for visitors and contractors include contact information required for Test and Trace purposes?
- Would you be able to identify individuals who may have been in contact with the symptomatic person 48 hours before symptoms developed? Examples of contact includes having skin-to-skin physical contact, being coughed on, having face to face contact (under one metre) for any length of time (including talking, even if a face covering or face mask is worn) and being within one to two metres of each other for 15 minutes or more (including travelling in a vehicle).
- Do you have a procedure on how individuals will be notified if they are suspected of being in close contact with a symptomatic or COVID-positive person whilst at work?

4. How do I know if an employee has been exposed to Coronavirus at work?

If it is suspected that employee(s) have contracted Coronavirus at work, this may be reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). There must be reasonable evidence linking the nature of the person's work with an increased risk of becoming exposed to Coronavirus. For example:

- There is more than one employee who has tested positive who could have reasonably been in contact with others at work or have a shared work environment/equipment etc.
- The nature of the person's work activities increased the risk of them becoming exposed to Coronavirus (e.g. providing care to someone who is symptomatic or COVID-positive).
- There has been a specific, identifiable incident that led to an increased risk of exposure (e.g. an employee provided first aid to/was in physical contact with someone who has fainted and subsequently tests positive for Coronavirus).
- The person's work directly brought them into contact with a known Coronavirus hazard without effective control measures (as set out in the relevant PHE guidance) in place, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) or social distancing.

If there is an occupational link/exposure identified, notify your insurer separately.

5. Our risk assessment has identified activities in which the risk of the spread of COVID-19 is increased and we have purchased masks which are available in the storeroom for staff to use at their discretion. Is this sufficient?

No, your risk assessment should have identified additional hazards in the workplace, such as:

- Activities or use of equipment involving face-to-face contact.
- Work involving physical contact. Working within two metres of other people.
- Working in teams or groups. Using equipment/items used by others or shared between individuals.
- Working in areas that are enclosed or deemed a confined space.
- Working in areas where maintaining hygiene and handwashing may be an issue.
- Emergency plans for disposal of items/materials if someone is symptomatic or COVID-19 positive. [Click here to learn more.](#)
- Work involving employees or volunteers who are deemed as being in the at-risk category, vulnerable or shielding.

You should ensure that you can demonstrate that all reasonable steps have been taken to reduce the risk to the lowest level as reasonably practicable. Where such steps involve a requirement to wear suitable personal protection equipment (PPE), such as masks, visors and face protection, these should be issued to staff directly along with appropriate information, instruction and training. You should ensure that your risk assessment and information, instructions and training for staff details the following:

- The type of PPE required and where such items must be worn.
- Instructions for donning, wearing and removing PPE to avoid contamination.
- Procedures that must be followed for disposable items of PPE, i.e. single use, disposed of after use.
- Procedures that must be followed for reusable items of PPE, i.e. cleaning of PPE to avoid contamination, storage between use etc.
- Procedures for obtaining replacement PPE.
- Reporting procedures for PPE-related issues and non-compliance in the workplace.

Records of risk assessments and information, instructions and training communicated to staff should be maintained.



6. We have enhanced cleaning procedures in place in practice, what documentation and records should we have for this?

In order to evidence any COVID-19 related precautions being adopted, it is recommended that the following documentation is produced and kept up-to-date:

- Risk assessments identifying any needs for additional or enhanced cleaning as a precaution and also assessing the risk of contact with hazardous substances.
- Cleaning schedule outlining what is cleaned (e.g. touch points, toilets, shared equipment etc.), frequency of such cleaning (e.g. hourly, daily, twice daily etc.), who the cleaning is carried out by (e.g. toilets may be cleaned by cleaning staff, whereas individual desks may be cleaned after use by staff), what should be used for cleaning (outlining substances and materials to be used for cleaning, such as Dettol spray and disposable cloth), any safety precautions to be followed (e.g. diluting procedures, requirements for personal protective equipment etc.). Some substances may not normally require the use of PPE, however items of PPE may be required to prevent the spread of COVID if cleaning in populated areas or cleaning of communal or shared facilities.
- Copies of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for individual cleaning products and substances used.
- Copies of specific COSHH risk assessments for each substance.
- Emergency plans for additional deep cleaning in the event of a symptomatic person and/or positive case within the workplace itself.
- Evidence of any safe working procedures or information and instructions provided to staff in relation to cleaning. This may also include evidence of any signage displayed in the workplace that relates to cleaning procedures, cleaning checks etc.

7. Our risk assessments are documented and in a file for staff to read, is this enough?

No. Given the changing situation with COVID-19 in the UK and changes that can occur within the workplace itself, it is recommended that significant findings and material updates to risk assessments are communicated clearly and effectively to relevant persons (such as employees, volunteers, temporary staff, customers etc.). It is also recommended to remind and refresh information and instructions on the risk and the workplace precautions that must be followed – this could take the form of staff bulletins, signage, toolbox talks or training.

8. We have a COVID-19 risk assessment in place, how often should we review?

Procedures should be in place to allow for planned reviews and unplanned reviews.

- **Planned Review:** A periodic review to ensure that the risk assessment is still valid for the workplace, its conditions and reflects current government legislation and HSE guidance. It is recommended that COVID-19 risk assessments are reviewed monthly currently.
- **Unplanned Review:** Risk assessments would need to be reviewed following a material change or incident.

For example: If new measures have been introduced to manage the risk, such as split shifts, cohorting teams, installing barriers etc. Or, for example, if there has been a person reporting symptoms whilst at work or identification of a positive case who has attended the workplace.

Downloads

[Download COVID-19 Employee Workplace Checklist](#)

[Download COVID-19 Workplace Checklist](#)

[Download COVID-19 Risk Assessment Guidance and Template](#)

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