

Coronavirus (COVID-19): general guidance for safer workplaces – checklist

This checklist is designed to be used in conjunction with the general office guidance. Please ensure you read this guidance.

Actions to take

Full risk assessment

- Must complete and implement full risk assessment in consultation with employees, employee representatives or trade unions

Home working

- Identify job roles that can be undertaken from home and put plans in place to support homeworking (e.g. monitoring wellbeing of staff, provision of correct equipment, processes for keeping in touch and ensuring access to work systems)

Physical distancing – signage and markings

- Use tape or paint to mark the required physical distance on the floor to help people comply with physical distancing regulations
- Use physical distancing floor markings for other common areas such as toilets, showers, lockers and changing rooms and in any other areas where queues may typically form
- Use signage to communicate key health and safety points, such as hygiene and physical distancing

- Ensure that there are no unintended impacts on people with disabilities or caring responsibilities. Signage should be clear and easy to understand, using visual material to reinforce messages

Physical distancing: workplace capacity

- Decide upon the number of staff that can reasonably follow current guidelines for physical distancing within the premises. Take into account total floor-space and desk arrangements as well as likely pinch points and busy areas and then implement relevant measures
- Lifts should only be used by disabled people, for essential purposes, or on a one person per lift basis where possible. Employers must make sure that disabled people are able to access lifts

Physical distancing: moving around the workplace

- If your premises has more than one access point, introduce a one-way system at entry and exit points if possible
- Stagger arrival and departure times of staff to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, if this is an issue
- Take measures to reduce the potential crowding of people, for example by having more entry points for employees into the workplace or change opening hours
- Identify high risk areas such as pinch-points like entrances or stairs where close physical contact is likely and/or obstructions force close physical contact. Take measures to reduce risk, including using drop-off points or transfer zones

- Consider opportunities to reduce unnecessary movement within buildings, such as restricting access to certain areas and use of technology (e.g. telephones, radio transmitters)
- Implement one-way systems where possible on walkways around the workplace, paying particular attention to pinch points or narrow corridors where physical distancing might be difficult

Physical distancing: staff arrangements

- Review desk layouts to let employees work in a manner consistent with physical distancing guidelines, ensuring that desks have adequate spacing
- Use baffle boards or screens between desks and at the front of reception desks, ensuring these provide adequate coverage and are cleaned regularly
- Test desk arrangements in a pilot setting before implementation and then again during operation, ensuring that staff are able to work while observing physical distancing
- Avoid staff sharing workstations and equipment, allocating staff to fixed desks where possible, or a fixed area of the building. Desks, equipment and shared spaces must be cleaned between uses by different shifts or groups of staff
- Reduce the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)
- Use a consistent pairing or grouping system where employees work on shifts together

Physical distancing: site visitors

- Provide clear guidance on physical distancing and hygiene expectations to visitors on arrival via signage and visual aids, and before arrival by prior communication. Consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics, such as those who are visually impaired.
- Establish host responsibilities relating to COVID-19, providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.
- Review entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to maintain physical distancing
- Limit the number of visitors at any one time
- Limit visitor times to a specific time window and restrict access to required visitors only
- Determine whether schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people
- Revise visitor arrangements to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in reception areas

Physical distancing: meetings

- Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings or interactions wherever possible
- Only essential participants should physically attend meetings and must maintain physical distancing throughout

- Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms wherever possible
- Provide hand sanitiser in meeting rooms and discourage use of shared equipment such as pens, whiteboards, etc

Physical distancing: adapting services

- Corporate vehicles (e.g. work minibuses) – plan in place to ensure adequate physical distancing, such as empty seats, limiting numbers
- Put in place pick-up and drop-off collection points where possible

Hygiene

- Use signage, tannoy announcements and any other relevant communication tools to remind staff to maintain hygiene standards. i.e. hand washing and the etiquette for coughing, sneezing, etc
- Provide hand sanitiser in locations around the workplace, including at entry/exit points, reception desks, communal areas and workstations
- Implement cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site, including containers
- Encourage visitors to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter and exit the premises
- Provide hand-drying facilities – either paper towels with appropriate and frequent waste disposal or electric hand driers

Cleaning

- Work areas, staff rooms, canteens and equipment should be cleaned frequently between uses. A cleaning schedule should be designed and staff trained to implement the schedule
- Where desks are shared, cleaning schedules should take account of shift patterns to ensure equipment is cleaned between uses by trained staff
- Frequent touch points should be identified and disinfected regularly including all objects and surfaces that are touched regularly. Adequate disposal arrangements should be made available for any additional waste created
- Workspaces should be kept clear and all waste should be removed. All personal belongings must be removed from work areas at the end of a shift, i.e. water bottles, mugs, stationery, etc
- Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean
- Consider whether additional waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection can be provided
- Where shower and changing facilities are required, set clear use and cleaning guidance for showers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items and that physical distancing is achieved

Other methods of reducing transmission

- Provide hand sanitiser in locations around the workplace, including at entry/exit points, reception desks, communal areas and workstations

- Provide a nearby supply of hand sanitiser for employees to use when boarding vehicles or handling deliveries when handwashing is not practical and ensure staff have access to and are able to regularly wash their hands.
- Increase ventilation and wedge doors open where possible and where it is safe to do so. i.e. do not keep fire safety doors open.
- Stagger break times and make use of outdoor space for breaks where possible.
- Staff should be encouraged to use contactless or cashless payment where possible, if required in staff canteens.
- Canteens should provide packaged meals to avoid fully opening staff canteens
- Restrict non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers
- Coordinate and cooperate with other occupiers for those working in facilities shared with other businesses, including with landlords and other tenants. Ensure consistency across common areas, for example, receptions, staircases, toilets, canteen and break areas
- Encourage staff to remain on-site and, when not possible, maintain physical distancing while off-site
- Encourage storage of personal items and clothing in lockers or personal storage spaces during shifts. Regulate use of lockers to reduce concurrent usage
- If staff have to use touch-based security devices such as keypads to enter the business through controlled areas, either seek alternatives or implement cleaning and diversification arrangements.

- Limit or restrict the use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards

Security

- Inform visitors that they should be prepared to remove face coverings if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification
- Review external messaging to visitors to make sure it does not provide information that may present a security risk, such as the location of queues or the number of people permitted in a queue
- Maintain a record of all visitors, if this is practical

Staff support

- Plan and implement appropriate engagement structures to ensure employee engagement on testing and modification of site measures is developed collaboratively and regularly informed by shared experience of a representative group of employees
- Provide written or verbal communication of the latest guidelines to staff, develop communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work.
- Engage with workers and worker representatives through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities are informed about new procedures, and are able to access facilities, i.e. handwashing facilities at wheelchair height, verbal direction for those unable to see floor markings or signage, etc.

- Consider support mechanisms to promote positive mental/physical health and wellbeing in the workforce, supporting employees who may be anxious for many reasons relating to the changes resulting from Covid-19

- Provide active travel facilities, to encourage staff and customers to walk or cycle to premises, such as bike racks where possible. Building arrangements will determine whether this is appropriate.