

2021

COVID-19

Work Safely Manual

Cork City Council

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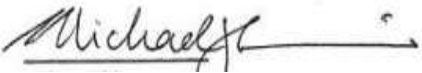


Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council



Revision History

CURRENT DOCUMENT VERSION		
Version No:	Date:	Reasons for Issue:
0023	08.12.2021	Update to include amended DoPER Guidance & SOGs & Updated Induction & Training Guidance

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0001	21.05.2020	Response to COVID-19 Pandemic
0002	29.05.2020	Update to include Guidance on Contact Logging/Tracing
0003	12.06.2020	Update to include COVID-19 Policy Statement & additional SOGs
0004	18.06.2020	Update to include additional SOGs
0005	23.06.2020	Update to include Annual Leave Guidance
0006	06.07.2020	Update to include additional SOGs
0007	15.07.2020	Update to include Leave Arrangements

PREVIOUS VERSIONS

Version No.	Date	Reason for Issue
0008	17.07.2020	Update to include COVID-19 Response Structure & Advance Travel Application Form
0009	20.07.2020	Update to include amended SOG
0010	28.07.2020	Update to include amended Annual Leave & Travel Guidance
0011	07.08.2020	Update to include DoPER Guidance & amended SOGs
0012	28.08.2020	Update to include amended DoPER Guidance & SOGs
0013	14.09.2020	Update to include amendment to Appendix 1-Suspect case at work
0014	02.10.2020	Update to include amended DoPER Guidance, SOGs & updated Green List.
0015	12.10.2020	Update to include updated SOGs and guidance on PPE.
0016	23.10.2020	Update to include amended SOGs and DoPER Guidance
0017	27.11.2020	Update to include Government Work Safely Protocol
0018	02.12.2020	Update to include amended SOG
0019	26.01.2020	Update to include amended DoPER Guidance
0020	11.03.2021	Update to include amended DoPER Guidance
0021	10.05.2021	Update to include amended SOG Guidance, amended Covid Induction & High-Level LA COVID-19 Work Safely Health and Safety Guidance
0022	21.06.2021	Update to include amended DoPER Guidance



1. Introduction

This Work Safely Manual was created as a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This manual provides for guidance on best practice to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of the staff of Cork City Council. We aim to mitigate the risk associated with this current COVID-19 Pandemic. This document is subject to ongoing change and revision.

2. Responsibility

The main responsibility for monitoring and updating remains with the People & Organisational Directorate in collaboration with the Senior Management Team. This is a living document which is subject to change due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its effects on the workforce.

3. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this document is to consolidate national best practice, in line with Government and HSE recommendations in relation to the management of COVID-19. This high-level document sets out the general principles to be applied to protect employees and to minimise the risk of spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The document has been drafted in accordance with the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol. This information can be used to inform the development or customisation of local policy and procedure documentation.

4. Terms of Reference

1. CCC Pathway towards Normal Operations (this document is subject to modifications)
2. LA COVID-19 Work Safely Health & Safety Guidance
3.
 - a. Work Safely Induction & Guidance Training Programme (PowerPoint)
 - b. COVID-19 LA Standard Operating Guidance
 - c. CCMA – Priority Actions in Reopening Services within the Planning System



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Cork City Council Pathway Towards Normal Operations

Cork City Council has prepared a pathway towards re-establishing normal operations as society makes arrangements and adapts to living with the Covid 19 pandemic. The Council will operate in line with Government directions and sectoral guidance in response to having to live and work with Covid - 19. The Taoiseach has announced the triggers and framework for a phased reduction of Covid - 19 related restrictions in five stages commencing on the 18th May 2020. That framework involves gradually reopening society and the economy while suppressing Covid-19 to a level that can be tolerated by health services capacity; there always will of course be a risk of future waves of the virus and repeated local or national lockdown measures. The Council will continually monitor the situation as time progresses and will take action, as necessary.

The Council will re-establish work practices in a way that reduces the risks to its staff, their families, and the public in general. The Covid 19 virus is a constant which means that we all have a responsibility to be more careful than ever in helping to contain its spread and carry out public health recommendations such as social distancing, respiratory etiquette and hand washing. These will still be critical requirements; ultimately these measures will help keep people safe.

The Council is fully aware and appreciative of the effort put in by its staff over the past months since the unwelcome arrival of Covid 19 to these shores. This has been publicly acknowledged and as a public body, the Council and its staff will continue to fulfil their public service duties on the front line and in facilitating the awakening of the local economy and society. The local authority will be to the fore in supporting residents, business and the public in returning to work and re-establishing commercial and cultural life in the City.

We are all in this together and we need to cooperate to sustain our society, keep ourselves and our families safe and play our part in suppressing the spread of the virus. This is a defining time in our history and while moving ahead with caution and constant consideration for others, we as a public service need to keep the show on the road and while doing so use better and more sustainable ways of working, where possible. We have all learned new ways of doing things already in these short few weeks; we must continue to do so and adapt as society finds its way through these extraordinary times.

The Council has prepared a schedule of documentation entitled *A Pathway Towards Normal Operations* which is based on and includes guidance documents and Standard Operating Procedures prepared for local authorities by the LGMA. These protocols and procedures will guide in the reestablishment of our services. The Pathway series sets out a range of protocols and operating procedures which are necessary to help keep us all, our families and the public safe. It is planned that these protocols will be adopted locally and adapted where necessary to suit either section or site conditions. It will be the responsibility of each Directorate to review its work activities in light of these protocols and adapt pre-established approaches as necessary in light of the changed circumstances and new overarching guidance. Our approach going forward will involve caution and common sense while still progressing with the delivery of essential public services.

Induction Training:



The first step on the Pathway for all employees is to receive induction training in work re-establishment with Covid-19 arrangements. All employees are asked to continue with their present arrangements until they are contacted by their direct line manager in the Council. The line manager will outline updated requirements including arrangements for each employee to undergo an induction process. Once an employee has completed the induction training, the direct line manager will make appropriate arrangements on realignment of operations in each case.

Re-establishment will be gradual:

The pandemic has presented many work challenges and new demands. The flexibility shown by staff in taking on new roles both in the local authority and with HSE has been central to the Councils response and has been extremely well received by the public. Clearly not all former work practices will resume immediately, and the Council will continue to be called upon to respond flexibly to emerging demands that will continue to be placed on the local authority as a result of COVID 19. As such the reestablishment of services will be characterised by a gradual and flexible approach.

Occupational Health and Safety Rules imposed by the pandemic must be observed:

This is critical and includes social distancing, cleansing, personal hygiene, and respiratory etiquette as described above and in the document.

Caring: Childcare and other special caring circumstances including caring for vulnerable persons:

If an *at risk or vulnerable* worker cannot work from home and must be in the workplace, the Council can arrange that they are preferentially supported to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. In other cases where special circumstances including childcare issues exist or care for vulnerable significant others, appropriate arrangements can be made including roster staggering, which can be agreed with the relevant Directorate.

Remote Working:

Temporary remote working solutions were implemented to address the initial challenges posed by COVID 19. The Council is examining how best to enable organisational resilience both now and in the future and a detailed remote working policy to meet the future needs of the organisation is currently being prepared.



Welfare:

In support of social distancing requirements mechanisms will be put in place to stagger assembly and breaks. Enhanced and regular cleaning of welfare facilities must also be in place and maintained for as long as required. Onsite welfare facilities will need to be reviewed and their use carefully managed. Sanitising facilities and practices are very important.

Office Space / Desks:

A preliminary exercise conducted indicates that there are 670 desks in City Hall and Civic Offices. To accommodate social distancing this would reduce to 407 desks, a shortfall of 263 desks, accepting that not all 670 desks are fully occupied. A review has been undertaken to review the additional capacity. This will include use of smaller meeting rooms, the co-working space, and off-site offices, libraries, museum, depots etc. They are currently being reviewed in terms of space and IT capability. The co-working space and the *shaft room* have been re purposed to accommodate forty staff members and these placements are currently being actioned. In some instances, directorates have already achieved social distancing, and where this is the case, these have been documented.

Social Distancing:

All outdoor and indoor staff should adhere to social distancing. Area Engineers, Resident Engineers, Supervisors and Foremen need to review all work practices, schedules and structures to ensure that social distancing, cleansing and respiratory etiquette are being adhered to. This will involve a fundamental review of how we do things and structure our work processes and work gangs. Transport to and from sites will also need to be modified to take account of the ongoing social distancing requirements. The attached SOPs will need to be adapted to reflect local site and work conditions across the range of activities being undertaken. Indoor staff should take responsibility to ensure that their social distancing is maintained by using, where possible, telephones and video conferencing to meet. Where physical meetings are necessary, please ensure that there is sufficient room to adhere to social distancing.

Health & Safety:

Health & Safety statements are being reviewed across all Directorates.

The Safe System of Work Plans (SSWPs) need to be updated to include consideration of health and safety interventions needed at sites. This will be guided centrally. Processes and procedures, risk assessments and work practices are being reviewed and modified as required. This may include the provision of tissues and bins, the maintenance of logs to facilitate contact tracing and enhanced safety notices.

Directorate Risk Assessments must also be updated to reflect the changes in the Corporate Risk Register that address COVID 19.

**Consultation:**

Posters/leaflets to advise employees of the hazards associated with COVID – 19 and the measures taken to prevent the disease have been prepared by the HSE and are displayed at various locations in City Council buildings.

The Council will also convene regular meetings of the Partnership committee as a forum to consult with workers on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace.

Flexible Working Arrangements:

Flexible working arrangements may not be suitable for all functions carried out by the Council. That said, where it is possible, flexible working times from 7am to 10pm seven days a week will continue to deliver better scope for social distancing. This arrangement will continue until the 4th September 2020 at which stage the need for, and approach to roster staggering and flexible working arrangements will be reviewed.

The Council is aware and understands that this is a most anxious time for everybody, but especially for families having to care for children and other vulnerable family members. Every situation is unique and we must support each other, so if there is a particular concern or circumstance please approach your line manager or the People and Organisational Directorate in confidence so that we can help you find a solution that works so that you can continue to progress your career with the Council during this pandemic interruption.

Ongoing Support:

It is important to remember that this will be a changing situation, we are all as humans coping with heightened risk. It may be necessary at times to adjust these pathway arrangements accordingly as we learn more. Your immediate line manager will be in communication with you and support you at this time.

Should you have any queries or concerns please make contact with your line manager. This is a two-way street; it is important that we get feedback and suggested improvements from the workforce, so please engage with your line manager with any suggestions or feedback. We are all in this together, this must be a team effort. It is us against the virus.

The Council is proud of its staff and is thankful for its support during these testing times. Ireland is making great progress with the controlling of this pandemic; we will prevail if we stick together.

Your further cooperation is appreciated.



High Level Local Authority COVID-19 Work Safely Health and Safety Guidance

**Version 6 -
1st December 2021**



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Version	Amendment /Addition
Version 2.0	December 2020
Version 2.0	Updated introduction to include Government’s Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 and the Work Safely Protocol.
Version 2.0	Inclusion of Key Terms and Definitions
Version 2.0	Note on Standard Operating Guidance and inclusion of list of current SOG’s at appendix 9.
Version 2.0	Updated COVID-19 symptoms as per HSE advice
Version 2.0	Added HSA advice on contact tracing requirements
Version 2.0	Incorporation of HSA advice on close contacts in the workplace
Version 2.0	Additional information in relation to hand sanitising gels advice (HSA) and reference to IPB risk management circular
Version 2.0	Added reference to HSA COVID-19 Checklists & Templates
Version 2.0	Added reference to COVID Tracker App
Version 2.0	Reference to Lead Worker Rep Role and Training
Version 2.0	Inclusion of HSA advice on Managing legionella
Version 2.0	Updated note on Temperature Screening Requirements for Workplaces
Version 2.0	Updated cleaning information
Version 2.0	Inclusion of guidance on face coverings and note on use of face visors
Version 2.0	Updated first Aid guidance – in line with PHECC advice
Version 2.0	Updated training information
Version 2.0	Updated High & Very High-Risk Categories as per HSE advice
Version 2.0	Removed Appendix on Donning and Removing PPE
Version 2.0	Updated guidance on meetings to include meetings with external parties
Version 2.0	Updated information on heating, ventilation and air conditioning (Work Safely Protocol)
Version 2.0	Updated Sample Pre-Return to Work Form (Appendix 4) in line with Work Safely Protocol

Version 3.0	7th May 2021
Version 3.0	Updated in line with Government's COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery: The Path Ahead 2021
Version 3.0	Updated information in relation to wearing of face coverings
Version 3.0	Updated information on Ventilation in line with HSPC Guidance on non-healthcare building ventilation during COVID-19
Version 3.0	Updated information on COVID-19 Statutory Training Updates
Version 3.0	Updated information on COVID-19 Tracker App
Version 3.0	Updated links to current public health advice provided throughout document.
Version 3.0	Inclusion of Guidance and FAQs on Working Arrangements and Leave Associated with COVID-19 for Civil and Public Service
Version 3.0	Inclusion of messaging around reinforcing key public health measures
Version 3.0	Updated links to COVID-19 Resources & Posters
Version 3.0	Updated links for advice on travelling for essential business or for work purposes
Version 3.0	Inclusion of HSA advice on waste disposal
Version 3.0	Updated information on welfare facilities / eating on construction sites and travelling for work
Version 3.0	Inclusion of reference to vaccinations and relevant links for further information.
Version 3.0	Inclusion of information on Pregnancy and COVID-19
Version 4.0	27th May 2021
Version 4.0	Updated in line with the Government's Work Safety Protocol (14th May 2021)
Version 4.0	Updated - advice on Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HIAV)
Version 4.0	New - information on fitness to work following COVID-19 Absence and inclusion of HSA's Interim Guidance for Employers on Fitness for Work following COVID-19 Absence
Version 4.0	Updated links for HSE advice for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close contacts who have received a COVID-19 vaccine • close contacts who have had a previous positive test • close contact of a person that tests positive for COVID-19 and you are not fully vaccinated
Version 4.0	Updated links and sources for further information as appropriate

Version 5.0	20th September 2021
Version 5.0	Updated introduction to reflect Government's 'Reframing the Challenge: Continuing our Recovery and Reconnecting'.
Version 5.0	Updated in line with the Government's Work Safely Protocol (September 2021).
Version 5.0	Inclusion of Guidance Note from the LEEF Consultative Group on returning to the workplace from 20th September 2021.
Version 5.0	Updated information on ventilation and further advice on CO2 monitors.
Version 5.0	Updated information in relation to meetings – removal of recommended time of attendance at meetings of maximum of 1 hour 55 minutes.
Version 5.0	Updated with new symptoms associated with Delta variant of COVID-19.
Version 5.0	Inclusion of most recently published HSA checklists on returning to the office.
Version 5.0	Additional information on COVID-19 vaccinations and the inclusion of the Data Protection Commissioner advice on Processing COVID-19 vaccination data in the context of employment.
Version 5.0	Updated links directing employers and employees to a range of government departments and agencies where additional and more detailed information and guidance can be sourced.
Version 5.0	Updated link for Guidance and FAQs on Working Arrangements and Leave Associated with COVID-19 for Civil and Public Service (16th June 2021)
Version 6.0	1st December 2021
Version 6.0	Updated introduction and context to reflect Work Safely Protocol and updated public health measures
Version 6.0	Updated to reflect technical updates as outlined in the Work Safely Protocol (18th November)
Version 6.0	Inclusion of LEEF Guidance Note dated 17th November.
Version 6.0	Updated link for Guidance and FAQs on Working Arrangements and Leave Associated with COVID-19 for Civil and Public Service (29th November).
Version 6.0	Updated COVID-19 symptoms to reflect current HSE advice.
Version 6.0	Inclusion of reference and link to HSE advice for Household Close Contacts.
Version 6.0	Updated close contact in the workplace information as per HSA guidance.
Version 6.0	Inclusion of link to latest public health posters <i>Layer Up</i> Campaign
Version 6.0	Updated information on the use of CO2 monitors in line with Work Safely Protocol.



Version 6.0	Updated Appendix 4 - Sample Return to Work Form
Version 6.0	Updated Appendix 6 – with most up to date links to updates, advice and information.



Section 1 – Introduction

Background

The purpose of this document is to consolidate national best practice, in line with Government and HSE recommendations in relation to the ongoing management of COVID-19. This high-level document sets out the general principles to be applied to protect employees and to identify and implement suitable control measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection in the workplace. This information can be used to inform the development, customisation or updating of local policy and procedure documentation.

This is a living document which means as Government restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will be updated to reflect new Government advice. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the Government's *Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting* and the Work Safely Protocol, based on the latest public health guidance available from the Department of Health and the HSE. The links to latest guidelines have been included throughout the document.

This document, which is Version 6, has been approved by the Health & Safety Operational Committee.

Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting

On the 31st August 2021 the Government published [Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting](#). This sets out Ireland's plan for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic COVID-19.

For information on public health measures in place – please follow this link:

[gov.ie - Public health measures in place right now \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Local Authority Resilience and Recovery / CCMA LA Services Framework for Future COVID-19 Pandemic Response

This framework outlines the response and schedule of services to be provided by local authorities in accordance with restrictions in place. The Local Authority Business Continuity Group continues to monitor this framework and update as required in government announcements regarding restrictions.

These services will be provided in accordance with Health and Safety Guidelines and relevant Standard Operating Guidelines prepared by the Local Government Management Agency.

COVID-19 National Protocol for Employers and Workers

Work Safely Protocol (18th November): [gov.ie - Work Safely Protocol \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie).

The Work Safely Protocol continues to apply in full, setting out the minimum Public Health infection prevention and control measures required to be taken by employers and workers, in every place of work, to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19. A technical update of the Work Safely Protocol was published on 18th November. This has been prepared with some minor changes to reflect the most up-to-date Public Health advice as well as the LEEF Guidance note.

This High-Level Guidance has been updated to reflect the latest version of the Work Safely Protocol.



LEEF Guidance Note

The Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) is the forum for high-level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters related to the labour force. Given the importance of keeping workplaces safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, it established a consultative stakeholder group to oversee the implementation of the Work Safely Protocol. This consultative group prepared and published an updated guidance note on the Work Safely Protocol on 17 November.

Guidance Note from LEEF Consultative Group¹ on the Work Safely Protocol (17th November):
[Guidance-Note-LEEF-on-Work-Safely-Protocol.pdf \(enterprise.gov.ie\)](#)

Standard Operating Guidance (SOGs)

To support the implementation of this High-Level guidance, a suite of SOGs was developed, structured to reflect the operational activities of local authorities. These operational guidance documents are presented in a format which will allow individual local authorities to extract the key elements to enable them to be applied in accordance with individual operational activities. There is currently a suite of 30 SOG's which have been developed under the aegis of the Health & Safety Operational Committee and issued to the sector. These documents are kept under review to ensure in line with current public health advice. A list of these documents can be found at Appendix 9.

Guidance and FAQs on Working Arrangements and Leave Associated with COVID-19 for Civil and Public Service

These FAQs have been prepared to assist employees and management in the Civil and Public Service to understand the process, rules and expectations associated with work arrangements during the COVID-19 recovery period across the public service.

This guidance includes information in relation to:

- Attendance in the work premises during COVID-19
- High and Very High-Risk Categories
- COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay Arrangements
- Working arrangements during COVID-19
- Procedures for Employees and Managers for Absence due to COVID-19
- COVID-19 Quick Guide on Working Arrangements

The most up-to-date version of these FAQs is available at: [gov.ie - Update on working arrangements and leave associated with COVID-19 for Civil and Public Service \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

Managing COVID-19 and Minimising the Risk of Transmission

Individual behaviour changes and cooperation across the Local Authority sector will continue to be critical to managing COVID-19 and to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our workplaces. Individually we can take precautions, and these continue to be our first line of defence. While the various vaccines and their delivery provide a clear pathway for us, we must continue to be mindful of the risks involved in everyday life and the need to continue to follow public health advice.

No single measure, in isolation, will control the spread of COVID-19 and the most effective approach is one which involves a combination of societal and personal protective measures, including:

- Washing our hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Observing good cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Maintaining physical distancing.



- Complying with COVID-19 control measures in place.
- Walking and cycling where we can to free up public transport for physical distancing for those who need it.
- Isolating and contact your GP if you develop symptoms.
- Increasing ventilation.

Many of these are simple precautions which people will take voluntarily. New habits are already well-adopted by the majority of people which will continue to help us combat the virus.

Working together to suppress COVID-19 in the Workplace

The key to a safe workplace remains strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers and employees. It is also essential to achieve success and maximum buy-in. Regular engagement should continue in relation to COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in the workplace. Employers should provide up to date information and guidance to employees.

The type of information should include:

- The signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- How COVID-19 spreads.
- That risk assessments have been carried out and that the results of risk assessments have been provided to relevant employees in a clear and understandable manner.
- Advice about hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing and ventilation.
- It is also important to emphasise that if employees have symptoms of COVID-19 – regardless of their vaccination status – they should not go to work, should self-isolate and contact the HSE or their GP to arrange a test.
- Routine and correct wearing of face coverings / masks in shared work areas and also during breaks, in locker and toilet areas and if travelling together to work.
- Procedures and steps to be taken in the event of a suspected or positive case or outbreak in the workplace.
- Enhanced levels of cleaning, especially shared equipment, common touch points etc.
- Visible leadership including the appointment of COVID-19 Lead Worker Representative, and the continued review of precautions.
- Information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Since the rollout of the vaccination programme began on 29th December 2020, there has been very high uptake across all population age cohorts. As the current phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme nears completion, vaccination of those not yet inoculated remains the immediate focus of the programme.

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee continues to examine evidence regarding booster vaccines for those with waning immunity and reduced vaccine effectiveness in other groups. The HSE is responsible for the roll out of the vaccination programme and they have specific information and resources available on their webpages. Vaccination should be carried out under the direction of a medical practitioner in line with relevant HSE or Department of Health guidance.

Specific information and resources are available at the below links:

- Check [hse.ie/covid19vaccine](https://www.hse.ie/covid19vaccine) for information about the vaccine, information on this page is updated regularly
- Find the vaccine information materials at www.hse.ie/covid19vaccinematerials



- Details on getting the COVID-19 vaccine is updated regularly [Getting your COVID-19 vaccine - HSE.ie](#)

Points to consider

Irrespective of the vaccination roll-out, Public Health infection prevention and control measures (such as physical distancing, hand hygiene, face coverings/masks, increased ventilation), and working from home unless it is necessary to attend in person to facilitate reduced numbers in the workplace, will all need to remain in place. In that regard, employers and employees should continue to adhere to the requirements set out in the Work Safely Protocol and ensure that their COVID-19 response plan and workplace risk assessments are kept up to-date.

In addition, employers and employees should keep up to date with all current Public Health on the HSE website (HSE).

The decision to get a vaccination against COVID-19 is voluntary and employees will therefore make their own individual decisions in this regard. An employer should read the advice on the Data Protection Commissioner [Processing COVID-19 Vaccination Data in the context of Employment | Data Protection Commissioner](#) as the processing or requesting of information on an individual's vaccination status may not be appropriate. However, employers working together with their employees and their representatives, including the Lead Worker Representative(s), may wish to provide advice and information on the vaccination programme so that workers have the necessary information to make an informed decision.

Requirements under Health and Safety Legislation

Under OSH legislation, vaccination is only referred to in the context of those employees who are working with biological agents (Biological Agents Regulations). The cohort of employees to whom this applies is limited to workplaces such as healthcare and laboratory settings. The 2013 Biological Agents Regulations requires an employer to make available appropriate vaccination where the biological agents risk assessment reveals a risk to employees from occupational exposure to working with a biological agent (note that for SARs-CoV-2, it is the Government who is making available the national vaccination programme for COVID-19). There is no requirement in these regulations that requires the employee to either accept the offer of a vaccination or indeed to inform their employer if they have availed of a vaccination.

For all other workplaces, adherence to the Work Safely Protocol and IPC measures are the principal requirements relevant to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in their places of work. Vaccination should be considered as a useful supplement to existing Public Health infection prevention and control measures, namely wearing masks/face coverings, ventilation, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, proper use of PPE but it should not replace them. Vaccination is a useful supplement because vaccination may not be effective in all who receive it. It is also known that a person who is vaccinated can still be infected with COVID-19 but the severity of the disease is reduced.

A vaccinated person can also still transmit the virus so the emphasis must remain on adherence to the IPC measures which are known to work rather than vaccination status of employees leading to a false sense of security or undermining of other Public Health measures.

For further information on the application of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations 2013-2020 with respect to COVID-19, please refer to the HSA website.



COVID-19 Vaccination Information

Employers and workers are encouraged to read about the COVID-19 vaccine and to get information from a factual, trusted source. Online information resources on the vaccine are available as follows:

- Information about the vaccination programme and specific vaccines used [COVID-19 vaccines - HSE.ie](#)
- Details on how to register to get the COVID-19 vaccine [Getting your COVID-19 vaccine - HSE.ie](#)
- The COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy [gov.ie - Provisional Vaccine Allocation Groups \(www.gov.ie\)](#)
- COVID-19 vaccine information for health professionals [COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Health Professionals - HSE.ie](#)



Section 2 - Key Information Terms & Definitions



COVID-19 Information Signs and symptoms of COVID-19	Symptoms of COVID-19 - HSE.ie
HSE very high risk and high-risk category	People at higher risk from COVID-19 - HSE.ie
Self-Isolation	How to self-isolate (stay in your room) - HSE.ie
Restricted Movements	Restricted movements (stay at home) - HSE.ie
Close Contact	https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html
Casual Contact	https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html
Household Close Contacts	If you are a close contact of COVID-19 - HSE.ie





Section 3 - COVID-19 Workplace Protection– How to Defend Against the Spread of COVID 19

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a new (novel) virus called Coronavirus.

The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is through prevention measures such as wearing masks/coverings, physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and increasing ventilation and employees themselves deciding to be vaccinated.

How the virus is spread	
 <p>Know the symptoms. If you have them self isolate and contact your GP immediately</p>	<p>How the virus is spread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come into close contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing or sneezing • Touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed and sneezed on and bring your unwashed hands to your face (eyes, nose or mouth) • Through airborne transmission – this is the spread of a virus in tiny water particles, known as aerosols. COVID-19 can spread in crowded or poorly ventilated areas. To protect against airborne spread, keep indoor spaces ventilated by opening windows and doors when possible.
Symptoms	
 <p>Know the symptoms. If you have them self isolate and contact your GP immediately</p>	<p>The most common symptoms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above) – including having chills • Dry cough • Fatigue(tiredness) <p>Less common symptoms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss or change to your sense of smell or taste– this could mean they’re completely gone or just different to normal. • Nasal congestion (runny or blocked nose) • Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes) • Sore throat • Headache • Muscle or joint pain (aches and pains) • Different types of skin rash • Nausea or vomiting • Diarrhoea • Chills or dizziness <p>You may not have all of these symptoms, or your symptoms may be mild. Symptoms may vary for different age groups or variants of the virus. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show.</p> <p>If you have any common symptoms of COVID-19, you must not attend the workplace. Self-isolate (stay in your room) and get a COVID-19 test. Do this even if you are part or fully vaccinated. If you are in doubt about any symptoms you have, phone your GP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For further information on COVID-19 symptoms please follow this link: Symptoms of COVID-19 - HSE.ie ➤ For further information on close contacts please follow this link: If you are a close contact of COVID-19 - HSE.ie

Protection against getting COVID-19	
 <p>Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you come in</p>	<p>Wash hands regularly and avoid touching your face with hands. Hand gels can be used if soap and water is not available.</p> <p>See HSE for posters & videos on correct hand washing techniques https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html</p>
Cough Etiquette / Respiratory Hygiene	
 <p>Practice good cough /sneeze hygiene. Use your elbow or a tissue</p>	<p>One of the best ways to prevent person to person spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19 is to use proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Follow this advice as strictly as possible and encourage others to follow too.</p> <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wash your hands properly and often. ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze. ✓ Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands. ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces' <p>Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean. ✗ Do not share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups.
Cleaning	
 <p>Clean and disinfect surfaces regularly</p>	<p>Enhanced cleaning regimes should be implemented ensuring that all frequently touched objects and surfaces are regularly cleaned and disinfected.</p>
Ventilation	
 <p>Open windows and doors for ventilation</p>	<p>Ventilation refers to the movement of outdoor air into a building, and the circulation of that air within the building or room. This can be achieved through natural means (e.g. opening a window) or mechanical means (e.g. central heating, ventilation and air conditioning). Adequate ventilation reduces how much virus is in the air.</p>



Physical Distancing

Physical distancing (also known as social distancing) aims, through a variety of means, to decrease or interrupt the spread of COVID-19. It does this by minimising contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals.

Physical distancing is one of the most important measures in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres.

The recommendations for physical distancing are to:

- Keep 2 metres of space between you and other people.
- Implement a no hand shaking policy.
- Avoid any crowded places.
- Free office capacity must be used as much as is reasonably practicable and multiple occupancy office space must be organised in such a way that physical distances can be maintained.
- Where possible, organise employees into teams /crews who consistently work and take breaks together. The teams should be as small as is reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done.
- Organise breaks in such a way as to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing.
- Conduct meetings as much as possible using online remote means. Where face to face meetings are necessary, these must be arranged in line with the Government advice that is in place at the time of holding the meeting. Furthermore, the length of the meeting and the numbers attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times. Proper ventilation, for example open windows, should also be in place
- Reorganise and rearrange working and break areas. For example, placing tables and chairs far enough apart in canteen.
- Provide one-way systems for access/egress routes in the workplace where practicable.
- Implement physical distancing during any outdoor work activity. For outdoor work activities, facilities for frequent hand hygiene should be available.
- Prevent gatherings of employees in the workplace at the beginning and end of working hours such as in changing rooms, locker rooms etc.

In settings where 2 metre separation cannot be ensured by organisational means, alternative protective measures should be put in place, for example:

- Maintain at least a distance of 1 metre or as much distance as is reasonably practicable.
- Install temporary physical barriers, such as clear plastic guards between employees for the duration of the pandemic.
- Provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids, such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc. that are readily accessible to employees.
- Provide PPE as appropriate.
- Use of face coverings in line with public health advice [gov.uk - When to wear face coverings and how to make them \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/when-to-wear-face-coverings-and-how-to-make-them).
- Ensure adequate ventilation.

Note: Wearing of face masks is not a substitute for the control measures outlined above but they may be used in addition to these measures especially where maintaining physical distancing is difficult. If masks are worn, they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues.



Section 4 - Implementation of Public Health Measures

Employer:

- Keep the COVID-19 Response Plan up to date.
- Ongoing review of workspaces to ensure that physical distancing measures are being maintained.
- Review and update Safety Statements, associated risk assessments and other relevant health and safety documents as required, to address the level(s) of risk associated with COVID-19 and the various workspaces and work activities.
- Review of COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures: Preventive measures should be regularly monitored and updated. Health & Safety Authority Template Checklists are available to assist in reviewing existing measures in place. See [Work Safely Templates, Checklists and Posters - Health and Safety Authority \(hsa.ie\)](#)
- Facilitate the appointment of at least one lead worker representative for the workplace, which shall be done in consultation with the workers and/or representatives.
- Reinforcing key public health messages including:
 - Advice about hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing.
 - Reinforcing the importance of not going to work if displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or feeling unwell.
 - Routine and correct wearing of face coverings / masks in shared work areas and also during breaks, in locker and toilet areas and if travelling together to work.
 - Procedures and steps to be taken in the event of a suspected or positive case or outbreak in the workplace.
 - Enhanced levels of cleaning, especially shared equipment, common touch points etc.
 - Visible leadership including the appointment of COVID-19 Lead Worker Representative, and the continued review of precautions.
- Review, implement and maintain policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of employees who may have symptoms of COVID-19. The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in protecting the person involved, their colleagues or others at the workplace. Refer to:
 - Appendix 1 for Sample Procedure on Dealing with COVID-19 Suspect Cases at Work.
 - Appendix 2 for Sample Procedure for COVID-19 Confirmed Case at Work.
 - Appendix 3 for COVID-19 Employee Return to Work Process – Suspected / Confirmed Case.
- Implement Pre Return to Work measures including the return to work form. This form is required for employees who have been remote working and any new staff being recruited. This form should seek confirmation that the employee, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirm that the employee is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test A sample template Return to Work Form is attached at Appendix 4.
- Provide COVID-19 induction training for all employees. Induction training should also be provided to employees prior to returning to work premises following a period of remote working.
- Arrange for the putting in place of the necessary controls identified in the risk assessment to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace
- Ensure a log of contact/group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing.
- Promote use of the HSE COVID Tracker-19 App. Encourage employees to download the tracker app by visiting Apple's App Store or the Google Play Store [COVID Tracker App - Ireland's Coronavirus Contact Tracing App](#)
- Continue to advise employees of supports available. Employees should be reminded of the Employee Assistance Programmes or Occupational Health Service available. There are also



many online resources available which can be accessed at:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

- COVID-19 Posters & Resources. Continue to display information to raise awareness about preventing the spread of COVID-19. The HSE has prepared a range of posters, booklets and videos to raise awareness about preventing the spread of the virus and these can be downloaded from the following link: [COVID-19 posters and resources - HSE.ie](#)

Employees:

- Follow the public health advice and guidance, such as good hygiene practices, frequent hand washing, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing to protect themselves and their work colleagues against infection.
- Follow any specific measures in place to protect both yourself and to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace
- Complete and return the Return to Work form when requested to do so. The form is to confirm that you to the best of your knowledge:
 - do not have symptoms of COVID-19
 - are not self-isolating or restricting your movements
 - are not waiting on results of a COVID-19 test
 - have not recently returned from travel abroad

Note: For up to-date information on travel overseas, please refer to the Government website. A range of new measures and requirements, including mandatory quarantine for travel from certain countries, for those travelling to Ireland is available at www.gov.ie. It is important for employers and workers to keep up to-date on travel restrictions and requirements in and out of the country as these may be subject to change on a regular basis.
- Inform their Line Manager / HR if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work. For example, if they are in the very high-risk category.
- Make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own well-being.
- Do not attend the workplace if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. Self-isolate and contact GP promptly for further advice.
- Report to Line Manager immediately if any symptoms develop during work.
- Participate in any COVID-19 induction training provided.
- Keep up to date with public health information.
- Maintain the workplace contact tracing log, as required.
- Download and use the [COVID Tracker App - Ireland's Coronavirus Contact Tracing App](#)

Fitness for Work following COVID-19 Absence

The Health & Safety Authority has published *Interim Guidance for Employers on Fitness for Work following COVID-19 Absence*. This guidance sets out the steps involved in determining/assessing Fitness for Work of any employee, after an absence due to COVID-19 Infection or possible/suspected infection.

The Guidance outlines general return to work criteria for workers returning after an absence from work due to COVID-19 Infection or testing which allows for the timely and safe return of the employee to their normal role and responsibilities where possible. It also provides advice on assisting employees to return to work after COVID-19 infection.



The following scenarios are outlined in this guidance:

- A - Returning to work following a suspected case of COVID-19
- B- Returning to work following a confirmed case of COVID-19 without health complications
- C- Worker unfit to return to work following a confirmed case of COVID-19

The guidance and accompanying checklists can be found here:

[Fitness for Work following COVID-19 Absence - Health and Safety Authority \(hsa.ie\)](#)

See section below for further information regarding at risk/vulnerable employees returning to the workplace.

At Risk/Vulnerable Employee

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher. People at higher risk from COVID-19 should take extra care to protect themselves. There are two levels of higher risk:

- very high risk groups (also called extremely vulnerable);
- high risk groups.

People at greater risk need to take extra precautions. There is different advice to protect people in each group which is available here: [People at higher risk from COVID-19 - HSE.ie](#)

At Risk/Vulnerable employee should be enabled to work from home where possible. If an at risk or vulnerable employee cannot work from home and must be in the workplace, Local Authorities must ensure that they are supported to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from others in the workplace. In planning a return to the workplace for employees in the very high risk (extremely vulnerable) category, a fitness for work medical risk assessment may need be completed with the employee and Occupational Health Practitioner (where available) and/ or the employee's family doctor to determine fitness for work.

The employer must take account of the following:

- the risk profile of the workplace
- ability to maintain physical distancing in the workplace
- whether there is a requirement for public facing tasks and/or tasks where person would come into contact with others
- whether the tasks involved would expose person to a higher risk of infection.

The employee must follow up to date public health advice and the advice of medical advisors to plan a safe return to work. If, following a medical assessment, a person is unfit to return to work (workplace / home working environment), employer may consider temporary alternative roles until COVID-19 is no longer a risk to their health, where possible.

The Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19 in relation to working arrangements and leave associated with COVID-19 and provides advice in relation to high risk and very high categories of employees - <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/092fff-update-on-working-arrangements-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19-fo/>

Pregnancy and COVID-19

Employers and employees should continue to refer to the HSE website for the most up to date advice in relation to pregnancy and COVID-19 - [Read advice on pregnancy and COVID-19](#)



A risk assessment should be undertaken, which along with current public health advice, will form the basis for considering the level of risk of COVID-19 associated with the specific work environment and determining what measures need to be taken. Employees should engage with their Line Manager / HR to discuss any concerns they may have in relation to attendance at the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Temperature Screening Requirements for Workplaces

The Work Safely Protocol makes provision for implementing temperature testing in line with Public Health advice. Currently, there is no public health requirement to undertake temperature testing/screening in the workplace apart from in certain sectors and workplaces where public health have advised its use.

In the case where public health advice has issued and/or local public health officials have advised that temperature screening/testing is to be undertaken in a specific workplace, local authorities will then be required to implement that advice and employees will need to comply with these requirements.

Close Contacts in the Workplace

For contact tracing purposes, 'close contact' can mean:

- spending more than a total of 15 minutes of face-to-face contact within 2 metres of someone who has COVID-19, indoors or outdoors, over a 24 hour period;
- living in the same house or shared accommodation as someone who has COVID-19;
- spending more than 2 hours in an indoor space with someone who has COVID-19, for example, a workplace, classroom, social venue, household or transport.

Public health officials will, in the course of the contact tracing process, assess the physical shape of the room, presence of windows, surfaces, etc, to determine the extent to which everyone in the room are actual close contacts. Employers are encouraged to risk assess work practices in their organisations to minimise the potential of employees becoming close contacts of each other, also consider the implications of being designated as a close contacts and having to restrict their movements and to build in contingencies into their workforce planning accordingly.

- Information on Close contacts in the workplace: [Introduction - Health and Safety Authority \(hsa.ie\)](https://www.hsa.ie)
- Detailed HSE information on close contacts and casual contacts is available at: [Close contact and casual contact - HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie)
- Updated HSE advice is available at [If you are a close contact of COVID-19 - HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie) for:
 - Household close contacts.
 - Close contacts who have symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Close contacts who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
 - Close contacts who have had a previous positive test in the last 9 months.

Contact Tracing Log Requirements

All Local Authorities, and where possible individuals should keep a contact log to facilitate HSE contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 case in the workplace. The log should include details such as date, name, contact details, duration of contact (if possible).



Should an employee become COVID-19 positive, Public Health officials may request the log as part of the contact tracing process to determine who might qualify as a close contact. Where contact details are not readily available to managers (e.g. external contractors), these should also be recorded in case contact needs to be made.

Contact logs should record:

- teams/crews that work together - this can be facilitated through existing attendance recording mechanisms in place (e.g. clocking systems, timesheet, sign in sheets, SSWP's) and also,
- those who come into close contact with the team/crew (i.e. spending more than 15 minutes and within a distance of 2 Metres) should be noted (e.g. sign in sheet, visitor logbook).

This information should be maintained centrally and readily available upon request from the HSE. Logs should be held for 28 days, after which time they can be discarded.

The Data Protection Commissioner has provided advice on processing data for contact tracing: [Homepage | Data Protection Commission](#)

COVID Tracker App

The COVID Tracker is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- advise you on what to do to protect yourself and others.
- alert other app users that you were in close contact with, if you test positive for coronavirus.
- provide advice on what to do if you have symptoms.

Individuals can use the COVID Tracker app to:

- track how they are feeling each day.
- find out if have symptoms of COVID-19.
- get advice quickly on what to do.

Logging symptoms each day can:

- help you remember when you first became unwell.
- be a useful reminder if you need to later speak with your GP.
- help you to get trusted advice quickly.
- help to map and predict the spread of the virus.

The app is part of the HSE's contact tracing operation. This tool is invaluable for contact tracing where positive COVID-19 cases are identified in the community. The app can be downloaded from 'Apple's App Store' or the 'Google Play Store'. For more information see: [Why use the COVID –racker app - HSE.ie](#)

Health and Safety Documentation

Employers should review, risk assess their work practices and where possible mitigate the risk of transfer of COVID-19 within the workplace to as low a level as is reasonably practicable. Relevant health and safety documentation should be reviewed to address the risk of COVID-19 and the associated control measures required. Relevant changes to documentation should be communicated to employees. It is important to note that all existing Health and Safety provisions continue to apply during this time.

Risk assessments and method statements for all work on site should be reviewed as required to address the risk of COVID-19 and the associated control measures required.



Health & Safety Authority Checklists

Health & Safety Authority template checklists are available to assist in reviewing existing measures in place. These are all available to download at the links below:

Checklist 1: Planning and Preparing Opening or re-opening the workplace after closure	checklist_1_30nov20.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 2: Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures	checklist_no_2_1dec20.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 3: COVID-19 Induction	checklist_no_3_1dec20.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 4: Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19	checklist_no_4_14dec20.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 5: Cleaning and Disinfection	checklist_no_5_1dec20.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 6: Employee	checklist_no_6_8dec20.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 7: Lead Worker Rep	checklist_no_7_1dec2020.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 8: Ventilation	checklist_no_8_ventilation_july_2021.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 9: Returning to the office	employers-checklist-no-9--returning-to-the-office-12-aug-2021.pdf (hsa.ie)
Checklist 10: Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADTs)	employers-checklist-no-10---radts--12-aug-2021.pdf (hsa.ie)

Well-Being in the Workplace

Infectious disease outbreaks like coronavirus (COVID-19), can be worrying and can affect your mental health. Employees should be reminded of the Employee Assistance Programmes or Occupational Health Service available.

There are also many online resources available which can be accessed at the links below:

- <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

A number of service providers offer online, and phone mental health supports and services, see link:

- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/news/supports-and-services-during-covid-19.html>

The government has also launched the “*Keep Well*” campaign which aims to support people and communities to mind their physical and mental health over the coming months. The Government Plan COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021 - The Path Ahead highlights the important role that individual and community resilience will play in contributing to our ongoing response to COVID-19.



The “Keep Well” campaign provides guidelines, information, and tips on keeping well and can be accessed here:

- <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/healthy-ireland/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/healthyireland/>
-

The HSA has a range of supports, resources and advice such as:

- dealing with stress as a result of the changes in a worker’s personal and/or working life during COVID-19 [Resources for Managing Health and Wellbeing \(Podcasts and Video\) - Health and Safety Authority \(hsa.ie\)](#)
- a free online risk assessment tool for addressing work related stress: [Home | Work Positive](#)

COVID-19 Communication

Local Authorities should use multiple ways to communicate to and inform employees about COVID-19 prevention measures, policies, and procedures to increase understanding of information and recommendations.

COVID 19 Signage

COVID-19 signage should be prominently displayed at various locations in buildings. Where feasible, television screens and monitors can be used to communicate these messages in reception and common areas.

The HSE has prepared a range of posters, booklets and videos to raise awareness about preventing the spread of the virus. These can be downloaded from the following link: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

Layer Up Campaign

Government has updated the public health advice posters. Layer Up is a cross-Government campaign which encourages us to layer up on the behaviours to protect from COVID-19.

A series of posters are available for downloading at [gov.ie - Layer up: Posters and guidance for you to use to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

Lead Worker Representative

The Government’s Work Safely Protocol requires that each workplace will appoint at least one Lead Worker Representative to work with the employer to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The LWR person should receive the necessary training and the employer should also have mechanisms in place for regular communications with the LWR and to address concerns raised.

Lead worker representative(s) should:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining physical distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace



The identity of the person or persons appointed should be clearly communicated within the workplace. They should also receive the relevant and necessary training. The HSA has prepared an online Lead Worker Representative training course to help those appointed as a Lead Worker Representative. It can be accessed at:

The role of the Lead Worker Representative is particularly important as it will ensure a collective response between employees and the employer in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Collaborative and open engagement between employers and workers ensures that workplaces operate in a manner which prevents the spread of COVID-19.

Lead Worker Rep course available here: [Lead Worker Representative - Overview \(hsa.ie\)](#)

Lead Worker Rep information poster available here: [lead_worker_representative_poster_a4 .pdf \(hsa.ie\)](#)

Delivery of Training during COVID-19

- Training should take place remotely where possible and if available. Utilise online courses where available e.g. Manual Handling for indoor employees, COVID-19 Induction.
- Where online training is not available, and it is deemed essential to have training activities in person, this should be based on a risk assessment and ability to comply with government advice and relevant sectoral guidance.
- Delivery of all SOLAS Training Courses must comply with “*The SOLAS Standard Operational Pandemic Containment Guidelines*”.
- Sectoral guidance should be followed in relation to the measures to be taken in preparation and prior to training and during its delivery.
- COVID-19 Enhanced Protective Measures – Local Authorities should ensure that all protective measures (physical distancing, enhanced cleaning regimes, hand sanitising etc) are in place before facilitating training.
- It is recommended that attendees wear a face covering for the duration of the training. This is not a replacement for essential personal behaviours like cough/sneeze etiquette or sanitising hands regularly, but an additional protective measure.

Travelling for Essential Business or Work Purposes

For advice on travelling for work purposes see COVID-19 Travel advice on [gov.ie https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/75d92-covid-19-travel-advice/](https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/75d92-covid-19-travel-advice/) and follow the Department of Foreign Affairs advice at <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/general-covid-19-travel-advisory/>

It is important for employers and employees to keep up to-date on travel restrictions and requirements in and out of the country as these may be subject to change on a regular basis.

Compliance with COVID-19 Control Measures

The Chief Executive may assign responsibility for COVID –19 compliance to a specific person(s) for the duration of the pandemic. This will be a decision for each individual Local Authority. Monitoring compliance will require ensuring that physical distancing, hygiene rules and COVID–19 control measures are being adhered to and maintained in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19.

It is important to note that compliance with COVID-19 control measures is the responsibility of everyone and must be supported by all in order to protect health and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Compliance checks with COVID-19 may include checking the following measures are in place and being adhered to:

- Adequate signage.
- Physical Distancing.
- Hand Washing.



- Cough/Sneeze Etiquette.
- Safety Documentation.
- Risk Assessment.
- Increased cleaning regimes where required.
- Staggering breaks, lunch times, etc.
- Correct use and disposal of PPE.
- Use of face coverings as per public health advice.
- Adequate ventilation.

Reporting Requirements if an employee contracts COVID-19

COVID-19 is reportable under the Infectious Diseases (Amendment) Regulations 2020 by a medical practitioner who becomes aware of or suspects an instance of such disease. Such a report should be sent to the Medical Officer of Health/Director of Public Health at the local Public Health Department. There is a requirement for an employer to notify the HSA if an employee contracts COVID-19 under the Biological Agents Regulations (S.I. No. 572 of 2013) in certain circumstances. Where a risk of occupational exposure to COVID-19 is identified, as a result of working with the SARSCoV-2 virus, an occupational health and safety biological agent risk assessment (BARA) should also be completed. For example, a BARA would be required for employees working directly with infected patients/ service users, laboratories and testing facilities handling the virus and waste companies handling SARs-CoV-2 contaminated waste etc. Further information on this reporting requirement is available here: [Introduction - Health and Safety Authority \(hsa.ie\)](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Biological_Agents/).

The Biological Agents Regulations (S.I. No. 572 of 2013) and associated Code of Practice have been updated to take account of the addition of the virus, SARS-CoV-2, as a risk group III biological agent to Annex III of the Directive (Commission Directive 2000/54/EC). These Regulations and associated Code of Practice lay down the minimum requirements for protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work. Further information on these regulations along with a downloadable version of the new Code of Practice is available here: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Biological_Agents/

Section 5 - COVID-19 Key Control Measures - Office Spaces

General Principles to be applied during COVID-19

- 1. Reduce** the number of persons in any work area to comply with the 2-metre physical distancing guideline recommended by the HSE.
- 2. Review** - work practices, mindful of close working arrangements. Employees should be encouraged to self-assess their task for physical distancing and transmission points.
- 3. Supervise** – monitoring compliance to ensure physical distancing, hygiene rules and COVID –19 control measures are being adhered to and maintained in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19.



Building Entrances

- Hand sanitizers should be made available at main entry / exit points and also at locations throughout the premises.
- Ensure a visible display of HSE Covid19 safety notices, available to download here: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

Public Counters

The following should be considered for public counters

- Manage physical interaction with the public as much as is reasonably practicable through revised working arrangements, for example advise the public to do business online, by phone or by appointment.
- Employees should avoid spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of members of the public.
- Provide hand sanitisers at entry/exit points.
- Consideration should be given to the installation of temporary physical barriers and clear markings, for the duration of the pandemic, to minimise contact between employees and the public and to ensure that queues do not form as they wait to be served.
- Implement an enhanced cleaning regime paying particular attention to high touch points.
- Display the advice on the COVID-19 measures in visible locations
- Implement and adopt public health regulations in relation to the use of face coverings. Locations where faces coverings must be worn are set out at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

Office Arrangements

The recommendations in relation to Office Spaces are as follows:

- Determine the occupancy levels for each work location ensuring that physical distancing in line with public health guidance can be achieved.
- Manage office layout as required to ensure individuals are seated 2m apart e.g. in a 4-pod station only 2 diagonally should be occupied at any one time, unless 2m distance can be achieved in the pod with normal seating arrangements.
- In situations where a 2-metre separation cannot be achieved, consideration to be given to installing temporary physical barriers, such as clear plastic guards between employees, for the duration of the pandemic.
- Promote a clean desk policy and ensure that employees implement a practice of cleaning their workstation at the start and end of their working day.
- Provide essential cleaning materials for employees to keep their own workspace clean.



- Regularly clean common contact surfaces in offices (for example, photocopiers, laptops, telephone, handsets, desks). Ensure that cleaning materials and waste disposal options are provided.
- It is important to reduce the movement of employees between offices/floors and when discussions are needed, do so by phone or email where possible. Promote use of emails, phones and I.T software rather than face to face contact in the office.
- Limit, if possible, non-essential visitors attending offices.
- Modify use of hot desks to ensure that these are made available to identified staff and have appropriate cleaning materials available for employees to clean the area before using.
- The sharing of office equipment should be avoided. Where shared equipment is necessary, it must be cleaned and disinfected after each shift or any time the equipment is transferred to another employee.
- Offices should be well ventilated, and windows kept open where possible – see ventilation section for further information.
- With the exception of fire doors, doors should be kept open where possible, when the building is occupied, to reduce persons touching door handles and so on.
- Minimise handling of paper documents and cash where possible.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

The spread of the virus is most likely when infected people are in close contact so the risk of getting COVID-19 is higher in crowded and poorly ventilated spaces where infected people spend long periods of time together in close proximity. It is important to maximise ventilation in areas where people are in close contact. While large droplets containing the virus will settle onto the surrounding surfaces within seconds, smaller particles can stay suspended for longer. Dilution of indoor air by opening windows and doors or using mechanical ventilation systems can lower the airborne concentration and remove these smaller particles from the air.

Reoccupying workplaces should not, in most cases, require new ventilation systems but improvements to ventilation will help increase the quantity of clean air and reduce the risk of exposure to airborne concentrations of the virus.

Ventilation refers to the movement of outdoor air into a building, and the circulation of that air within the building or room. This can be achieved through natural means (e.g. opening a window) or mechanical means (e.g. a central heating, ventilation and air conditioning). Adequate ventilation reduces how much virus is in the air. The ability to adequately ventilate an indoor setting is a key mitigating measure to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

While ventilation reduces the amount of virus in the air and the aerosol risk, it will have minimal impact on droplet transmission where people are within 2 metres of each other, or contact transmission (touching surfaces), which is why it is not a standalone measure and continued adherence to other public health advice is absolutely essential. Ventilation should therefore not be seen as a replacement for the other infection prevention and control measures advised such as hand-washing, surface cleaning, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, wearing masks/face coverings and vaccination. In addition, the continued need for employees to stay at home if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell is crucial too. All infection and prevention control and other measures should continue to be adhered to and implemented.

The primary principle for improving ventilation is to minimise transmission, so that the level of “fresh” outside air should be maximised therefore reducing the level of recirculated air in the workspace, unless high-efficiency particulate filters (HEPA) are installed in the ventilation system.



Regulatory Requirements in the Workplace

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 require employers to make sure there's an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This can be done by:

- natural ventilation which relies on passive air flow through windows, doors and air vents that can be fully or partially opened. This is the simplest way to ensure adequate air quality in poorly ventilated areas,
- mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts including window fans to bring in fresh air from outside, or
- a combination of natural and mechanical ventilation, for example where mechanical ventilation relies on natural ventilation to maximise fresh air. Any planned changes to ventilation should consider regulatory requirements under building, food and/or health and safety regulations along with other consequences such as cost, energy use, noise and security

Types of Ventilation

Natural ventilation should be maximised through the introduction of fresh air into the workplace. Where possible, windows and doors should be opened on a regular basis to allow for a flow of air throughout buildings. When rooms are being cleaned windows and/or doors, where appropriate, should be opened. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure security and safety measures.

Cross-ventilation is a good option for window ventilation as it facilitates the quick exchange of room air for fresh air through widely opened windows opposite to each other where possible. Propping open internal doors may increase air movement and ventilation rate. (Note: fire doors should not be propped open unless fitted with approved automatic closers so that they function as fire doors in the event of an alarm or fire).

Mechanical ventilation - While the use of HVAC systems can provide comfortable environmental conditions (temperature and humidity) and clean air in indoor settings such as buildings and vehicles, it is important to check ventilation systems to ensure that there is an adequate supply of fresh air (from a clean source) and that recirculation of untreated air is avoided. There is no need to switch off air conditioning to manage the risk of COVID-19. It is advised to speak to the building engineer or system manufacturer before implementing any of the changes or recommendations below relating to mechanical ventilation.

- Disable air recirculation system settings, where possible.
- Keep ventilation running all the time regardless of building occupancy, even if on a low setting when building unoccupied. Ensure that demand controlled ventilation settings are turned off where necessary.
- Use the correct filters as per the manufacturer's specifications.
- Ensure regular maintenance of HVAC systems.
- Ensure those who are responsible for maintaining and servicing are trained and competent.
- Avoid the use of ceiling mounted, desk and portable fans where possible as they may only recirculate the virus droplets rather than removing them.
- Extend the hours of nominal HVAC operations particularly in relation to before the building is occupied.



- Avoid directing air flow directly onto individuals or across groups of individuals as this may facilitate transmission.
- Ensure extractor fans in bathrooms are functional and running when in use. Ensure that such fans are not recirculating air to other poorly ventilated areas of the workplace where workers are exposed.
- Ensure that any changes to ventilation systems introduced do not have negative impacts on worker's comfort levels or do not result in non-compliance with occupational health and safety or building regulations.

Assessing ventilation in the workplace

Determining ventilation of enclosed workplace settings should be considered as part of the workplace risk assessment. The priority for the risk assessment is to identify areas of the workplace that are usually occupied and are poorly ventilated. These are also the areas that should be prioritised for improvement to reduce the risk of aerosol transmission of the virus. A poorly ventilated area may include:

- Areas where people work and where there is no mechanical ventilation or natural ventilation such as open windows, doors or vents etc.
- Areas that use mechanical ventilation if the system recirculates air and has no outdoor air supply in place.
- Areas that are stuffy or smell bad. There are various recommendations made for what the appropriate air changes per hour (ACH) could be for different indoor settings. However, the overall objective should be to increase the ventilation in the workspace thereby improving the existing ventilation without impacting on the workers'/occupants' comfort.

Risk Assessment

The following should be considered when developing a workplace risk assessment:

- *How do you currently provide ventilation (fresh air) in your workplace?* Most ventilation is provided by natural or mechanical means or a combination of both of these.
- *How many workers occupy or use the area(s)?* The more people who use or occupy an area the greater the risk that an infected person is there, increasing possible exposure to aerosol transmission. Ensuring that workers who have symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell remain at home is key here. In addition, reducing the number of people who use or occupy an area can also reduce this risk.
- *How much time do workers spend in the area(s)?* The longer workers spend in an area, the greater the risk. This risk can be minimised by encouraging working from home where possible.
- *What work activities take place in the area(s)?* Activities that make you breathe deeper, for example physical exertion or shouting, may increase generation of aerosols and increase the risk of transmission.
- *How large is the area(s)?* The larger the area, the lower the risk as the virus droplets will be diluted and less likely to build up.
- *Are there any features in the workplace which might affect ventilation?* For example, is there large machinery in use which might impact cross ventilation air flow?
- *Do you use open windows?*
 - Cross-ventilation is a good option for window ventilation as it facilitates the quick exchange of room air for fresh air through widely opened windows opposite to each other, where possible.
 - Propping open internal doors may increase air movement and ventilation rate
 - Fire doors should not be propped open unless fitted with approved automatic closers so that they function as fire doors in the event of an alarm or fire.
 - Airing rooms as frequently as you can improves ventilation. Open all the doors and



windows fully to maximise the ventilation in a room. This may be best done when the room or area is unoccupied.

- *Do you use desk or ceiling fans?* Desk or ceiling fans should not be used in poorly ventilated areas as they may only recirculate the virus droplets rather than remove them from the area. Fans should only be used in areas where there is a single occupant.
- *Does the workplace have Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)?* Where workplaces have Local Exhaust Ventilation, the make-up air should ideally come from outdoor air rather than from adjacent rooms. The Health and Safety Authority guidance on LEV is a useful resource for advice and guidance and it is available here.
- *Does the workplace have multiple or complex ventilation systems in place?* For example, different systems on different floors or areas. In such cases, the CIBSE Ventilation Guidance can provide additional information. In addition, it may be necessary to retain the services of a ventilation engineer to provide expert advice on what modifications are needed to the mechanical system to reduce any potential transmission risks. Before embarking on use of a service engineer, all other mitigation factors such as reducing occupancy etc., should be considered first

The employer should also consider the ventilation systems in vehicles used by employees who may travel for work. The employer should advise that windows in work vehicles are kept open and that ventilation systems are not set to recirculate air.

Use of carbon dioxide (CO₂) monitors as a proxy to identify poorly ventilated areas

Checking CO₂ levels may also help determine if ventilation is poor in an area where people work. For example, where there is no mechanical ventilation or natural ventilation in place or for areas that are stuffy or smell bad. However, while checking CO₂ levels may be useful in a number of limited settings, they are less effective in work areas used by few people or in large workspaces.

Checking CO₂ levels is also not a good proxy for transmission risk in spaces where there is additional air cleaning (e.g., HEPA filtration) as these remove the virus but not exhaled CO₂. Additional research is needed to determine overall how levels of CO₂ can provide a more reliable indicator to show that ventilation is adequate to mitigate transmission risks.

Always follow the sensor manufacturer's advice and instructions on care and use of the sensor at all times and ensure adequate training is in place on their use and maintenance.

Judgement and caution are needed when using CO₂ monitors and interpreting CO₂ monitoring values. It should not be assumed that a ventilation rate at a particular CO₂ concentration is sufficient to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2 as other factors, for example, exposure time, number of infected persons present, and airflow are also relevant. CO₂ concentrations above 1400 – 1500 ppm are likely to be indicative of poor ventilation and most ventilation guidance documents recommend maintaining CO₂ concentrations below 1000 ppm for effective ventilation. Outdoor air concentrations of CO₂ are approximately 400 - 480 parts per million (ppm). Where there are high CO₂ concentration levels or the levels are increasing upwards towards the indicative values of poor ventilation, then mitigation measures to either increase ventilation or adjust occupancy should be taken.

CO₂ monitors should be CE marked and based on non-dispersive infrared (NDIR) technology and have a measurement range up to at least 2,000 ppm. Some sensors have a 'traffic light' display which is a useful visual aid. Do not opt for sensors that measure either a CO₂ "equivalent" or indirectly.



CO2 monitors should never be used as a means to avoid adherence to the COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures recommended by Public Health.

Other equipment and systems

Local air cleaning may be beneficial in reducing risks in some spaces, particularly where it is not possible to increase ventilation using natural or mechanical means as set out above.

The most suitable types to use are those with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA filter). In particular, HEPA filtration systems are generally cheaper, easier to maintain, require minimal training to operate correctly and do not create secondary health concerns. HEPA filtration systems incorporating ultraviolet or other ionising radiation systems are best suited to more specialist applications and settings and require competent advice from qualified personnel prior to their installation.

These devices are usually either stand-alone and they can be deployed in any space or installed in a manner similar to a local air conditioning unit. While these devices can increase the air flow, their effectiveness will depend on the volume of the room/area and the flow rate through the device. Therefore, it is important that if considering this as an option the device should be of a suitable specification for the relevant area.

Their introduction and use in the workplace should be done as part of an overall assessment of the existing ventilation systems in place to show that their use is necessary. There are also drawbacks in using these devices – noise emissions are likely and these impacts need to be risk assessed before using them.

In addition, operators need to be properly trained to use and maintain them. As with CO2 monitors, use of such systems are supplementary in nature and should not be seen as a substitute for Public Health advice or ventilation. By itself, a local air cleaner is not enough to protect people from COVID-19. IPC measures are still the principal ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Further guidance and information on ventilation is available at:

- HPSC – Guidance on non-healthcare settings - [Guidance on non HCBuilding ventilation during COVID-19.pdf \(hpsc.ie\)](#)
- WHO - A roadmap to improve and ensure good ventilation in the context of COVID-19 across healthcare, non-healthcare and residential settings. Provides useful flow charts to assist in decision making about ventilation - [Roadmap to improve and ensure good indoor ventilation in the context of COVID-19 \(who.int\)](#)
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, S.I. No. 299 of 2007 [General Application Regulations 2007 - Health and Safety Authority \(hsa.ie\)](#)
- UK Sage Group – guidance on role of ventilation in controlling SARS-CoV-2 transmission <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies>
- Federal Environment Agency, Indoor Air Hygiene Commission (IRK) [Proper airing reduces risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection | Umweltbundesamt](#)

Cleaning Arrangements

- COVID-19 can last for several hours on surfaces in the absence of effective cleaning.
- COVID-19 can survive for:
 - Up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel.
 - Less than 4 hours on copper.
 - Less than 24 hours on cardboard.



- It is essential that workplaces maintain thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. If disinfection is required, it must be performed in addition to cleaning, not as a substitute for cleaning.
- Implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, paying particular attention also to washroom facilities, communal spaces and high touch points such as table tops, counters, desks, equipment, communication devices, handrails, door handles, door release buttons, etc.
- Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.
- Provide employees with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).
- Increase number of waste collection points and ensure these are emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.
- A cleaning log should be maintained to record the date and time of cleaning in the various buildings/offices/toilets etc.
- In an instance of an employee becoming COVID-19 positive, extra steps should be taken in the workplace to protect from further infection from the virus. These include additional cleaning measures of work areas that the employee may have been in contact with and additional precautions for waste disposal.
- In relation to routine disposal of waste in the workplace, waste such as used tissues, wipes and cleaning material should be disposed of in the regular domestic waste stream. Hands should be cleaned immediately after disposal of these items.
- In relation to disposal of waste from a person who becomes symptomatic while at work, this waste should be disposed of in a disposable refuse bag. When the waste bag is three quarters full, it should be tied securely, placed into a second refuse bag and tied again. The bag should then be left in a safe location for three days (72 hours) before putting out for collection.

Further details and advice on cleaning and waste disposal for different work sectors are available from hpsc.ie. Additional information is now also available in the HPSC Cleaning Guidance for Use in Non-Healthcare Settings which covers routine cleaning advice in the absence of a known symptomatic or confirmed case of COVID 19 and for situations where COVID-19 is suspected/confirmed.

The HSA Checklist on Cleaning and Disinfection can be found here [HSA Employer Checklist No. 5 on Cleaning and Disinfection](#)

Wearing of Face Coverings

Employees who are feeling unwell or have symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend the workplace. Observing physical distancing, appropriate hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette are the most important measures individuals can take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 in the workplace.

Face coverings should not be used in lieu of following physical distancing or proper hand and cough etiquette, but they may be used in addition to these protective measures, especially where maintaining physical distancing is difficult.

Face coverings are required by law in certain settings such as on public transport, in shops and in some other settings as outlined here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>.

Face coverings are also recommended when staying 2 metres apart from people is difficult.

Government has recently updated advice on the wearing of face masks / coverings in the workplace,



with an emphasis on the routine and correct wearing of masks in shared work areas and also during breaks, in locker and toilet areas and if travelling together to work.

Employees should be advised to wear appropriate face masks/coverings when in shared / communal areas as an extra preventative measure, e.g.

- Entering and leaving the workplace
- Not sitting at your desk/work area/base or moving between floors/areas/bases
- Public access areas of buildings, including receptions/foyers and public counters.
- In locker rooms, toilets and other welfare facilities
- Moving around work locations
- During breaks (prior to and after eating).

If any employee has a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering they should inform their Line Manager. Refer to this link for further information - [When to wear a face covering - HSE.ie](#)

Wearing of cloth face coverings may help prevent people who do not know they have COVID-19 (Coronavirus) from spreading it to others. It is important that while wearing a face covering, individuals still do the important things necessary to prevent the spread of the virus.

These include:

- Physical distancing
- covering mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing and sneezing
- washing hands properly and often
- not touching eyes, nose or mouth if hands are not clean.

If a face covering is worn it should be clean and should not be shared or handled by other colleagues. HSE provides advice in relation to the correct wearing of face coverings and the exemptions that apply: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/face-masks-disposable-gloves.html>

Please continue to refer to [gov.ie - When to wear face coverings and how to make them \(www.gov.ie\)](#) for the most up to date advice in relation to wearing of face coverings.

Face Visors

HSE advice is that visors are not the best option for protecting yourself and others from COVID-19 and should only be worn in certain circumstances see [hse.ie](#) for further information . See [hpsc.ie](#) for a summary document on the [Efficacy of visors compared with masks in the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 in non-healthcare settings](#)

Visors may stop some spread of droplets from your nose or mouth. This is better than not wearing any face covering. Visors should only be worn if you have an illness or impairment that makes wearing a face covering difficult or if you are dealing with people with particular needs (e.g., hard of hearing). Where visors are used, they should cover the entire face (above the eyes to below the chin and wrap around from ear to ear) and be correctly applied. Reusable visors should be cleaned after each use and then stored in a clean place until needed.

Use of Hand Sanitisers

Regular and thorough handwashing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds can help to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses and bacteria. It should be carried out in line with public health advice. -based hand sanitisers are highly flammable and must not be stored or used near heat or a naked flame.



Instructions on safe use will be contained on the product label and further information will be available within the products safety data sheet. It is important that employers and workers follow the safe use information for the product.

Further advice and supports are available at <https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Chemicals/>

Note: IPB has issued a Risk Management Circular Hand Sanitiser (Flammable Liquid) Safety.

Choosing a Hand Sanitiser

Note: Hand sanitising gels are biocides and fall under the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) – Regulation (EU) 528/2012. The Pesticide Registration and Control Division (PRCD) of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is the competent authority for biocides in Ireland. Only biocidal products listed on the DAFM biocide product register are legal to market and use in Ireland. Employers should ensure that all sanitisers and disinfectants they have in the workplace carry a PCS 9xxxx, PCS 1xxxxx, IE/BPA 7xxxx or an EU-000xxx-xx registration number on the label. Each product registered by DAFM will carry a unique registration number specific to that particular product. If the product label does not contain any of these number formats, the employer should not purchase or use the product. To confirm the biocide can be used on the Irish market, the employer can check the register of products online at Biocidal Product Registers. Further information from DAFM on Sanitisers and Disinfectants is available by contacting them at biocideenforcement@agriculture.gov.ie or at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine website. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 must contain a minimum of 60% alcohol. Nonalcohol based hand sanitiser may also be used. However, in choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against Coronavirus.

Meetings

- The Work Safely Protocol advises that where possible, meetings should be conducted online as much as possible using online remote means.
- Where face to face meetings take place, these must be arranged in line with the Government advice that is in place at the time of holding the meeting.
- The numbers attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times. The length of the meeting and the numbers attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times. Proper ventilation, for example open windows, should also be in place.
- Attendance in a meeting room for a prolonged period may result in attendees being considered close contacts should an outbreak occur.

Internal Staff Meetings

- Face to Face interaction must be reduced to the absolute minimum, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Meeting should be conducted as much as possible using online remote means.
- Where face to face meetings are necessary, ensure the 2m physical distance is maintained at all times and keep room well ventilated.
- Limit the attendance numbers to the absolute minimum. Capacity will depend on the venue and the ability to physically distance and ensure other protective measures are in place.
- Keep the meeting time as brief as possible. Communication and preparation ahead of the meeting should endeavour to reduce the time required at the actual meeting
- No hand shaking or close contact with other individuals.



- Adhere to General Hygiene Procedures and ensure you have washed/sanitised your hands before going into a meeting
- Welfare facilities/Hand sanitiser / wipes to be made available at / adjacent to the meeting room.
- Record of meeting attendees to be kept for contact tracing purposes.

Meetings with External Parties / Members of the Public

- Face to Face interaction must be reduced to the absolute minimum so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Use technological alternatives (for example, Telephone or Video conferencing) where possible.
- Where face to face meetings are necessary:
 - Maximum occupancy and seating capacities to be assessed to ensure the recommended physical distancing of 2m can be achieved for meeting venue.
 - Capacity will depend on the venue and the ability to physically distance and ensure other protective measures are in place. The overall numbers at any one time within the meeting facility should be in accordance with the Government's *Reframing the Challenge, Continuing our Recovery and Reconnecting* which can be accessed at: [gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Reframing the challenge, continuing our recovery and reconnecting \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)
 - Prior to the meeting, attendees should complete a COVID Self Declaration / Health Declaration Form.
 - If meeting is being hosted in an external venue check local guidelines in place.
 - Ensure welfare facilities / hand sanitiser / wipes available at or adjacent to the meeting room.
 - Ensure attendees are advised that they must not attend the meeting if they have any COVID-19 symptoms or feel unwell (or suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19).
 - Display COVID-19 posters prominently.
 - Ensure cleaning schedule in place.
 - Ensure meeting room is set up to facilitate 2m physical distancing.
 - Provide one-way systems for access/egress routes where practicable.
 - Keep meeting rooms well ventilated during use ideally through open windows.
 - No tea/ coffees or food.
 - No roaming mics.
 - A record of attendees and contact details must be kept for contact tracing purposes. Use of own pen for sign in or alternatively one person to record contact details.
 - Attendees to be encouraged to bring minimal personal belongings into the meeting room to avoid risk of contamination.
 - Attendees to be informed at the start of the meeting, the COVID-19 control measures in place.
 - Strictly **no** Hand Shaking (or any physical contact).
 - Aim to keep hardcopy document handling to the absolute minimum, use of electronic means as an alternative, where possible.

Canteen and Eating Arrangements

- A risk assessment should be carried out to determine the appropriate number of employees who can be facilitated in canteen, kitchen or break area at any one time.
- Put in place a seating and table arrangement which complies with the 2m physical distancing
- Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact.
- Employees should sanitise their hands before and after eating.
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the canteen/ kitchen entrance and exit.



- Implement a queue management system with correct distance markings to avoid queues at food counters, checkouts, and tray return points.
- COVID-19 information posters should be prominently displayed.
- Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible.
- All rubbish should be disposed in a suitable bin.
- Tables should be cleared by employees when finished eating and cleaned between each use.
- Employees should not share objects that touch their mouth, for example, bottles or cups.
- If possible, use packaged items, tea / coffee / sugar / stirrers and so on.

Toilet Facilities

- Employees must adhere to physical distancing when using toilet facilities
- Ensure adequate provision of soap and hand washing facilities.
- Provide clear pictorial guides for washing hands (See HSE Posters advice <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>)
- Review and enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities, particularly frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, locks, taps and the toilet flushing mechanisms.
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

Passenger Lift Usage

- Encourage employees not to use lifts in buildings if possible and to use the stairs instead.
- If using passenger lift, ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- Ensure signage informs lift users of rules of usage for the duration of the pandemic.

Travel to / from Work

- Where an employee exhibits any signs of COVID-19 or has been exposed to a confirmed case, they should not travel to work.
- Where possible, walk or cycle, to and from work.
- Where possible, travel alone in your private vehicle.
- Parking arrangements for additional cars and bicycles may need to be considered as alternative travel arrangements may be made by employees during this time.
- If availing of public transport, wear a face covering, sit 2m apart from others and minimise contact with frequently touched surfaces, handles, roof straps, isolation bars etc. Transport for Ireland has [updated public transport information](#).
- Practice personal protective measures by avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth and cleaning your hands often.
- Sanitise hands on arrival at work location.

First Aid Responder

In the event that first aid is required in the workplace it may not be possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres. Employees who are designated First Aid Responders will be provided with a briefing on infection prevention and control principles including hand hygiene and appropriate use of personal protective clothing and equipment when delivering first aid.

Further advice on first aid is available from the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC): <https://www.phecit.ie/>

Refer to Appendix 7 for a more detailed outline of care provision by First Aid Responders during COVID-19.



Managing Legionella Risks during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The HSA has produced guidance to support employers with control of Legionella bacteria during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic. It highlights the requirement to continue managing Legionella control to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease. A copy of the guidance can be found [COVID-19 Legionella Information Note \(hsa.ie\)](#)



Section 6 - COVID-19 Key Control Measures - Outdoor Activities

General Site Work Principles during COVID-19

- 1. Reduce** - the number of persons-in any work area to comply with the 2 metre physical distancing guideline recommended by the HSE (e.g. relocate workers to other tasks, review work schedule and task sequence, consider staggered starting and finishing times etc.).
- 2. Review** - work practices, mindful of close working arrangements. Employees should be encouraged to self-assess their task for physical distancing and transmission points.
- 3. Supervise** – monitoring compliance is to ensure physical distancing, hygiene rules and COVID –19 control measures are being adhered to and maintained in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19.

Using Council Vehicles

- The occupancy level of vehicles is to be minimised and single occupancy for vehicles is preferable.
- The number of workers who share a vehicle – at the same time or one after the one – should be kept to a minimum as far as is reasonably practicable, for example by assigning a vehicle to a fixed team or pod.
- If more than one per person per vehicle, the following measures should be followed:
 - Employees should not enter a work vehicle with others if they have any symptoms or have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - Sit as far apart as the vehicle allows and where possible passenger to travel in the back of vehicle at left passenger side. Keep windows of vehicles open, at least partially.
Note - ventilation systems should not be set to recirculate air.
 - Practice good respiratory hygiene.
 - Sanitise hands before and after entering / exiting the vehicle.
 - Face covering to be worn.
- Key touch points in vehicles are to be wiped regularly (e.g. door handles, steering wheel, handbrake, gear stick, radio controls) and hands sanitised before and after entering / exiting the vehicle. Adequate supplies of hygienic wipes and hand sanitiser must be available for this purpose.
- Where an employee decides to eat their lunch in their vehicle, they should be advised to do so on their own to avoid possibility of infection from others.

Note: IPB has agreed to extend the Local Authorities motor fleet policy to provide business use for those employees using personal vehicles for the period of the emergency. The cover level is agreed Comprehensive Cover. Management should keep a record of the employee’s name and private insurance policy number.

Recommended Maximum Road Vehicle Seating Arrangements (Ref: CIF Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic SOP)		
Number of Seats	Max Number of Occupants	Seating Arrangements
2	1	1 driver
3	2	1 in the driving seat 1 in the far passenger seat
5	2	1 in the driving seat 1 in the far passenger seat

RECOMMENDED ROAD VEHICLE OCCUPANCY



Ref CIF SOP V7

General Site Work Activities

- Employee should not attend site if they have COVID-19 symptoms and should be advised to leave the site and return to vehicle and follow HSE advice should they become unwell while at work.
- Reduce the number of people in any work area to comply with the 2 metre physical distancing guideline (e.g. review work schedule and task sequence, consider staggered starting and finishing times etc.)
- Agree work teams / crews to limit movement of staff between teams / crews.
- Determine how many can use welfare and changing / shower facilities at a time ensuring that physical distancing can be achieved.
- Ensure physical distancing by avoiding congregating in canteens / depots/ yards
- Review work practices, being particularly mindful of close working activities.
- Include COVID-19 controls in the site induction.
- Supervise to specifically monitor adherence to physical distancing.
- Regular cleaning of site welfare facilities.
- Individual PPE where required must be kept separately from other employees and under no circumstances should it be shared.
- Stagger Breaks.
- Inform line management of any works where the 2m physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- All shared tools and equipment to be sanitised before and after use.
- Comply with the rules regarding sharing of vehicles. Sanitise contact points regularly.
- Use ongoing toolbox talks to heighten and maintain awareness of employee responsibilities in the workplace in relation to physical distancing.
- Display HSE COVID-19 information notices at fixed sites.
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser must be available.

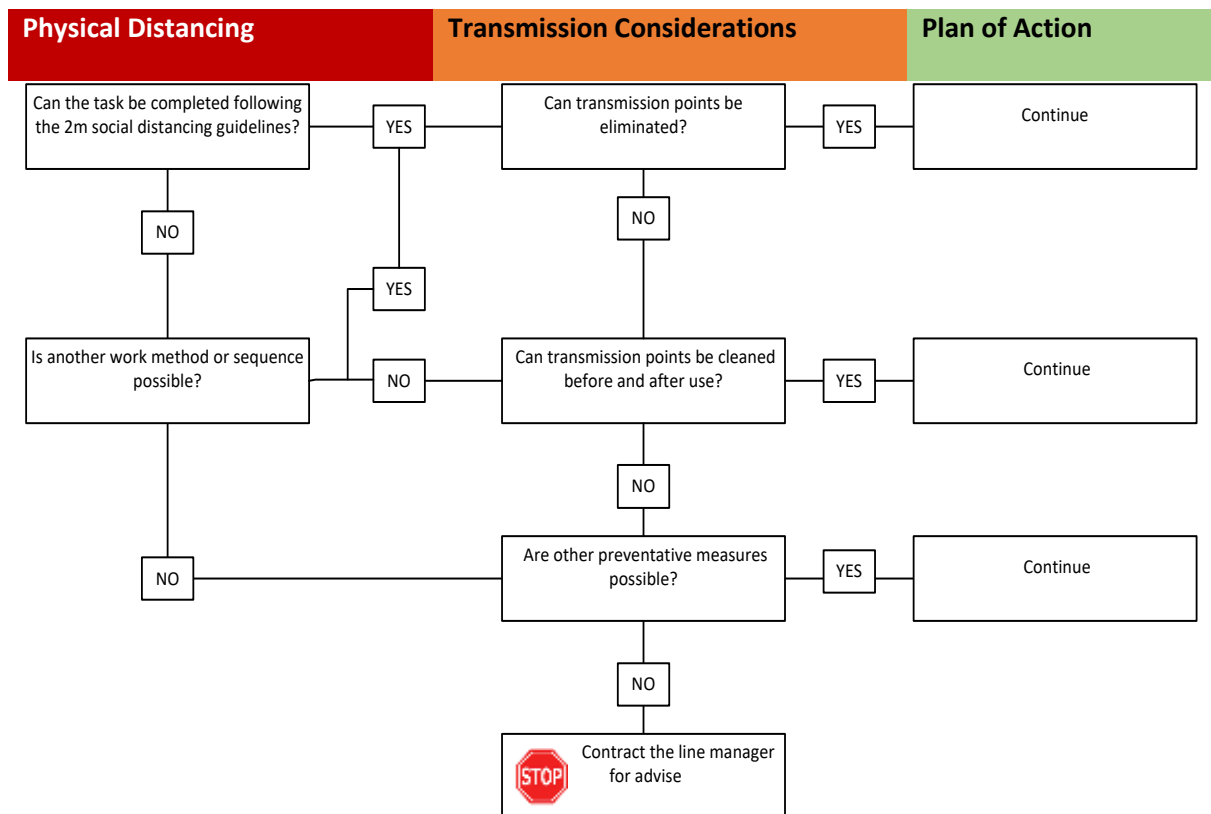
A sample COVID-19 Site Compliance Checklist is provided at Appendix 8.

Close Working Activities

Physical distancing is one of the key measures in the prevention of the spread of COVID-19, however there may be limited situations where close working cannot be avoided. This section provides guidance relating to COVID-19 for close working activities that must be completed where workers are less than 2m apart (<2m).

In the first instance, all options to eliminate the close working activity must be considered and exhausted.

The flow chart below is provided to assist in the review of work processes with physical distancing in mind.



Ref CIF COVID SOP 2020

Requirements for personnel prior to working within 2m of each other:

- Risk assessment carried out and control measures determined including PPE requirements.
- Limit the amount of time of close working to the absolute minimum.
- No employee, other than those required for the activity shall be permitted within a 2m exclusion work zone.

Where possible / appropriate utilise:

- Queue management system with social distancing markings
- Barriers / partitions at points where regular interactions occur
- Increase ventilation levels
- Establish a 2m exclusion work zone



Hygiene to be maintained to a high standard:

- Clean hands before and after activity
- Avoid touching face
- Practice good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Work environment and equipment to be cleaned before and after activity
- Personnel to operate side by side, facing away from each other where possible

PPE required for close working activities is to be determined by Risk Assessment and local operating procedures.

Where used, PPE is to be removed and disposed of appropriately i.e. disposable PPE to be double bagged and placed in a bin and non-disposable PPE to be sanitised.

Inductions, Toolbox Talks & Site Meetings

- Inductions, toolbox talks & site meetings should be conducted if possible, in an open-air setting.
- Physical distancing must be adhered to.
- Rooms should be well ventilated/windows open to allow fresh air circulation.
- Reduce the amount of paperwork and signatories on site documentation. Employees should use own pen for signing documentation.

Contractors and Visitors to Site

- Visitors & Contractors visiting sites should be advised of and follow the onsite COVID-19 measures in place.
- A system for recording visits to the site(s) should be put in place and completed as required (contact log).

Welfare Facilities / Eating on Construction Sites

- Review of welfare facilities to determine capacity for use to comply with physical distancing requirements.
- Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact.
- Ensure seating is arranged to maintain 2m physical distancing.
- Cleaning materials should be provided at these locations and numbers using them limited according to the space available.
- All rubbish should be disposed of appropriately.
- Tables should be cleared by employees when finished eating and cleaning between each use.
- Employees should not share objects that touch their mouth, for example, bottles or cups.
- Implement appropriate COVID-19 hygiene regime and ensure adequate provision of cleaning materials
- Ensure hands are washed before eating. Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser must be available.
- COVID information posters should be prominently displayed
- Where an employee decides to eat their lunch in their vehicle, they should be advised to do so on their own to avoid the possibility of infection from others.

Management of Deliveries to Sites

- All deliveries must be planned with allocated times for collections/ appointments/deliveries.
- Ensure that all delivery transactions adhere to physical distancing.
- During the delivery, if it is necessary for the driver to exit the vehicle, (i.e. to lift out materials / to open a lorry Tail Gate etc.), Physical Distancing of 2 metres from any other personnel at the depot / yard, must be maintained at all times.



- Where possible arrange for paperless delivery acceptance and request electronic copy of the delivery dockets.
- If signing for deliveries, employees should only use their own pens. In the case of electronic devices, both device and pen should be cleaned and disinfected prior to signing.

Changing Facilities, Showers, Drying

- Ensure enhanced cleaning of all changing and shower facilities.
- Use of facilities should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact.
- Provide suitable and sufficient bins in these areas with regular removal.

Tools, Plant & Equipment

- Avoid the sharing of tools and equipment as much as possible.
- All tools and equipment should be properly sanitised to prevent cross contamination.
- Sharing of tools and equipment should be avoided if possible.
- Where more than one person is likely to use equipment and tools then they should ensure they are wiped down between use and also hands sanitised before and after use.
- Consider provision of posters / stickers in the workplace to encourage staff to complete ongoing disinfection of tools and equipment that is shared.
- Cleaning materials must be made available for this purpose.

COVID-19 Contractor Safety

- Prior to contractors returning to site to recommence construction, contact should be made with the Contractor to get confirmation that they can undertake the works in accordance with HSE & Government Guidelines with regard to physical distancing and other COVID-19 restrictions.
- Site supervision, inspections and audits must include compliance with public health advice on COVID-19.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment

While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other preventative measures. The most important action employees can take to protect themselves from COVID-19 is regular hand-washing, good respiratory hygiene and follow physical distancing guidelines. The requirements for PPE are to be determined in the first instance by risk assessment. The risk assessment will determine the type of PPE to be provided and to ensure that the PPE is appropriate to the risk.

Further information on PPE is available at:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Personal_Protective_Equipment_-_PPE/.

Local Authorities and employees should keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice in relation to the wearing of PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic, this is available from the HPSC website.

PPE needs to be consistently and properly worn where required. In addition, it must be regularly, cleaned, maintained and replaced as necessary. Hands should be sanitised before donning and after doffing PPE.



Face Masks

In the context of COVID-19, facemasks should be available for the following:

- As identified by Risk Assessment.
- Specific circumstances relating to COVID-19 e.g. close working activity
- Suspect Case of COVID-19 - if someone becomes unwell in the workplace with symptoms such as cough, fever, breathing difficulties.

If masks are worn, they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues.

Public Health advice in relation to the wearing of masks will continue to be monitored.

Note: Face Shields designed and authorised as PPE against respiratory droplets should not be mistaken or used as a substitute for impact protection PPE in the workplace, for example, where standard CE marked Face Visor/Face protection PPE is required for work activities such as welding, grinding or to protect against chemical splashes.

Disposable Gloves

Disposable gloves are generally not required for infection prevention and control purposes. Wearing disposable gloves can give a false sense of security. Individuals may:

- sneeze or cough into the gloves - this creates a new surface for the virus to live on
- contaminate themselves when taking off the gloves or touching surfaces
- not wash hands as often as needed and touch your face with contaminated gloves

Where gloves are necessary:

- they must not be considered a substitute for hand hygiene and hands must be cleaned whenever gloves are removed.
- Gloves should be disposed of after each use and/or if they become damaged/torn.

[How to properly wash your hands and avoid infection](#)

Disposable Overalls

- Single-Use disposable overalls may be provided for employees undertaking specific tasks during this unprecedented time e.g. close working activities. > 15 minutes within 2m.

Eye Protection

- Eye protection - safety goggles or safety glasses made available for staff, as appropriate. As per HSE guidance, employees should be advised to avoid touching face, particularly eyes, nose and mouth, at all times.



List of Appendices

- Appendix 1** COVID-19 Suspect Case at Work
- Appendix 2** COVID-19 Confirmed Case at Work
- Appendix 3** COVID-19 Employee Return to Work Process – Suspected/Confirmed Case
- Appendix 4** COVID-19 Sample Return to Work Form
- Appendix 5** First Aid Responder Guidance
- Appendix 6** Latest Updates, Advice and Information
- Appendix 7** COVID-19 Sample Site Compliance Checklist
- Appendix 8** List of Standard Operating Guidance (SOGs) Documents

APPENDIX 1

COVID-19 Suspect Cases at Work

What to do if an employee or a member of the public becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.

The key message remains that an employee should not attend work if they are displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell. However, while an employee should not attend work if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, the following outlines the steps employers should put in place to deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in protecting the employee involved and their colleagues.

Local Authority must:

- Include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case in the COVID-19 response plan.
- Appoint an appropriate manager (s) for dealing with suspected cases.
- Identify a designated isolation area in advance. This designated area and the route to the designated area should be accessible and as far as is reasonable and practicable should be accessible by people with disabilities.
- Take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID-19 and have additional areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.
- Ensure the designated area has the ability to isolate the person behind a closed door. Where a closed door is not possible, move to an area away from other employees.
- Provide as is reasonably practicable:
 - Ventilation i.e. via a window
 - Tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and /or wipes
 - PPE; gloves and mask
 - Waste bags/bins.

If an employee displays symptoms of COVID-19 during work, the manager and the response team must:

- Isolate the employee and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available.
- The employee should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- Assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home to call their doctor and continue treatment and self-isolation at home.
- If employee is not using own transport or not fit to travel alone, arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment if required. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The employee should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

- Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved
- Provide advice and assistance if contacted by the Department of Public Health or the HSE in relation to contact tracing.

Further information on close contacts, casual contacts and testing is available from the HSE website [Close contact - HSE.ie](#)

APPENDIX 2

Confirmed COVID-19 Case at Work

- The HSE will make contact with the workplace to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with the employee and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- If a confirmed case is identified in the workplace, the HSE will provide the relevant employee with advice. Relevant employee includes: any employee in close face-to-face or touching contact for any length of time while the employee was symptomatic or anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids. Any employee living in the same household as a confirmed case.
- Contacts are not considered cases and if they are well, they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others.
- Those who have had close contact will be contacted by the HSE contact tracing team and advised on what steps will be taken.
- Employees who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions and can continue to attend work.

For further information on close contact please see:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html#close>

For further information on working arrangements and leave associated with COVID please see:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/news/092fff-update-on-working-arrangements-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19-fo/>

APPENDIX 3

COVID-19 Employee Return to Work Process – Suspected / Confirmed Case

In the event of a worker either being a suspected/ confirmed case of COVID-19 or a known “close contact” with a confirmed or suspected case, this protocol must be followed to ensure they are fit to return to work by means of self-declaration. These arrangements may not preclude employees from returning to work at home at an earlier stage if this is feasible, depending on the situation of each case.

Note: Local Authorities may need to refer to their own arrangements as necessary where these exist.

Fitness for Work should be considered from two perspectives:

- Does their illness pose a risk to the individual themselves in performing their work duties?
- Does their illness pose a risk to other individuals in the workplace?

The following steps should be followed, in line with current public health advice:

- Any worker who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must stay away from work, self-isolate and contact their GP by phone.
- They must also notify their line manager. An individual will be classified as either a suspected or confirmed case, based on HSE decision to test/outcome of test.
- An individual who is a known close contact with a confirmed or suspected case will be contacted by the HSE through its contact tracing process. HSE advice provided must be followed.
- An individual must only return to work if deemed fit to do so and upon approval of their medical advisor and having coordinated with their line manager/designated HR/employer contact.
- Line Manager/HR should confirm the relevant criteria with the individual and write down their responses.
- Individual must self-declare their fitness for work in the absence of having a fitness for work certificate from their GP/healthcare provider. This is reflecting that some GP’s may currently not have capacity to be issuing return to work certificates.
- Self-declarations and any accompanying certification should be retained by Local HR on the individual’s personnel file and should be subject to audit.
- Managers should be mindful of confidentiality and should also alert the employee to any follow up actions that are required on their return to work. This includes any return to work talk/toolbox talk etc which may have been given to other employees and the employee missed due to absence.

Refer to Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19 - In relation to working arrangements and temporary assignments across the Public Service - [gov.ie - Update \(26 November 2021\) on working arrangements and leave associated with COVID-19 for Civil and Public Service \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publications-and-statements/2021-11-26-update-on-working-arrangements-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19-for-civil-and-public-service/)

Please continue to refer to [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie) for the most up to date information.

APPENDIX 4

Sample COVID-19 Return to Work Form

Note: if an employee answers yes to any question, they are required to follow HSE/ medical advice they receive or seek medical advice before returning to work.

Question	Yes	No
1. Do you have symptoms of COVID-19 now or in the last 14 days? For a full list of symptoms click here: Symptoms of COVID-19 - HSE.ie		
2. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3. Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?		
4. Are you a close contact of a person who is confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days? <i>If yes, follow HSE advice in relation to close contacts If you are a close contact of COVID-19 - HSE.ie</i>		
5. Have you been advised to self-isolate at this time?		
6. Have you been advised to restrict your movement at this time?		
7. Have you returned from overseas travel in the past 14 days? <i>If yes, ensure you are aware of, and follow the requirements on arrival into Ireland: gov.ie - New rules for travelling to Ireland (www.gov.ie)</i>		
8. Please provide details below of any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the above, which may need to be considered to allow your safe return to work. Further information on people at higher risk from Coronavirus can be accessed here People at higher risk from COVID-19 - HSE.ie		
Additional Information		

If you are unsure whether or not you are in an at risk category, please check the link at question 8.

I confirm that the information I have provided in this form is correct at the date of completion.

I also commit to advising Line Management if this situation changes and I will exclude myself from my work location should I develop COVID-19 symptoms and seek GP advice while I self-isolate at home.

Name: _____

Employee Number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Employer: _____

APPENDIX 5

First Aider Responder Guidance COVID-19

Key Interventions

Covid-19 infects through contact with the mucous membranes (mouth, nose and eyes). It does not infect through the skin.

The greatest element of risk is the transfer of the virus via contaminated hands. The key intervention is to minimise hand contamination, avoid touching your face, and to wash/sanitise hands frequently.

Sensible precautions will ensure you are able to treat an injured person effectively. If, as a First Aid Responder, you can avoid close contact with a person who requires some level of first aid, do so. This, of course, will not be possible in all situations.

Screening for COVID-19

The First Aid Responder should apply the following general principles:

- Complete a preliminary assessment, if possible, while maintaining social distancing (> 2 metres).
- The preliminary assessment to involve the screening questions for COVID-19.

Screening questions for COVID-19 infection:

1. Do you have any new cough or new shortness of breath?
2. Do you have a high temperature/ fever?
3. Have you had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 within the past 14 days?

If the answer is yes to any question, regard the patient as suspect COVID-19

If no to all questions, regard the patient as low risk for COVID-19

- If the person is regarded as suspect COVID-19, provide a facemask and request that they apply it.
- If the person requires close contact assessment and/or treatment wash/sanitise hands and don appropriate PPE (disposable gloves and facemask)
- If the injured person is unresponsive, check for breathing without using the look, listen and feel (ear to the person's mouth) process.
- Minimise the number of unnecessary bystanders within the vicinity of the injured person, especially in a small room/area.
- When the patient encounter is complete, remove and dispose of the PPE appropriately and finally wash your hands.

First Aid Incidents

First aid incidents in the workplace may be divided into three sub groups;

1. Minor injuries

- Many of these patients could provide self-help under direction from the first aid responder, thus maintaining physical distance. The first aider responder should encourage 'supervised' self help (from a safe distance) i.e. instruct the patient to wash a minor wound and then apply a plaster to themselves. The successful application of this

model of care will reduce the requirement to don PPE every time a person enquires about a minor injury etc.

- No PPE is required, therefore, provided that physical distancing is maintained.
- Follow FAR CPGs when advising care provision.

2. Presentations that require an intervention and/or follow up care where COVID-19 is not identified through screening.

- Many of these presentations will require direct contact with the patient inside the physical stance requirement.
- Appropriate PPE is therefore required. This includes gloves, fluid resistant apron, surgical facemask and eye protection.
- Follow FAR CPGs after donning PPE.

3. A COVID- 19 Suspected Presentation.

- To minimise droplet infection, patients who are screened as COVID-19 positive should be offered a surgical facemask and requested to don it. These patients may or may not require a direct clinical intervention therefore they should be cared for under two protocols.
- To minimise droplet infection, patients who are screened as COVID-19 should be offered a surgical facemask and requested to don it. These patients may or may not require clinical intervention therefore should be cared for under 2 protocols:
 - 3.1. No direct contact required and physical distancing maintained between patient and first aid responder. Provide self help under direction from the first aid responder. No PPE is required. Follow FAR CPGs when advising care provision.
 - 3.2 Direct Contact required. PPE is mandatory which includes gloves, surgical facemask, fluid repellent long sleeved gown and eye protection. Follow FAR CPGs when advising care provision.

Specific clinical presentations/interventions

Cardiac arrest: patients in cardiac arrest should have compression only CPR applied. An AED should be used as normal. <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/layrescuersguidance/>

As CPR is an aerosol generating procedure the first aid responder should wear a FFP2 facemask to minimise aerosol transmission.

Unresponsive patients: If the patient is unresponsive, check for breathing without using the look, listen and feel (ear to the patient's mouth) process.

Following First Aid Treatment

Clean hands thoroughly with warm water and soap / alcohol-based hand gel after taking off PPE. Disposable PPE and any waste should be disposed of appropriately. Reusable PPE shall be cleaned/disinfected thoroughly. Replenish PPE stock as appropriate.

Further Information

For updated information see HSE Website or follow the link:
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>

Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC):

https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx

APPENDIX 6

Latest Updates, Advice & Information

Employers are advised to keep up to date with information on COVID-19 by using the websites referred to below.

HSE - General Information about Covid-19	https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html
COVID-19 Latest Updates	https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/
Public Health Measures in place	gov.ie - Public health measures in place right now (www.gov.ie)
Department of Health Work Safely Protocol	https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/ gov.ie - Work Safely Protocol (www.gov.ie)
HSE Coronavirus (COVID-19) posters and resources	https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/
Health & Safety Authority Advice on COVID-19	https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/coronavirus-information-and-resources/
Health Protection Surveillance Centre FAQ's	https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/
Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19 - In relation to working arrangements and temporary assignments across the Public Service	https://www.gov.ie/en/news/092fff-update-on-working-arrangements-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19-fo/
Data Protection –Work Safely Protocol	gov.ie - Data Protection - Work Safely Protocol (www.gov.ie)
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	https://www.dfa.ie/
General COVID-19 Travel Advisory	General COVID-19 Travel Advisory - Department of Foreign Affairs (dfa.ie)
World Health Organisation	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (who.int)

European Centre for Disease Control	https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en
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APPENDIX 7
COVID -19 Sample Site Compliance Checklist

Location		Date		Time	
Description of Works					
	Question	Yes	No	Comment	
1	Has a SSWP / RA been completed for this site/activity?				
2	Is physical distancing being achieved on site?				
3	Are staff adhering to staggered break times to limit numbers in canteens / welfare facilities / smoking areas and adhering to the 2metre physical distancing guideline?				
4	Have staff received COVID-19 toolbox talk/ induction?				
5	Is there adequate supply and availability of hand sanitising and cleaning material provisions?				
6	Are staff working in a manner where they can achieve the 2m physical distancing guidance?				
7	Have breaks been staggered / arranged to facilitate physical distancing?				
8	Is the non-sharing of tools achievable, if not is there adequate hygienic wipes / alternatives available to clean down after use?				
9	Is there appropriate COVID-19 PPE (masks, goggles, gloves, disposable suits) available if required (close working activities)?				

10	Is there sufficient up to date signage in place to alert staff, contractors and members of the public to maintain a 2m physical distance and COVID-19 controls on site?			

To the best of my knowledge, I can confirm that this site is in compliance with the relevant HSE Guidance and Site Rules relating to COVID-19 Pandemic

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX 8

List of Standard Operating Guidance

The following is the list of SOG's developed under the aegis of the Health & Safety Operational Committee and issued to the sector:

- SOG No.1 Construction COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.2 Building & Civil Engineering Contractors Contractor COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.3 Welfare Units COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.4 Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.5 Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements.
- SOG No.6 Meeting and Working Close to Members of the Public
- SOG No.7 Maintenance & Inspection of Parks and Playgrounds COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.8 Beach / Harbour COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.9 Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house)
- SOG No.10 First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.11 Canteen / Eating COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.12 Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.13 Attendance at Emergency Callout
- SOG No.14 Travelling to Work / Site
- SOG No.15 Requirement and Use of PPE correct
- SOG No.16 Use of Tools and Equipment
- SOG No.17 Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property
- SOG No.18 The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment
- SOG No.19 Local Authority Vet and Veterinary Inspectors - COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.20 Open Water Lifeguarding – COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.21 Local Authority Housing Maintenance
- SOG No.22 Management of Construction Projects
- SOG No.23 Libraries – COVID-19 Requirements
- SOG No.24 Local Authority Public Toilets
- SOG No.25 Delivery of Training – Regional Training Centre
- SOG No.26 Non-Routine or Un-Announced Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property or Private Residential Property – COVID - 19 Requirements
- SOG No.27 Local Authority Only, Operated Leisure, Gym & Sports Centres

- SOG No.28 Local Authority Only, Operated Swimming Pools
- SOG No. 29 School Wardens
- SOG No. 30 Attendance at Council Meetings by Elected Members & Council Officials / Others (Media & Public) and attendance at other meetings or Council Buildings

APPENDIX 11

CCC COVID-19 Policy Statement



COVID-19 POLICY STATEMENT

Cork City Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees, customers and those affected by our activities. All heads of section, line managers, supervisors and employees are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Cork City Council will:

- (a) Continue to monitor the COVID-19 response and amend where required the COVID-19 Business Response Plan in consultation with employees.
- (b) Provide up to date information to our employees on current Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.
- (c) Display information on signs /symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing or sanitising techniques.
- (d) Assign management responsibility for compliance, appoint Worker Representatives(s) and establish an appropriate reporting system.
- (e) Inform all employees of essential hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements.
- (f) Adapt where possible, the workplace to facilitate physical distancing.
- (g) Keep a log of contact / group work to help with contact tracing.
- (h) Provide COVID-19 Induction to all employees.
- (i) Provide consultation to employees on relevant Risk Assessments and Safe Work Practice Guidance.
- (j) Develop a procedure to be followed and provide instructions for employees to follow in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at work or in the workplace.
- (k) Advise employees to immediately self-isolate at home, to contact their GP promptly for further advice, and to report to line management if any symptoms develop while at work.
- (l) Where practicable, and if employee is unable to immediately self-isolate at home, identify a workplace location that can be used as an isolation room.
- (m) Intensify cleaning arrangements of workplaces in line with government advice.

All heads of section, line managers, supervisors and employees will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback will be encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

Signed: 
Chief Executive

Date: 9th June 2020

APPENDIX 12 Chief Executive Staff Notification re. Face Masks

25th September 2020.

Dear Colleagues,

Due to the actions taken by all of us, Cork's Covid-19 incidence figures remained markedly low over the summer. Unfortunately, in recent days, we are seeing those figures begin to climb. Earlier this week, I was told that Cork is now where Dublin was approximately three weeks ago. This doesn't mean that we are on an inexorable path to Level 3. But it does mean that if we pay extra attention to social distancing, hand hygiene and face coverings, and if households minimise social contacts, we can slow the spread once more.

Since last February, Cork City Council staff have repeatedly shown their flexibility and resilience in the face of Covid-19. Our workplace is not what it was a year ago and I never thought I would say that I miss face-to-face meetings - but I really do.

Again, I am asking you to work with us as we introduce some further necessary measures to ensure our continued wellbeing in the coming weeks.

- At work, staff are required to wear face coverings in the circulation areas of the buildings and as they move around indoor areas outside of their section. Coverings may be removed when you are seated at your desk or entering canteen facilities. The use of face coverings gives us all another level of protection and by wearing face coverings we show respect for others and their families.
- Many of you will probably rather wear your own face coverings, but a number of face coverings will be made available through your individual Directorates.
- We want staff to do the best they can to make sure that their work environment is well ventilated. I am very aware of how temperatures have dropped in recent days and so if windows are to remain open in the coming weeks, there will be a need for warmer clothing.
- Face to face meetings are to be avoided where possible and held only when necessary, should be conducted efficiently and at such meetings social distancing and hygiene protocols should be observed.
- As ever, common sense should prevail and if you have concerns around any of these measures, please contact your line manager and we will work to ensure that our workplace remains as comfortable and as safe as possible for all.

Just to remind you that our Covid-19 Confidential Staff Helpline facility is available to Cork City Council staff from 9:00am-5:00pm Monday to Friday. The helpline number is ext. 4098 / 021-4924098. Many of us were lucky to enjoy the gradual re-opening of the country over the recent months: the summer easing of restrictions, the staycations, and the outdoor dining. If we all make that extra effort now to follow public health guidelines and as public servants to lead by example over the coming weeks, we have every chance of remaining at Level 2 in Cork. So, take care of yourself, your colleagues, and your families.

Kind Regards

Ann Doherty

Chief Executive of Cork City Council.

APPENDIX 13

Annual Leave Guidance Document

Cork City Council Annual Leave Guidance Document

This guidance is provided to assist line managers and staff in facilitating the taking of annual leave in the current year in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- All staff are encouraged to avail of their annual leave entitlement to the greatest extent possible in the current year.
- Line managers should engage with their staff to ensure that annual leave is planned and availed of in an orderly manner over the remainder of the year.
- Each member of staff should take a minimum of two weeks annual leave before 1st October, 2020 unless they are required for essential services as authorised by their Director of Services.
- The existing arrangements allowing the carry forward of up to 5 days annual leave into the following year is extended to 10 days for 2020/2021. Any annual leave carried forward from 2020 to 2021 must be taken during 2021. Line managers should work with individual staff to develop plans to achieve this.
- Based on current Public Health and Government Guidance staff are reminded that all foreign travel is strongly discouraged and that those returning from foreign travel to countries that are not on the 'green list' are required to self-quarantine for 14 days.
- Staff who despite the Public Health and Government Guidance are planning to undertake foreign travel should be aware of the requirement to self-quarantine for 14 days (non 'green list' countries) and note that this period will require taking additional leave following their return from foreign travel. This additional leave will need to be approved by line management in advance and will need to align with annual leave planning and scheduling within individual directorates.
- This guidance will be kept under review and will be updated to reflect any changes in Public Health and Government Guidelines.

APPENDIX 14

Guidance on Foreign Travel

There is a Government Advisory in operation against all non-essential international travel.

A legal requirement to quarantine has been introduced for all travellers (except if your journey originates in Northern Ireland) – with very limited exceptions.

Anyone coming into Ireland (including those arriving from outside the Common Travel Area into Northern Ireland) is required to be in receipt of a negative PCR test, complete a passenger locator form and restrict their movements (quarantine) for 14 days.

The restricted movement (quarantine) period can finish earlier if the passenger obtains a negative PCR test result taken no less than 5 days after arrival in the State. Note that individuals arriving from Category 2 countries and territories¹ must complete the 14 day quarantine period regardless of any follow up testing. (See [this link on gov.ie](#) for more details of when the test can be taken).

Full details of current arrangements can be found at [this link](#). Employees should also be aware of the testing and quarantine requirements in place at the time of travel, both for their intended destination and on return to Ireland.

Responsibility to provide for the period of restricted movement (quarantine) arising from travel overseas is a matter for each individual employee unless they fall into the very limited exemption categories as outlined on gov.ie.

In order to protect public health, employees are required to advise their employer of any intention to travel overseas. Where there is an intention to undertake travel overseas to any country which requires a restricted movement period on return to Ireland, all employees must make provision by way of an annual leave or unpaid leave application for that period of restricted movement, in line with the normal rules applying in the relevant sector. This arrangement is applicable to all civil and public servants regardless of whether they can work from home.

In all instances, employees should continue to notify their employer of any intention to travel overseas. The security rating of countries will be regularly reviewed and may change, and employees should be aware that whatever restricted movement (quarantine) requirements are in place on their date of return to Ireland will apply to them. Employees should log on to www.dfa.ie immediately prior to their return to Ireland to ensure they are fully apprised of any changes to the security rating of countries, and any necessary requirement to restrict their movements.

<https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/general-covid-19-travel-advisory/>

APPENDIX 15

Advance notification of intention to travel abroad form

Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

Cork City Council



Covid-19 Advance notification of intention to travel abroad

The Irish authorities advise against all non-essential travel overseas until further notice. This includes Great Britain but does not apply to Northern Ireland. It also includes all travel by cruise ship. The Irish authorities require anyone coming into Ireland, apart from Northern Ireland and Green Listed Countries to restrict their movements for 14 days and therefore you will not be available to work for this **14 day** period following return. Work means all local authority workplaces and /or working from home.

This form is to be completed by any Cork City Council staff member who intends to travel abroad during the time that the above advice remains valid and or until further notice.

I _____ intend travelling to _____ for a period of ____ days returning on _____.

I acknowledge that in doing so I am required in accordance with Public Health advice to restrict my movements for a period of fourteen days from the date of arrival back into Ireland and will not be available to work.

The manner in which I intend to provide for the additional period of self-isolation / restricted movement is:

Annual Leave (insert no. of days) From _____ To _____

Unpaid Leave (insert no. of days) From _____ To _____

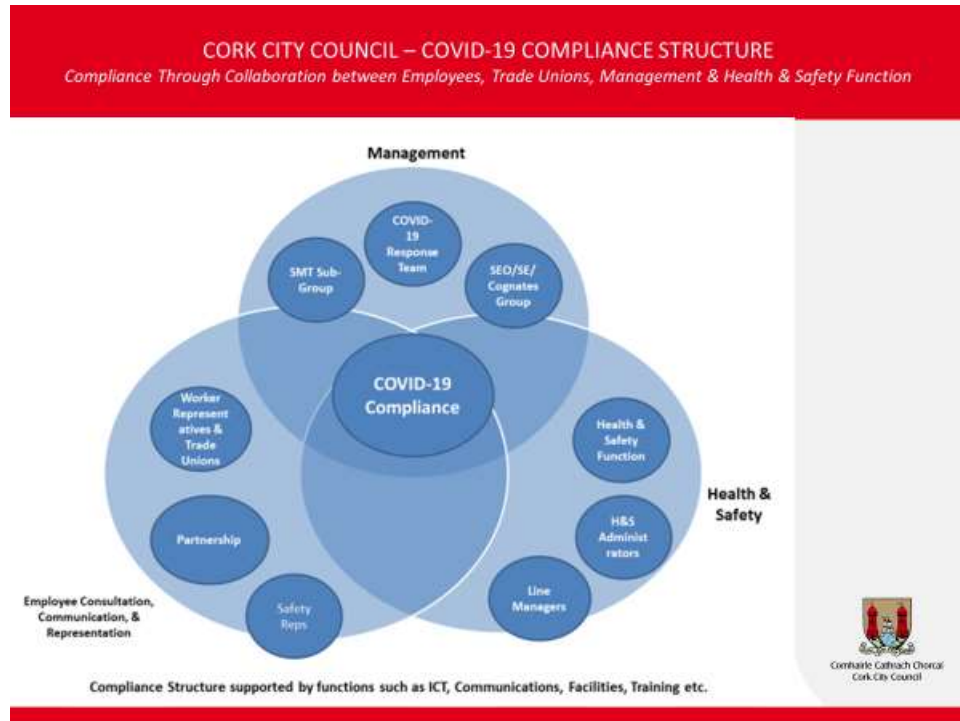
- You may choose a mixture of both annual and unpaid leave

Signed: _____ Dated: _____


Note: This form is to be submitted to P&OD on completion of a booking for annual leave made in relation to travel overseas or at a minimum of 7 days prior to departure. Failure to submit this form may necessitate disciplinary action in accordance with Cork City Council policy.

APPENDIX 16

CCC COVID-19 Response Structure



Management

 <p>SMT Sub-Group</p>	<p>Sub-Group of SMT Group. Develops short and long term actions in relation to COVID-19 in response to government, LGMA and public health guidelines. Advises SMT, maintains risk register related to COVID-19, role in assigning/redeploying resources. Develops & reviews COVID-19 Return to Work Safety Manual. Meets on Monday & Thursday AM.</p>
 <p>COVID-19 Response Team</p>	<p>Senior Management Team with four additional reps from Fire Service, ICT, Communications and HR. Provided initial emergency response. Meets daily/weekly or as required depending on status of COVID-19 pandemic and Public Health Guidance</p>
 <p>SEO/SE/ Cognates Group</p>	<p>SMT and direct reports (SEOs/SEs & cognates). Approx. 50. Communication Forum. Weekly updates provided on Fridays or as required.</p>


 Ceanúisce Cathrach Chiorraí
 Cork City Council

Employee Consultation, Communication, & Representation

Safety Reps

Part of existing Health & Safety management Structure.

Partnership

Existing Partnership Process with representatives from staff and management. Provided with briefings, forum for concerns and questions to be raised and responded to. Meets fortnightly on Wednesday or as required.

Worker Representatives

Formal role as required by Return to Work Safely Protocol. and nominated by trade unions. Three worker representatives including one Lead Worker Representative. The worker representatives are Kathryn Collins for FORSA (Lead), Kevin McCarthy for Connect and Denis Crowley for SIPTU.



Health & Safety

Line Managers

Responsible for local risk assessments, training and communication. Collaborates with Health & Safety functions in developing local risk assessments.

Health & Safety Function

Provides advice and guidance in relation to COVID-19 related risk assessments to line managers and advises management team as required. Maintains Health & Safety Statement and structures to reflect COVID-19 requirements. Participates in development of sectoral Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs). Resource to line management for specialist advice and support.

H&S Administrators

Part of the existing Health & Safety Management structure. Existing role and responsibilities have been expanded to include issues related to COVID-19 including compliance. Provides advice and guidance locally, escalates issues arising locally, supports communications. Collaborates with Health & Safety function.



APPENDIX 17 COVID-19 National Protocol for Employers and Workers



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Work Safely Protocol

COVID-19 National Protocol for Employers and Workers

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1. Introduction

A. Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every part of Ireland's society and economy. In the face of this, the biggest challenge we have encountered in decades, the people of Ireland have universally stepped up to the plate and adhered to the strict guidelines put in place by the Government, following the advice of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). We have all contributed to the progress that Ireland has made in containing the spread of COVID-19 and in so doing we have saved lives. However, our continued progress in reducing the spread of the virus remains challenging. We collectively and individually need to continue our efforts to keep the virus under control.

The revision of the Return to Work Safely Protocol has become necessary to ensure that it reflects the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 as well as updating the public health advice available since its first publication. This revised document is now called the **Work Safely Protocol**. It continues to be designed to support employers and workers to put infection prevention and control (IPC) and other measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Work Safely Protocol also covers the measures needed to both ensure the safe operation of workplaces and the re-opening of workplaces following temporary closure due to local and regional restrictions.

This revision of the Protocol is a collaborative effort by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), the Health Services Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health. This Work Safely Protocol also follows discussion and agreement at the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF), which is the forum for high-level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters related to the labour force. This work has also been overseen by the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

The Protocol incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community and workplaces issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team

(NPHET) and Government. As the advice issued by Government and NPHET continues to evolve, this Work Safely Protocol and the measures employers and workers need to address will also evolve. The details included in this document are therefore non-exhaustive and are subject to change. This Protocol is a general document applicable to all sectors. It is not designed to prohibit the introduction of further specific measures in particular sectors or workplaces. Further specific measures can be introduced as long as they enhance the measures set out in this Protocol. On foot of this Work Safely Protocol, all businesses and sectors who have specific guidance are required to review and update their guidance in line with the advice contained in this document.

B. Working together to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace

The key to a safe workplace remains strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers and workers. It is also essential to achieve success and maximum buy-in. Employers, workers and/or their recognised Trade Union or other representatives need to continue to have regular engagement about COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in the workplace.

Employers should provide up to date information and guidance to workers. The type of information should include:

- the signs and symptoms of COVID-19,
- how COVID-19 spreads,
- advice about hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing,
- the importance of not going to work if displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or feeling unwell,
- use of face coverings/masks, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE),
- cleaning routines and waste disposal.

Procedures and steps to be taken in the event of a suspected or positive case or outbreak in the workplace and the role of public health authorities in managing an outbreak should also

be made clear. Employers will also need to provide COVID-19 induction training for all workers, after the re-opening of the workplace following a closure.

In addition, given the fact that COVID-19 is equally an issue in the wider community, general advice in relation to measures the worker should follow when not at work, including safe travel to and from work and living accommodation are also useful to provide (see section below on Worker Role).

Adherence to this Protocol will only be achieved if employers and workers have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this Protocol in their place of work. A key role in each workplace is that of the Lead Worker Representative (LWR). Each workplace will appoint at least one LWR charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their place of work. Further details on this role are provided in the section below.

Employers will also communicate with safety representatives selected or appointed under Occupational Health and Safety legislation and consult with workers on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace. For further information on the role of [Safety Representative](#), visit the HSA website.

The employer can also use a competent person responsible for managing health and safety (internally or externally) as required to ensure the effective implementation of changes to work activities and the implementation of IPC measures at the place of work.

In addition to this Protocol, a range of [COVID-19 templates and checklists](#) are also available. These have been prepared and updated by the HSA to help business owners, employers and workers to keep businesses up and running and/or to facilitate their reopening after a period of closure. These resources are also available in Irish and other languages.

C. Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

Each workplace will appoint at least one Lead Worker Representative (LWR). Their role is to work together with the employer to assist in the implementation of and monitor adherence to the IPC measures in this Protocol to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their workplace. The number of representatives appointed will ideally be proportionate to the number of workers. The LWR, together with the COVID-19 response management team, should support the implementation of the IPC measures identified in this Protocol. The identity of the person or persons appointed should be clearly communicated within the workplace. They should also receive the relevant and necessary training by their employer. Further information and a short online course on the role of [Lead Worker Representative](#) can be found on the HSA website.

2. General Information on COVID-19

A. Introduction

The Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with Covid-19 puts in place a framework to manage the risk of spread of the virus. The controls escalate as infection levels and other public health COVID-19 indicators change on a regional and national basis.

Exposure to COVID-19 is a public health risk, which affects all citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic also has implications for all workplaces as it may present a health risk to workers. Ensuring that the economy remains open and operating goes hand-in-hand with the provision of both public health measures and occupational health and safety requirements to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19 in the workplace is important in relation to the health of workers and is also important as part of general efforts to control the spread in the wider community and protect the most vulnerable.

The sections below provide details on the symptoms of COVID-19 and on how current evidence shows how it spreads in general and in the workplace. Employers and workers should keep up to date with public health advice as knowledge about COVID-19 continues to evolve.

B. Symptoms of COVID-19

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of [cold](#) and [flu](#).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you have any common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), [self-isolate](#) (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need [a COVID-19 test](#). Other people in your household will need to [restrict their movements](#) (stay at home).

Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE [Website](#).

C. How COVID-19 Spreads

You can get COVID-19 if you come into close contact with someone who has the virus.

COVID-19 is mainly spread through close contact and droplets that come from your nose and mouth. For example, from someone who is talking loudly, shouting, coughing or sneezing. This happens most when people are less than 2 metres from each other. It is why keeping a 2-metre distance from other people is so effective in reducing the spread of the virus.

You can also get the virus from surfaces. For example, when someone who has the virus sneezes or coughs, droplets with the virus can fall onto surfaces around them. If you touch that surface and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, you could become infected too.

Airborne transmission is the spread of a virus in very tiny respiratory particles. This can happen over a longer distance and persist for a longer time than droplets, such as within a room. Airborne transmission does not appear to play a major role in the spread of COVID-19. However, it can happen in some situations. To minimise this risk, keep indoor spaces well ventilated (aired out) by opening windows and doors if possible.

COVID-19 (coronavirus) can survive:

- up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel
- less than 4 hours on copper
- less than 24 hours on cardboard

Common household disinfectants will kill the virus on surfaces. Clean the surface first and then use a disinfectant. A system of thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in the workplace is essential. For example, vending machines, coffee machines and door handles should all be cleaned frequently, as they can be particular sources of transmission. If disinfection is required, it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning. Please refer to section on Cleaning below for further details.

Current information suggests that infected people can transmit the virus both when they are symptomatic (showing symptoms) and asymptomatic (showing no symptoms). This is why it is essential that anyone who is showing symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, or anyone who has been in close contact with a confirmed case, should be tested.

Research has also now identified specific types of working environments where the spread of COVID-19 is more likely to occur, often due to environmental factors. For example, there have been reported outbreaks of COVID-19 in some closed space settings, such as meat processing plants, nightclubs, places of worship, restaurants, and workplaces where people may be shouting or talking loudly. In these outbreaks, airborne transmission (specifically in indoor locations that are densely populated and inadequately ventilated) cannot be ruled out. In these high-risk environments, a greater level of adherence by employers and workers to the specific public health advice for such settings is required.

3. Steps for Employers and Workers to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace

The Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 will provide the details on which workplaces can be open and operating at any given time. Therefore, at different times, a business may be open or may reopen following localised or national restrictions.

In this regard, employers, in consultation with the LWR(s), must take the following steps either for the first time or as part of a need to keep their response to COVID-19 up to date:

A. Keep their COVID-19 Response Plan up to date

Employers will continue to:

- develop and/or update their COVID-19 Response Plan.
- develop plans in consultation with workers and communicate once finalised.
- facilitate the appointment of at least one lead worker representative for the workplace, which shall be done in consultation with the workers and/or representatives.
- review and update their occupational health and safety (OSH) risk assessments and safety statement.
- address the level(s) of risk associated with various workplaces and work activities in their COVID-19 business plans and OSH risk assessments. For example, where, how and from what sources might workers be exposed to COVID-19? Consider also exposure to/from the public, customers, co-workers etc. In this regard, particular locations (canteens, washroom facilities, access/egress points), where staff congregate can be particular hotspots for transmission.
- ensure that where work practices have been changed or modified to prevent the spread of COVID-19, workers are not inadvertently exposed to additional occupational health and safety hazards and risks.
- take into account workers' individual risk factors (e.g. older workers, whether a worker is considered very high risk or high risk due to the presence of underlying medical conditions).

- include measures to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- include the controls necessary to address the risks identified.
- include contingency measures to address increased rates of worker absenteeism, implementation of the measures necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, changing work patterns, etc.
- include in the plan any specific communication measures that are required for workers whose first language may not be English. In such workplaces, employers should identify leads who can act as communicators to particular groups. Such leads may also be nominated as the lead worker representative. The HSE have provided [translations](#) of their COVID-19 Resources.
- include in the plan any specific measures or response for dealing with an outbreak of COVID-19.

B. Implement and maintain policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in protecting the worker involved, their colleagues, customers or others at the workplace. It is also a crucial step in preventing an outbreak in a workplace from moving into the wider community.

Employers will:

- keep a log of contacts to facilitate contact tracing.
- inform workers and others of the purpose of the log (i.e. to be used by Public Health in the event of an outbreak).
- maintain up-to-date information on all workers (full-time, part-time, contract and agency) in the workplace. Such information should include at a minimum the name, address and contact phone number of the individual worker. This information will be needed by the Department of Public Health in the event there is a case or outbreak.
- display information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and not working if displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or if feeling unwell.

- provide information on how to receive illness benefits or other Government COVID-19 supports.
- provide up to date information on public health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.
- provide public health advice and information in languages other than English as required. Consideration should also be given to providing a variety of information on TV monitors in prominent locations (canteens, access/egress points) to enhance uptake of key messages.
- provide instruction for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work.
- cooperate with the local [Department of Public Health](#) if a case of COVID-19 and/or an outbreak is confirmed in their workplace and implement any follow up actions required.
- maintain personal information collected in line with GDPR requirements

Workers will:

- make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- not go to work if they are displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or if feeling unwell.
- immediately [self-isolate or restrict their movements at home](#) if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test.
- stay at home, if identified as a [close contact](#) of a confirmed case of COVID-19, and not go to work. In such instances, they must also restrict their movements for 14 days.
- report to managers immediately if any symptoms develop during work.
- cooperate with any public health personnel and their employer for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their workplace

C. Develop, Update, Consult, Communicate and Implement Workplace Changes or Policies

Employers will continue to:

- review and revise existing sick leave policies and amend as appropriate and in line with normal procedures. In so doing, employers will consult with and communicate to workers, in line with normal procedures, any changes that are introduced to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- make available the necessary public health advice from the HSE and other sources as appropriate to their workers. The LWR(s) appointed should be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.
- provide information on how to receive illness benefits or other Government COVID-19 supports.
- agree through negotiation with workers/Trades Unions any temporary restructuring of work patterns that may be required to implement the COVID-19 prevention measures in the workplace. In so doing, any existing sectoral agreements must be taken into account.
- ensure that conditions, including the employment of staff via agency contracts, support the prevention and spread of COVID-19.
- minimise rotation of staff across multiple settings and workplaces, particularly in relation to staff employed under agency contracts.

Note: for some workplaces, there may be an occupational health service provided. However, this is unlikely to be available in the majority of workplaces. In situations where the employer has put in place an occupational health service, the service can be used to address any worker concerns and communicate the messages about good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing. An organisation's occupational health service may also provide training and advice on the measures recommended in this Protocol to reduce the spread as well as advice on case or outbreak management and on fitness to return to work.

Note: Downloading and using the HSE COVID-19 tracker app is also an important measure that can be adopted. Employers should provide advice on the tracker and encourage workers

to download. Workers should download as it can be used for contact tracing purposes in and out of the workplace.

D. Implement the COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene and follow respiratory etiquette.

D1. Hand Hygiene

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

Employers must:

- ensure that appropriate hygiene facilities and materials are in place to accommodate workers adhering to hand hygiene measures.
- make available advice and training on [how to perform hand hygiene](#) effectively.
- display posters on how to wash hands in appropriate locations throughout the workplace.
- provide hand sanitisers (alcohol or non-alcohol based) where washing facilities cannot be accessed. In choosing an alcohol-based sanitiser, a minimum of 60% alcohol is required. Note: alcohol-based hand sanitisers are highly flammable and must not be stored or used near heat or a naked flame. Refer to the Appendix for advice on choosing a hand sanitiser.

Workers must:

- be familiar with and follow [hand hygiene guidance and advice](#).
- wash their hands with soap and water or with hand sanitiser (alcohol (minimum of 60%) and or non-alcohol based) for at least 20 seconds and in particular:
 - after coughing and sneezing,
 - before and after eating,
 - before and after preparing food,
 - before and after removing their face covering,

- if in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms,
 - before and after being on public transport,
 - before and after being in a crowd,
 - when arriving and leaving the workplace/other sites,
 - when entering and exiting vehicles,
 - before having a cigarette or vaping,
 - when hands are dirty. If visibly dirty, wash hands with soap and water, and
 - after toilet use.
- avoid touching their eyes, mouth, or nose.
 - have access to facilities to support hand hygiene (for example hand sanitiser/hand wipes/hand washing facilities).
 - not share objects that touch their mouth, for example, bottles or cups.
 - use own pens for signing in/out.

D2. Respiratory Hygiene

In addition to hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene and etiquette is also necessary.

Employers must:

- provide tissues as well as bins/bags for their disposal.
- empty bins at regular intervals.
- provide advice on good respiratory practice including [the safe use, storage and disposal of face masks/coverings and the safe cleaning of face coverings](#).

Workers must:

- adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- be familiar with and follow respiratory hygiene guidance.
- follow good practice on the safe use, storage, disposal and cleaning of face masks/coverings.

D3. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is one of the most important measures in reducing the spread of COVID-19. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres.

Employers must:

- provide for physical distancing across all work activities. This may be achieved in a number of ways:
 - implement a no hand shaking policy.
 - where office work is essential, free office capacity must be used as much as is reasonably practicable and work organised in such a way that multiple occupancy of office premises is avoided and physical distances maintained.
Note: Government advice under the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 continues to recommend that working from home continues as much as possible.
 - organise workers into teams or pods who consistently work and take breaks together. The teams should be as small as is reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done, Refer to the Appendix for general advice on the use of teams/pods.
 - organise breaks in such a way as to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing during breaks.
 - reorganise and rearrange working and break areas. For example, placing tables and chairs far enough apart in canteens.
 - consider closing canteen facilities if public health measures including social distancing cannot be facilitated. If closing, provide information on alternative delivery options. **Note:** by providing canteen facilities in the workplace in a controlled manner, this can reduce the need for workers to congregate in other less well-controlled locations outside the workplace (i.e., cars and shops).
 - stagger canteen use and extend serving times.
 - implement a queue management system with correct distance markings to avoid queues at food counters, tray return points and checkouts.
 - put in place card payment methods where practicable.
 - allocate specific times for collections, appointments and deliveries.

- conduct meetings as much as possible using online remote means. Where face-to-face meetings are necessary, these must be arranged in line with the Government advice that is in place at the time of holding the meeting. Furthermore, the length of the meeting and the numbers attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times. Proper ventilation, for example open windows, should also be in place. Attendance in a meeting room for a prolonged period may result in attendees being considered close contacts should an outbreak occur.
- provide one-way systems for access/egress routes in the workplace/canteen where practicable.
- adapt existing sign-in/sign-out measures and systems, for example, biometrics/turnstiles.
- ensure that workers sharing collective accommodation at a place of work are grouped in fixed teams or pods that are as small as is reasonably practicable and consist of individuals who also work together. As far as is reasonably practicable:
 - each team or pod should, where reasonably practicable, be provided with their own communal facilities (washrooms, kitchens and communal rooms) in order to avoid the additional burden of shift-wise use and the necessity to clean between occupancy by different teams. If this is not possible, employers should implement phased use and an enhanced cleaning regime.
 - accommodation must be regularly cleaned and ventilated either manually (by opening windows and doors) or mechanically.
 - sleeping accommodation should normally be occupied singly.
 - additional rooms must be provided for early isolation of infected persons.
- prevent gatherings of workers in the workplace at the beginning and end of working hours, such as, at time recording terminals and in changing rooms, washrooms, locker rooms and showers.
- implement physical distancing during any outdoor work activity. For outdoor work activities, facilities for frequent hand hygiene should be provided and should be located close to where workers are working. Outdoor toilet facilities, if reasonably practicable, should also be considered.

In settings where 2-metre worker separation cannot be ensured by organisational means, alternative protective measures should be put in place, for example:

- Maintain a distance of at least 1 metre or as much distance as is reasonably practicable.
- Minimise any direct worker contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids, such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc. that are readily accessible so workers can perform hand hygiene as soon as the work task is complete.
- Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards between workers.
- Provide PPE as appropriate (see section below).
- Provide face coverings in line with public health advice.

Note: Wearing of masks is not a substitute for the IPC measures outlined above but they may be used in addition to these measures especially where maintaining physical/social distancing is difficult. If masks are worn, they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues. Refer to the Appendix for further general advice regarding face coverings.

Note: Screens do not need to be floor to ceiling but should be of an adequate height (e.g., cover a person in a standing position) and width to block the pathway from the nose and mouth to the face and workspace of the other persons. Screens may be fixed or mobile depending on requirements including emergency access. Screens should be regularly cleaned with detergent and water. Further advice on screens is given by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre ([HPSC](#)) and the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health ([NCCEH](#)).

D4. Pre-Return to Work Measures

Before returning to work for the first time after a workplace closure, the following steps should be put in place and completed by both employers and workers.

Employers must:

- establish and issue a pre-return to work form for workers to complete in advance of returning to work. This form should seek confirmation that the worker, to the best of their knowledge:

- has no symptoms of COVID-19.
- is not awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test.
- is not self-isolating or restricting their movements.
- has not returned from travel abroad.

Note: From 9 November, Ireland is implementing the new EU “traffic lights” approach to travel, which applies to countries in the EU/EEA (+UK). The advice for travel to these countries remains “exercise a high degree of caution.” [The general advice for any other overseas travel remains “avoid non-essential travel” or some cases, “do not travel.”](#) Travel within the island of Ireland can continue as normal, subject to domestic public health restrictions on gov.ie. [Workers who have travelled abroad](#) – only in certain defined circumstances – may be able to return to work after their arrival back in Ireland. Details on the defined circumstances are available at gov.ie.

- include the following questions on the form. If a worker answers Yes to any of them, they are required to follow the medical advice they receive or seek medical advice before returning to work:
 - Do you have symptoms of cough, fever/high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days? Yes/No
 - Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days? Yes/No
 - Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test? Yes/No
 - In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19? Yes/No
 - Have you been advised to self-isolate at this time? Yes/No

- Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time? Yes/No
- Have you been advised to [cocoon](#) at this time? Yes/No. **Note:** if you're at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 you may be advised to cocoon.
- provide an induction training for all workers on their return to work. This training should at a minimum include the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health. The HSA has a free online course [Return to Work Safely Induction](#), which employers can use. Specific items to be covered include:
 - what a worker should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 at home or at work.
 - details of the IPC measures at the workplace to address the risk from COVID-19.
 - an outline of the COVID-19 response plan.
 - identification of points of contact for the employer and the Lead Worker Representative.
 - any other sector specific advice that is relevant.
- put in place the necessary controls identified in the risk assessment to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- implement temperature testing as advised by Public Health. Currently there is no public health requirement to undertake temperature testing/screening in the workplace. However, in certain sectors and workplaces, Public Health have advised the employer to put in place temperature check, for example on entry to the facility or during shift work, and in such sectors, the employer will implement this requirement as it is advised by Public Health.
- implement any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing requirements as advised by Public Health.

Workers must:

- complete and submit the pre-return to work form before they return to work.
- inform their employer if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work. For example, if they are in the very high-risk category.
- stay at home if displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or feeling unwell.

- self-isolate or restrict their movements at home in line with their family doctor and/or public health advice.
- contact their family doctor promptly if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their workplace as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health and implemented by their employer.
- restrict their movements if they:
 - are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 (even if a test or tests performed within the 14-day period of restricted movements comes back as “not-detected”).
 - live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.
 - have travelled outside of Ireland, unless they fall into certain defined categories (refer to Note above on travel and keep up to date with advice on [travelling outside Ireland](#) and [returning to Ireland](#)).
- self-isolate for the advised period and not return to work until symptom free and free from fever for the last 5 days of the period if they have had a positive test for COVID-19.
- participate in any induction training provided by the employer on their return to the workplace.
- cooperate with their employer in relation to prevention measures including physical distancing, hand hygiene and wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required.
- complete any temperature testing implemented by their employer on foot of public health advice.

Completed forms should only be retained for as long as necessary by the employer and in line with the advice from the [Data Protection Commission](#).

Employers can provide the pre-Return to Work Form in a range of ways: paper copy, electronic copy, through apps or other online facilities. In using electronic or online formats, the same questions should be asked and the same approach regarding keeping these forms will apply.

While the form itself does not need to be resubmitted, employers may request workers to reconfirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain the same following an extended

period of absence from a workplace (e.g., following annual leave) or where the worker may only access the workplace infrequently.

D5. Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace

The key message remains that a worker should not attend work if they are displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell.

However, while a worker should not attend work if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, the following outlines the steps employers should put in place to deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

Employers must:

- include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case in the COVID-19 response plan.
- appoint a case manager/designated contact person(s) for dealing with suspected cases.
- identify a designated isolation area in advance. The designated area and the route to the designated area should be easily accessible and as far as is reasonable and practicable should be accessible by people with disabilities.
- take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID-19 and have additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.
- ensure the designated area has the ability to isolate the person behind a closed door. Where a closed-door area is not possible, the employer must provide for an area away from other workers.
- provide as is reasonably practicable:
 - Ventilation, i.e. via a window.
 - Tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and/or wipes.
 - PPE, gloves, masks.
 - Waste bags/bins.

If a worker displays symptoms of COVID-19 during work, the case manager/designated contact person and the response team must:

- isolate the worker and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
- provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. The worker should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home to call their family doctor and continue treatment and self-isolation at home.
- facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their family doctor. The worker should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment if required. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- carry out an assessment of the incident, which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved (refer to section below on Cleaning).
- provide advice and assistance if contacted by the Department of Public Health or HSE in relation to contact tracing.

Note: if the employer has in place a designated occupational health service, this service may be used by the employer to respond and support measures dealing with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 as set out above.

Further information on [close contacts, casual contacts and testing](#) is available from the HSE website.

D6. At Risk Workers

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. For some people and workers, the risks are higher. There are two levels of higher risk – [very high risk \(extremely vulnerable\) and high risk](#).

There is different public health advice for each of these groups and employers should follow and adopt this advice. If you are at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 you may be advised to [cocoon](#).

If a worker in the very high risk or high-risk categories cannot work from home and must be in the workplace, employers must make sure that they are supported to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from others at the workplace. However, employers should enable such workers to work from home where possible.

D7. Working from home

All staff should continue to work from home to the greatest extent possible. The employer should develop and consult on any working from home policy in conjunction with workers and/or Trades Unions. [Guidance on Working from Home](#) is available from the HSA. The Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 sets out when only essential workers or other designated workers should go to work.

D8. Business Travel

- Business trips and face-to-face interactions should be reduced to the absolute minimum and, as far as is reasonably practicable, online or other alternatives should be made available (e.g., telephone or video conferencing).
- For necessary work-related trips, the use of the same vehicles by multiple workers is not encouraged. The number of workers who share a vehicle – at the same time or one after the other – should be kept to a minimum as far as is as reasonably practicable, for example by assigning a vehicle to a fixed team or pod.
- Workers should be provided with hand sanitisers and cleaning equipment for their work vehicle, with cleaning taking place before and after each shift.

- Workers should be encouraged to travel alone to/from and for work. If using their personal cars for work, they should be accompanied by a maximum of one passenger who shall be seated in adherence with physical distancing guidance. Where workers need to share a work vehicle, or where travelling to work with others in a vehicle, a face covering or mask should be worn in line with public health advice.
- Businesses should refer to the latest Government advice in relation to essential overseas travel for employees. Advice on travel will change as the levels within the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 increase or decrease nationally or regionally.

Note: From 9 November, Ireland is implementing the new EU “traffic lights” approach to travel, which applies to countries in the EU/EEA (+UK). The advice for travel to these countries remains is “exercise a high degree of caution.” The general advice for any other [overseas travel](#) remains “avoid non-essential travel” or some cases, “do not travel.” Travel within the island of Ireland can continue as normal, subject to domestic public health restrictions on [gov.ie](#).

Travellers from abroad with an essential function or need as set out in [paragraph 19 of the EU Council Recommendation](#), including passengers travelling for the purposes of an imperative business reason, are not requested to restrict their movements while carrying out that essential function.

[Irish residents, who have travelled](#) and carried out an [essential function](#) in another region, but who have otherwise restricted their movement while in that region, are not requested to restrict their movements on return.

D9. Contractors and Visitors

- Workers, contractors or visitors visiting workplaces where there are restrictions arising from the risk of COVID-19 should follow the onsite IPC measures and take into account public health advice around preventing the spread of COVID-19. A system for recording visits to the site(s) by workers/others as well as visits by workers to other workplaces should be put in place by employers and completed by workers as required (contact log).

- Induction training for contractors and visitors to the workplace should be provided. The Health and Safety free online course [Return to Work Safely Induction](#) can also be used. The employer should also provide specific advice related to the workplace in addition to this general induction.
- Refer to **Note** in Business Travel section above regarding requirements for travel.

D10. Cleaning

Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals. Further information on cleaning in non-healthcare settings is available from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ([ECDC](#)).

Employers must:

- implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. If disinfection of an area is required, it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.
- ensure contact/touch surfaces such as table tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned at least twice daily.
- implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities, lockers and communal spaces. Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.
- provide workers with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).
- provide workers with hand sanitisers and cleaning equipment for their work vehicle, with cleaning taking place before and after each shift.
- increase number of waste collection points and ensure these are emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.
- modify use of hot desks to ensure that these are made available to identified staff and have appropriate cleaning materials in place for workers to clean the area before and after using.

Note: Personal waste, for example, used tissues, wipes and cleaning material, should be disposed of in a plastic rubbish refuse bag. When the bag is full, it should be tied and placed

into a second refuse bag and tied again. Once the bag has been tied securely, it should be left in a safe location for three days (72 hours) before putting out for collection. Other waste can be put out for collection without delay. For further advice, refer to Health Protection Surveillance Centre ([HPSC](#)) or contact your relevant Local Authority as necessary.

D11. Use of PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other preventative measures as outlined above. Examples of PPE include gloves, goggles and respiratory protection. Use of PPE may already be required in many workplaces to address occupational health and safety risks, for example, exposure to hazardous chemicals.

In the context of COVID-19 risk, employers should check the [HPSC website regularly for updates regarding use of recommended PPE](#).

- All IPC measures and hygiene compliance as set out above should be applied and maintained in all circumstances.
- PPE must be selected based on the hazard and risk to the worker.
- Employers must provide PPE and protective clothing to workers in accordance with identified COVID-19 exposure risks and in line with public health advice.
- Workers should be trained in the proper use, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE.
- Gloves are generally not required for IPC purposes. Where gloves are necessary, they must not be considered a substitute for hand hygiene and hands must be cleaned whenever gloves are removed. Gloves should not create an additional occupational hazard (such as gloves getting caught in rotating parts). Limitations on wearing time and workers' individual susceptibilities (allergies, etc.) must also be considered.
- For particular PPE, such as respirators, these must be properly fitted and periodically refitted, as appropriate.
- PPE needs to be consistently and properly worn when required. In addition, it must be regularly inspected, cleaned, maintained and replaced as necessary. Hands should be sanitised before donning and after doffing PPE
- Further [information on PPE](#) is available from the HSA.
- [Advice for manufacturers and importers who wish to introduce PPE](#) onto the market in response to the current COVID-19 emergency is available from the HSA.

Note: Face Shields designed and authorised as PPE against respiratory droplets should not be mistaken or used as a substitute for impact protection PPE in the workplace, for example, where standard CE marked Face Visor/Face protection PPE is required for work activities such as welding, grinding or to protect against chemical splashes.

D12. Customer Facing Roles

Many of the measures noted above for workers can and should equally be applied for work activity that involves direct customer or client contacts.

Employers must:

- eliminate physical interaction between workers and customers as much as is reasonably practicable through revised working arrangements, for example through provision of online or phone orders, contactless delivery or managed entry.
- provide hand sanitisers at entry/exit points.
- install physical barriers and clear markings to ensure that contact between workers and customers is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues do not form between customers as they wait to be served.
- implement a cleaning regime to ensure that contact points for workers and customers are kept visibly cleaned at all times.
- display the advice on the COVID-19 measures in visible locations to ensure that customers are also adhering to what is required.
- implement and adopt public health regulations in relation to use of face coverings in shops, shopping centres and other indoor settings.
- provide masks to workers who need to interact with customers/others where a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.

4. Worker Role – Workplace and Community Settings

Workers should follow the public health advice and guidance as it relates to workplace and community settings.

Workplace Settings

In the workplace, the worker should follow the requirements set out in this Protocol and with any specific direction from the employer. Workers should also communicate and engage with the Lead Worker Representative as appropriate.

They should also adopt physical distancing and good hygiene practices, such as frequent hand washing, respiratory etiquette to protect themselves and their work colleagues against infection and should seek medical advice if unwell. If a worker has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or if feeling unwell, they should not attend work.

Community Settings

Outside of work, workers should be encouraged to travel alone if using their cars to get to and from work. If this is not possible, workers travelling to/from work together should travel as a team/pod and use face coverings.

Those travelling on public transport to and from work must wear face coverings and follow physical distancing guidelines. In addition, workers who may share accommodation outside of work should be advised to adhere to public health and Government advice.

Workers should avoid congregating in particular settings outside of work. For example, congregating in shops when buying lunch. Similarly, congregating in particular social settings in and out of the home is also something that workers should avoid as such settings (household gatherings, parties) are known areas where COVID-19 transmission is very high.

Outside of work, workers should practice the same IPC measures, physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory etiquette and adhere to the specific requirements of the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 as announced by Government.

If travelling for personal reasons, [follow the travel and public health advice for domestic, EU and international destinations](#) at gov.ie.

5. Occupational Health and Safety Measures and Recommendations

All existing occupational health and safety provisions continue to apply to all workplaces and further information and advice is available on the [HSA website](#) including additional occupational health and safety information on the specific [COVID-19 webpages](#).

Where the IPC measures implemented requires changes to work activities, the employer is required to review and update their occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement.

As employers implement the above measures in the workplace to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for workers, specific occupational health and safety measures may also need to be considered and implemented.

Employers should first take into account the most up-to-date official public health advice and guidance from the Department of Health and the HPSC on how to mitigate the health risk including measures advised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for work related travel.

Where a risk of exposure to COVID-19 is identified in the COVID-19 response plan, an occupational health and safety risk assessment should also be completed. All of the public health and occupational health and safety measures should be developed in consultation with workers and/or Trades Unions and ultimately communicated to workers and others at the workplace.

Employers should also communicate with safety representatives selected or appointed under the occupational health and safety legislation and consult with workers on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace. Further information on the role of [Safety Representative](#) is available on the HSA website.

The employer can also use a competent person responsible for managing health and safety (internally or externally) as required to ensure the effective implementation of changes to work activities and the implementation of IPC measures in the workplace.

A. Reporting Requirements if a worker contracts COVID-19

COVID-19 is reportable under [the Infectious Diseases \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#) by a medical practitioner who becomes aware of or suspects an instance of such disease. Such a report should be sent to the [Medical Officer of Health/Director of Public Health at the local Public Health Department](#).

There is no requirement for an employer to notify the HSA if a worker contracts COVID-19. Diseases or occupational illnesses are not reportable under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 2016 (S.I. No. 370 of 2016).

The Biological Agents Regulations (S.I. No. 572 of 2013) and associated Code of Practice are being updated to take account of the addition of the virus, SARS-CoV-2, as a risk group III biological agent to Annex III of the Directive (Commission Directive 2000/54/EC). This Regulation lays down the minimum requirements for protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work. Further advice on the new requirements related to SARS-CoV-2 under the [Biological Agents Regulations](#) are available from the HSA.

B. First Aid

In the event that first aid is required in the workplace, it may not be possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres. Workers with a specific role in acting as first responders should be provided with updated training on infection prevention and control principles including performance of hand hygiene and appropriate use of personal protective equipment when delivering first aid.

Further advice on first aid is available from the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC), who have provided advice in relation to return to work and first aid ([Update on FAR Responder Recertification](#)).

Advice is also available on the [HSA website](#).

C. Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Employers should put in place support for workers who may be suffering from anxiety or stress. Workers, when they return to work or as they continue to work, may go through traumatic events such as the serious illness or death of a relative or friend, or be experiencing financial difficulties or problems with their personal relationships.
- Workers who are returning to the workplace after a period of isolation or working from home are also likely to have concerns about the risk of infection or changes to their job due to the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Employers should provide workers with information on publicly available sources of support and advice and information about the prevention and control measures taken in the workplace to reduce the risk of infection.
- Employers should ensure workers are made aware of and have access to any business provided Employee Assistance Programmes or Occupational Health service.
- The HSA has a range of supports, resources and advice such as:
 - [dealing with stress as a result of the changes in a worker's personal and/or working life during COVID-19](#).
 - a free online risk assessment tool for addressing work related stress: [WorkPositive](#).
- The Government's "[In This Together Campaign](#)" also provides information on minding one's mental health as well as tips on staying active and connected and may be useful for use by employers and workers.

D. Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Ventilation refers to the movement of outdoor air into a building, and the circulation of that air within the building or room. This can be achieved through natural means (e.g. opening a window) or mechanical means (e.g. a central heating, ventilation and air conditioning).

- Natural ventilation through the introduction of fresh air into the workplace e.g. opening doors and windows. Cross-ventilation is a good option for window ventilation as it facilitates the quick exchange of room air for fresh air through widely opened windows opposite to each other where possible. Propping open internal doors may increase air movement and ventilation rate. (Note: fire doors should not be propped open unless fitted with approved automatic closers so that they function as fire doors in the event of an alarm or fire).
- Mechanical ventilation through the use of HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems. These provide comfortable environmental conditions (temperature and humidity) and clean air in indoor settings such as buildings and vehicles. Switching off air conditioning is not required to manage the risk of COVID-19. However, as many air conditioning units just heat, cool and recirculate the air, it is important to check ventilation systems to ensure that there is an adequate supply of fresh air (from a clean source) and that recirculation of untreated air is avoided. Where workplaces have Local Exhaust Ventilation, the make-up air should ideally come from outdoor air rather than from adjacent rooms.

Further information on ventilation is available at:

- [HPSC](#)
- [WHO](#) -
- [ECDC](#)
- [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work \(General Application\) Regulations 2007, S.I. No. 299 of 2007](#)
- [Federal Environment Agency, Indoor Air Hygiene Commission \(IRK\)](#)
- [CIBSE Ventilation Guidance](#)

E. Legionella

For some places of work such as hotels, leisure facilities, offices, dental clinics and hairdressers, the employer needs to put in place control measures to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease. Further advice on the [prevention of Legionnaires' disease](#) is available from HSA.

6. Advice for Employers and Workers

- The Health and Safety Authority Workplace Contact Unit can be contacted at
 - Tel: 1890 289 389 and Email - wcu@hsa.ie
 - An online [complaint form](#) is also available and this should be used where possible.
- The Health Service Executive, [HSElive](#).
 - Tel: 1850 241850
- [Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment](#) COVID-19 Business Support Call Centre - for information on the Government supports available to businesses impacted by COVID-19.
 - Tel: 01 631 2002 and Email: infobusinesssupport@enterprise.gov.ie
- Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) Information and Customer Service:
 - Tel: 059 9178 990
- National Standards Authority of Ireland ([NSAI](#))
 - Tel: 01 807 3800 and Email: COVID-19-support@nsai.ie

7. Information on Public Health and Occupational Health and Safety

- Health and Safety Authority ([HSA](#))
- Health Service Executive ([HSE](#))
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre ([HPSC](#))
- European Commission: [COVID-19: Back to the workplace - Adapting workplaces and protecting workers](#)
- EU OSHA: [COVID-19: back to the workplace in safe and healthy conditions](#)
- World Health Organization (WHO): [Coronavirus](#)
- World Health Organisation (WHO) [Getting Your Workplace Ready](#) guide
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC): [COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO): [In the face of a pandemic: Ensuring Safety and Health at Work](#)
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: [Controlling COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

8. Information on Business Continuity and Supports

- Information on a wide range of Government supports for COVID-19 impacted businesses can be found on Gov.ie. This [includes information on financial supports, sectoral specific supports, and training](#).
- Business Continuity Guides and resources are available from the NSAI. See [NSAI Business Guides and Technical Resources](#).
- Key supports and resources available to help businesses impacted by COVID-19 can be found on the [Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment](#) website.

9. Appendix – Further Public Health Advice and Information

MANAGEMENT OF A CASE OR CASES (OUTBREAK) IN THE WORKPLACE

An outbreak of COVID-19 is when two or more cases of the disease are linked by time, place or person. The management of an outbreak is managed by the local Departments of Public Health to enable the outbreak to be brought under control as quickly as possible. It also requires close engagement and cooperation between the employer, the LWR, the staff, representatives and in particular with the worker(s) affected. Outbreaks in a single workplace, which are not managed and brought under control quickly, can rapidly spread to other workplaces and/or the wider community. Continuous and effective communication between all parties is essential.

While the Departments of Public Health are responsible for managing an outbreak, employers and/or workers may, for example, need to:

- co-operate with their local [Department of Public Health](#) if there is a case or number of cases in their workplace.
- continue to strictly follow all IPC measures and the steps advised in response to an individual case of COVID-19 during an outbreak.
- assign a designated manager/HR staff member to liaise with staff on COVID-19 issues and liaise directly with the local Department of Public Health for advice and support during an outbreak.
- communicate and liaise with staff, Lead Worker Representative and others as required.
- encourage workers to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app. This can assist Public Health in relation to for example completing risk assessments and contact tracing.

Additional advice on dealing with a suspected case or managing an outbreak are available from the [HPSC](#) website.

CHOOSING A HAND SANITISER

Hand sanitising gels are biocides and fall under the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) – Regulation (EU) 528/2012. The Pesticide Registration and Control Division (PRCD) of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is the competent authority for biocides in Ireland. Only biocidal products listed on the DAFM biocide product register are legal to market and use in Ireland. Employers should ensure that all sanitisers and disinfectants they have in the workplace carry a PCS 9xxxx, PCS 1xxxxx, IE/BPA 7xxxx or an EU-000xxx-xx registration number on the label. Each product registered by DAFM will carry a unique registration number specific to that particular product. If the product label does not contain any of these number formats, the employer should not purchase or use the product. To confirm the biocide can be used on the Irish market, the employer can check the registers of products online at [Biocidal Product Registers](#). Further information from DAFM on Sanitisers and Disinfectants is available by contacting them at biocide-enforcement@agriculture.gov.ie or at the [Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine](#) website.

Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 must contain a minimum of 60% alcohol. Non-alcohol based hand sanitiser may also be used. However, in choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against Coronavirus.

USE OF IDENTIFIED TEAMS OR PODS

As noted above, workers should be organised into pods or groups, where possible. Pod members should work together, take their breaks together, change together and as far as possible even travel to work together, etc. If one person then becomes a suspected or confirmed case only members of their pod are contacts and the pod can be excluded together. This will allow the appropriate skill mix to always be available and facilitate the smoother running of the workplace preventing key workers being excluded together.

Workers travelling in pods should wear face masks/face coverings and wash their hands before and after travelling together. Where possible, the canteen should be split into zones and specific zones then assigned to specific pods in the production area. Break times and subsequent cleaning should be staggered along zone/pod lines too.

FACE COVERINGS – FACE MASK - VISORS

The wearing of face coverings or masks is not a substitute for other measures outlined above (physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory contacts, minimising contacts) but they may be used in addition to these protective measures, especially where maintaining physical/social distancing is difficult. Surgical masks are not currently recommended for use outside of health care settings.

A face covering is a material you wear that covers the nose and mouth. Wearing a face covering reduces the spread of COVID-19 in the community. It helps to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets from people infected with COVID-19. This helps to stop people who do not know they have the virus from spreading it to others. If a face covering or mask is worn, it should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues. Further information on the handling and care of cloth face coverings can be found [here](#).

Visors are not the best option for protecting yourself and others from COVID-19. Visors may stop some spread of droplets from your nose or mouth. This is better than not wearing any face covering. Visors should only be worn if you have an illness or impairment that makes wearing a face covering difficult or if you are dealing with people with particular needs (e.g., hard of hearing). Where visors are used, they should cover the entire face (above the eyes to below the chin and wrap around from ear to ear) and be correctly applied. Reusable visors should be cleaned after each use and then stored in a clean place until needed.

By law ([S.I. No. 296 of 2020](#)), you have to wear a face covering on public transport, and in the following locations. Note: this Regulation is now in place until 9 June 2021 (The Health Act 1947 (Section 31A – Temporary Restrictions) (Covid-19) (Face Coverings in Certain Premises and Businesses) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2020 ([S.I. No. 511 of 2020](#))).

- shops, including pharmacies
- shopping centres
- libraries
- cinemas and cinema complexes
- theatres
- concert halls

- bingo halls
- museums
- nail salons
- hair salons and barbers
- tattoo and piercing parlours
- travel agents and tour operators
- laundries and dry cleaners
- bookmakers

It is generally recommended that in public settings, cloth face coverings should be worn especially where the wearer is at a high level (standing) than those potentially exposed at a lower level (sitting).

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) advise that face coverings made to the [SWiFT 19](#) or [CEN/CWA 17553](#) specifications should be the preferred option for masks and coverings used by consumers in public settings such as public transport, supermarkets and shops, and other enclosed areas where it may be difficult to maintain social distancing guidelines.

Office locations are not currently listed as [locations where faces coverings must be worn](#). However, consideration may be given to wearing face coverings in places or situations where it may be difficult to achieve or maintain 2m physical/social distancing. This might include:

- When entering and exiting buildings
- Public access areas in buildings, including receptions/foyers
- When moving throughout buildings to toilets, photocopiers, on stairwells etc.
- Canteens and kitchen areas (prior to and after eating) or when using facilities such as boilers, toasters.

Employers and workers should keep up to date with the latest public health advice and regulations in relation to use of face coverings. The HPSC have published general advice around the [efficacy of visors compared with masks in the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 in non healthcare settings](#).

SECTORAL SPECIFIC ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The Return to Work Safely Protocol, published in May 2020, formed the basis for many of the specific sectoral guidance documents further developed by individual sectors in conjunction with Public Health. Sectors are now required to review their existing advice and guidance to ensure it is line with the updated Work Safely Protocol.

In addition to specific advice prepared by sectors, The HSE Departments of Public Health and the HPSC may also provide specific advice to sectors in response to outbreaks or other evidence and data. In such cases, the employers and workers in the particular sector should adopt the specific public health advice provided.

A non-exhaustive list of sectors where specific public health advice has been provided is given below and employers and workers should keep up to-date as this guidance advice is subject to change:

- Healthcare
- Social care
- Retail
- Meat Processing
- Food Processing
- Construction
- Childcare
- Education
- Bars
- Restaurants
- Funeral directors

See [HSPC Guidance on COVID-19 in Ireland](#).

10. Glossary

Asymptomatic – infected but not having symptoms of illness.

Congregated setting – place where groups of people gather where contact with infected people can happen.

HPSC - Health Protection and Surveillance Centre.

HSE - Health Service Executive.

IPC measures - Infection, Prevention and Control measures.

LEEF – Labour Employer Economic Forum.

LWR - Lead Worker Representative.

NPHEM – National Public Health Emergency Team.

Occupational health and safety risk assessment - a term used to describe the overall process or method where you identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm to employees and others at the workplace. Refer to [HSA website](#).

Outbreak - An outbreak of COVID-19 is when two or more cases of the disease are linked by time, place or person.

OSH - Occupational Health and Safety.

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment - means any device or appliance designed to be worn or held by an individual for protection against one or more health and safety hazards.

Respiratory Protective Equipment Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) is a particular type of Personal Protective Equipment, used to protect the individual wearer against inhalation of hazardous substances in the workplace air.

Risk assessment - Risk assessment is a term used to describe the overall process or method where you identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm.

Safety Statement - a written document that represents the employer's commitment to the health and safety of their employees in line with workplace health and safety laws and standards. Refer to [HSA website](#).

SARS-CoV-2 - is the virus which causes COVID-19.

Symptomatic – infected and having symptoms of illness.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Department of Health
Health and Safety Authority
Health Service Executive



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

COVID-19 Induction & Guidance Training Programme

Cork City Council

COVID-19

**Work Safely Induction
&
Guidance Training Programme**



Cork City Council COVID-19 Work Safety
Staff Induction
Advice and Guidance Slide
Revised November 2021

00:01

Introduction



The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted severely on every part of our society and our economy. We are living through a world crisis of an enormous scale. This has led to extraordinary demands and challenges for local authorities. However providers of essential services we have ensured that service provision has been maintained to the highest possible level during COVID-19.



Work is a key part of life and it is important that we can continue to work safely. This presentation is designed to provide information on the key control measures implemented by the Council and our responsibilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

New habits are already well-adapted which will continue to help us combat the virus. While the various vaccines and their delivery provide a clear pathway for us, we must continue to be adhere to public health advice.

The key to a safe workplace remains strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers and employees. Individual behaviour changes and cooperation across the local authority sector will continue to be critical to managing COVID-19 and to minimising the risk of in our workplaces.

Individually we can take precautions which continue to be our first line of defence. No single measure in isolation will control the spread of COVID-19 and the most effective approach is one which involves a combination of societal and personal protective measures.



00:18

Working together to suppress COVID-19 in the Workplace

- In line with current public health guidelines, staff who can do so, are asked to work from home unless it is necessary to attend your workplace in person.
- A collaborative approach to the implementation of the Work Safety Protocol is essential to achieve success and maximum buy-in. Our approach to COVID-19 reflects the positive engagement which we have had with trade unions and their support for the safety at work of their members. We all - employers, trade unions and employees-have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this document in our place of work.
- The City Council has appointed worker representatives charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to.

00:19

COVID-19 How it is spread





- **Close Contact** - COVID-19 is mainly spread through close contact and droplets that come from your nose and mouth, for example from someone who is talking loud, coughing or sneezing. This happens when people are within 1 to 2 metres of each other and is why keeping a 2 metre distance from other people is so effective in reducing the spread.
- **Airborne Transmission** - this is the spread of a virus in tiny water particles, known as aerosols. COVID-19 can spread in crowded or poorly ventilated areas. To protect against airborne spread, keep indoor spaces ventilated by opening windows and doors when possible.
- **Infected Surfaces** - You can also get the virus from infected surfaces. For example, when someone sneezes or coughs, droplets with the virus can fall onto surfaces around them. If you touch that surface and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, you can become infected too. Getting COVID-19 from surfaces is not as common as getting it through close contact with someone who has the virus but it is still important to wash hands properly and often and to clean surfaces.



00:24

COVID-19 Symptoms

The most common symptoms are:

			
Cough: A new cough – this can be any kind of cough not just dry	Fever: High Temperature over 38° C or above	Shortness of Breath or breathing difficulties	Loss or change to your sense or smell or taste

Other symptoms may include:

- runny or blocked nose
- aches and pains or tiredness
- headache
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea
- sore throat

You may not have all of these symptoms. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu. If you are in doubt about any symptoms you have, phone your GP.



5 00:09

COVID-19 symptoms – what to do?

- **Remain vigilant - early intervention helps to prevent the spread of the virus.**
- Do not attend your workplace if you are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. This applies regardless of vaccination status.
- Immediately self isolate and make phone contact with your GP or the HSE Helpline 1800 700 700 and notify your Line Manager / Supervisor.
- While awaiting the test result other people in your household may need to restrict their movements (stay at home).
- If your test comes back as positive for COVID-19 then you must self-isolate and follow the advice of Public Health.
- You will be contacted by HSE Public Health contact-tracers. Your close contacts will be identified, contacted and advised if they are not vaccinated, to restrict their movements and get tested. If they are household close contacts, even if fully vaccinated, they will need to restrict movements until they have had 3 negative antigen tests within 5 days.
- All close contacts regardless of whether they are vaccinated or not need to self-isolate and get tested **if they have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.**



6 00:20

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms at work

Current advice is to work from home where possible.

Those that are required to attend the workplace **should not do so** if they have **any** symptoms of COVID-19. If you develop symptoms while at work follow workplace isolation procedures:

Isolate from other staff members -

- If it is not possible to find a room in which to isolate, please ensure you keep a distance of 2 metres from others.
- Notify your Line Manager by phone immediately
- Avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- If possible, do not use public transport to go home.
- Self isolate at home and phone your GP to arrange a test for COVID-19.

If you cannot go home immediately:

- Remain self isolating in the building and phone your GP
- Wear a face covering / mask
- Go home as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues when you cough or sneeze and bin these tissues in a waste bag.



7 00:25

Close Contact and Casual Contact

Close Contact can mean:

- Spending more than a total of 15 minutes of face to face contact within 2 metres of someone who has COVID-19, indoors or outdoors, over a 24 hour period
- Living in the same house or shared accommodation as someone who has COVID-19
- Spending more than 2 hours in an indoor space with someone who has COVID-19

How you will know if you are a close contact:

You will usually find out if you are a close contact from:

- A text message from the contact tracing team
- The COVID Tracker App
- The public health team investigating confirmed cases within a specific setting.



8 00:18

Close Contacts

What close contacts need to do

If you are a close contact of someone that tests positive for COVID-19, what you need to do depends on if you:

- [have symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- [are fully vaccinated against COVID-19](#)
- [have a weak immune system](#)
- [had a positive COVID-19 PCR test in the last 9 months](#)



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• 00:04

Casual Contact

- You may have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, but do not meet the definition of a close contact in the previous slide. This is a casual contact.
- If you are a casual contact you do not need to restrict your movements. Continue to follow advice on how to protect yourself and others.
- Please see HSE for further information [Close contact and casual contact - HSE.ie](#)



10

• 00:08

Return to work protocol

- In the event of a staff mem being either a suspected / confirmed case of COVID-19 or a known close contact with a confirmed or suspected case, they must follow return to work protocols and follow public health advice in relation to when they can return to workplace.
- This includes completing the pre-return to work form, when requested to do so. Employees should have regard to any changes in their circumstances in relation to the questions on the form and notify their manager/HR immediately.



11

• 00:11

COVID-19 Tracker App

The COVID Tracker App is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- advise you on what to do to protect yourself and others
- keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19
- provide advice on what to do if you have symptoms



You can use the COVID Tracker app to:

- track how you are feeling if you need to later speak with your GP
- help you to get trusted advice quickly
- help to map and predict the spread of the virus

The app is part of the HSE's contact tracing operation. This tool is invaluable for contact tracing where positive Covid-19 cases are identified in the community. The app can be downloaded from [Apple's App Store](#) or the [Google Play Store](#).



12

• 00:06

Protection against getting COVID-19

The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is through prevention measures such as wearing masks/ face coverings, physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, increasing ventilation and staff themselves deciding to be vaccinated.



13 + 00:06

Protection against getting COVID-19



Hand Hygiene - Wash hands regularly and avoid touching your face and eyes with your hands. Use hand sanitizer where soap and water is not available. Many hand sanitizers are alcohol based and highly flammable. Do not use near heat or a naked flame. If hands are visibly dirty, wash hands with soap and water prior to using the sanitizer. Remember this should be for at least 20 seconds.

Watch this short video demonstrating how to wash your hands properly, and help prevent the transmission of COVID-19: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pL81181800>



Cough Etiquette - when coughing / sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or a tissue. Place used tissues into a closed bin and wash hands.



Clean and disinfect frequently - touched objects and surfaces. Keep your environment clean.



14 + 00:19

Protection against getting COVID-19



Unnecessary Contact - Do not shake hands or make unnecessary contact with other people, if possible.



Physical Distancing - (also known as social distancing) aims, through a variety of means, to decrease or interrupt the spread of COVID-19. It does this by minimizing contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals. Physical distancing is one of the most important measures in reducing the spread of COVID-19.



The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres. It is important that you follow any measures put in place by your employer to maintain physical distancing.

If your work activity is going to require close contact within 2 metres, STOP and ask your line manager / supervisor for advice. This will require a risk assessment resulting in additional protection measures.



15 + 00:21

Protection against getting COVID-19



Physical Distancing - (continued)

Recommendations for physical distancing may include:

- Avoiding any crowded places
- When in public areas be respectful of the local community. Avoid gathering in groups and follow physical distancing.
- Organising office space in such a way that physical distances are maintained.
- Organising teams / rows to consistently work and take breaks together. The teams should be as small as is reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done.
- Organising breaks to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing.
- Conducting meetings using online remote means as much as possible. Where face to face meetings are necessary, the length of the meeting and the numbers attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Reorganising and rearranging working and break areas e.g. placing tables and chairs far enough apart in canteens.
- Providing one-way systems for access/egress routes where practicable.
- Implementing physical distancing during outdoor work activity.



16 + 00:20

Ventilation

- Ventilation refers to the movement of outdoor air into a building, and the circulation of that air within the building or room while removing stale air to improve the air quality. This can be achieved through natural means (e.g. opening a window) or by mechanical means e.g. HVAC systems.
- The primary principle for improving ventilation is to minimise transmission, so that the level of "fresh" outside air should be maximised therefore reducing the level of recirculated air in the workspace.
- Adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace can be achieved by:
 - Natural ventilation which relies on passive air flow through windows, doors and air vents that can be fully or partially opened. This is the simplest way to ensure adequate air quality in poorly ventilated areas. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure security and safety measures.
 - Mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts including window fans to bring in fresh air from outside.
 - A combination of natural and mechanical ventilation, for example where mechanical ventilation relies on natural ventilation to maximise fresh air.
- It is not a standalone measure and continued adherence to other Public Health advice such as hand-washing, surface cleaning, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing is essential.



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00:10

Vaccination against COVID-19

The HSE are responsible for the roll out of the vaccination programme. The HSE website provides a range of information about the vaccine and details of vaccine roll out:

<https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/>

It is important to note that irrespective of the vaccination roll-out, public health infection prevention and control measures (such as physical distancing, hand hygiene, face coverings and adequate ventilation) all remain in place.



18

00:12

Protection against getting COVID-19 : FACE COVERINGS

- By law, you have to wear face coverings in certain places such as on public transport, in shops and in some other indoor settings.
- Face coverings are also recommended when staying 2 metres apart from people is difficult and in shared work areas, during breaks, in locker and toilet areas and if travelling together for work. This is as an extra preventative measure.
- Wearing a face covering is not a substitute for other control measures. If you wear a face covering you should still do the important things needed to stop the spread of the virus:
 - Physical distancing
 - Covering mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze
 - Washing hands often and properly
 - Not touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- If face coverings are worn, they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues.



19

00:05

Protection against getting COVID-19

Travelling to work -

When travelling to work it is preferable that you do so alone by walking, cycling, using a private vehicle.



Avoid public transport if possible. If this is not possible, ensure you take steps to protect yourself.

- Wear a face covering.
- Take a seat, avoid being close to others.
- Avoid touching transmission points such as handrails.
- Bring hand sanitiser.



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00:15

Protection against getting COVID-19

Travelling for work and mobile plant -



The occupancy level of vehicles is to be minimised and single occupancy for vehicles is preferable.



If more than one per person per vehicle, the following measures should be followed:



- Wear a face covering/mask as appropriate.
- Sit as far apart as the vehicle allows.
- Passenger to travel in the back of the vehicle at left passenger side.
- Keep windows of vehicles open, at least partially.
- Practice good respiratory hygiene.
- Key touch points in vehicles / mobile plant are to be wiped regularly (e.g. door handles, steering wheel, handbrake, gear stick, radio controls).
- Hand Hygiene - hands sanitised before and after entering / exiting the vehicle. Hygienic wipes and hand sanitiser must be available for this purpose.
- Cough Etiquette - when coughing / sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or a tissue.



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★ 00:15

Protection against getting COVID-19

Welfare Facilities -

When using welfare facilities such as canteen, toilets, drying rooms allow appropriate time and space to facilitate the correct levels of hygiene and physical distancing. Be respectful of these boundaries.



Toilets:
You must respect the space available to ensure physical distancing. This may require a longer wait.



Canteen:
Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact. Cleaning materials will be provided, please clean area when finished break/s and dispose of rubbish appropriately. Do not share objects that touch your mouth e.g. bottles, cups. Always be vigilant of sources of contamination.



Drying Rooms:
You must respect the space available to ensure physical distancing while you change.

Report any concerns to the line manager or supervisor.



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★ 00:21

Protection against getting COVID-19

Work Environment -

We must all work as a team. Throughout your day you should:



- Continue to maintain hygiene by washing your hands regularly. Keep your workspace clean and disinfected.
- Regularly clean high touch surfaces e.g. Handrails, Tables, desks, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, handles, phones, keyboards, toilets, taps and sinks.
- Be mindful of distractions.



Equipment, tools and plant -

- Equipment, tools and plant should not be shared where possible.
- Keep equipment, tools and plant clean and don't share unless sanitised.
- Keep hands sanitised before and after use.



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★ 00:18

Protection against getting COVID-19

When going home -

When going home:

- PPE must remain at the depot / drying room / store.



- It is recommended that clothes are washed daily.
- Wash your hands before you leave.
- Travel alone if possible by walking, cycling, using a private vehicle.
- Keep contact points on your vehicle clean.
- Wash your hands when you return home, change your clothes and leave your boots outside.



24

★ 00:05

Lead Worker Representative

The Government's Work Safety Protocol requires that each workplace will appoint at least one Lead Worker Representative (LWR) to work with the employer to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Lead worker representative(s) should:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining physical distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.



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00:18

City Council Lead Worker Representative

The lead worker representative for the City Council is Kathryn Collins and the two worker representatives are Kevin McCarthy and Denis Crowley.

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00:09

Wellbeing

Infectious disease outbreaks like coronavirus (COVID-19), can be worrying and can affect your mental health. As well as your Local Authority's Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme, there are many public resources available which can be accessed at the links below.

Mental health supports and services during COVID-19:

- <https://www2.hse.ie/ent/being/mental-health/mindnag-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/coronavirus-together/?ref=mer-together/>
- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health/services/connective-for-life/over-support-and-services-during-covid-19.html>



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00:09

Cork City Council Contacts for COVID-19 issues

You can contact any of the following for advice and guidance:

- Your line manager
- The Council's Health and Safety Officer, Paula Kennedy
- The People and Organisation Development Directorate: peo@cc-cork.ie
- The Staff Covid-19 Confidential Helpline ext 4388 / 021 4924098
- The Lead Worker Rep, Kathryn Collins
- Support is always available to staff through the Employee Assistance Programme which you can contact on 1800 946 799
- Your local trade union representative

Further information is available on the staff section of the website:

<https://www.corkcity.ie/corkcity/en/social-services/health-room/staff-section>

You can also call the HSE National helpline on 1800 700 700

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00:24

Final Notes

We must all depend on each other to protect ourselves, our families, our colleagues and our community.

It is essential that we continue to follow current Government restrictions:

- Work from home where possible
- Take ownership of your own and others safety
- Maintain physical distancing
- Limit physical contact
- Wash your hands and practice good respiratory etiquette
- Open windows
- Download and use the Covid Tracker App

If in doubt stop and ask your line manager



33

• 00:27

Thank You



34

• 00:12



We are Cork.



35

• 00:11

APPENDIX 19 - COVID-19 Local Authority Standard Operating Guidance (SOG)



COVID-19 Local Authority Standard Operating Guidance (SOG) Revision 14: 7th December 2021

COVID-19 Local Authority Standard Operating Guidance (SOG)	
No	SOG
1	Construction COVID-19 Requirements
2	Building & Civil Engineering Contractors Contractor COVID-19 Requirements
3	Welfare Units COVID-19 Requirements
4	Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements
5	Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements.
6	Meeting and Working Close to Members of the Public (Version 3)
7	Maintenance & Inspection of Parks and Playgrounds COVID 9 Requirements
8	Beach / Harbour COVID-19 Requirements
9	Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2)
10	First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements
11	Canteen / Eating COVID-19 Requirements
12	Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2)
13	Attendance at Emergency Callout
14	Travelling to Work / Site (Version 2)
15	Personal Protective Equipment – Requirements and Use – COVID-19
16	Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant
17	Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2)
18	The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment.
19	Local Authority Vet and Veterinary Inspectors - COVID-19 Requirements
20	Open Water Lifeguarding – COVID-19 Requirements
21	Local Authority Housing Maintenance (Version 2)
22	Management of Construction Projects
23	Libraries – COVID 19 Requirements (Version 7)
24	Local Authority Public Toilets
25	Delivery of Training – Regional Training Centre (Version 2)
26	Non-Routine or Un-Announced Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property or Private Residential Property – COVID - 19 Requirements (Version 2)
27	Local Authority Only, Operated Leisure, Gym & Sports Centres (Version 6)
28	Local Authority Only, Operated Swimming Pools (Version 5)
29	School Wardens
30	Attendance at Council Meetings by Elected Members & Council Officials / Others (Media & Public) and attendance at other meetings or Council Buildings (Version 2)

Main Local Authority Works Area	Associated LGMA Pertinent Sub Activity Standard Operation Guidance
Roadwork's Construction Municipal Districts General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (Fixed and Mobile Sites) COVID-19 Requirements 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 3. Welfare Units COVID-19 Requirements 4. Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements 5. Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements. 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 7. Maintenance & Inspection of Parks and Playgrounds COVID-19 Requirements 8. Beach / Harbour COVID-19 Requirements 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 13. Attendance at Emergency Callout 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 17. Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment. 22. Management of Construction Projects
Water Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (Fixed and Mobile Sites) COVID-19 Requirements 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 13. Attendance at Emergency Callout 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 17. Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment. 22. Management of Construction Projects 26. Non-Routine or Un-Announced Site Inspections of <u>Non Residential</u> Private Property or Private Residential Property (Version 2)
Housing Construction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (Fixed and Mobile Sites) COVID-19 Requirements 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 4. Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 13. Attendance at Emergency Callout 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 17. Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment. 21. Local Authority Housing Maintenance (Version 2) 22. Management of Construction Projects
Environment / Landfill Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (Fixed and Mobile Sites) COVID-19 Requirements 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 13. Attendance at Emergency Callout 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 17. Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment. 19. Local Authority Vet and Veterinary Inspectors - COVID-19 Requirements 21. Local Authority Housing Maintenance (Version 2) 22. Management of Construction Projects 26. Non-Routine or Un-Announced Site Inspections of <u>Non Residential</u> Private Property or Private Residential Property (Version 2)
Capital Projects Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (Fixed and Mobile Sites) COVID-19 Requirements 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 17. Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment 22. Management of Construction Projects
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 17. Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment 22. Management of Construction Projects 26. Non-Routine or Un-Announced Site Inspections of Non Residential Private Property or Private Residential Property (Version 2)
Cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (Fixed and Mobile Sites) COVID-19 Requirements 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 3. Welfare Units COVID-19 Requirements 4. Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements 5. Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements. 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment 24. Local Authority Public Toilets
Beach Guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Welfare Units COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 8. Beach / Harbour COVID-19 Requirements 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment. 20. Open Water Lifeguarding – Covid-19 Requirements 24. Local Authority Public Toilets
LA staff working in Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment. 23. Libraries – Covid 19 Requirements (Version 7) 24. Local Authority Public Toilets

Public Counters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 17. Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment
Halting Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (Fixed and Mobile Sites) COVID-19 Requirements 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 4. Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3). 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 13. Attendance at Emergency Callout 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment. 21. Local Authority Housing Maintenance (Version 2) 26. Non-Routine or Un-Announced Site Inspections of Non- Residential Private Property or Private Residential Property (Version 2)
LA staff carrying out maintenance of Playgrounds Adult gyms MUGA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 4. Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements 5. Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements. 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 7. Maintenance & Inspection of Parks and Playgrounds COVID-19 Requirements 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 13. Attendance at Emergency Callout 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 24. Local Authority Public Toilets 28. Local Authority Only, Operated Leisure, Gym & Sports Centres (Version 6)
LA staff working in Civic Amenities Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment

<p>LA staff working in Swimming Pools</p>	<p>2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 2) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment 24. Local Authority Public Toilets 27. Local Authority Only, Operated Swimming Pools (Version 5) 28. Local Authority Only, Operated Leisure, Gym & Sports Centres (Version 6)</p>
<p>Delivery of Training</p>	<p>2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment 25. Delivery of Training – Regional Training Centre (Version 2)</p>
<p>Interviews</p>	<p>6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment</p>
<p>LA staff carrying out maintenance of Public Toilets</p>	<p>2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 9. Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2) 14. Travelling for work (Version 2) 15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use 16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant 18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment 24. Local Authority Public Toilets</p>
<p>LA staff working in cultural /tourism buildings</p>	<p>2. Building & Civil Engineering Contractors COVID-19 Requirements 5. Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements. 6. Meeting and Working Close to the Public (Version 3) 10. Occupational First Aid / Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements 11. Canteen Eating Arrangements COVID-19 Requirements</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements (Version 2)14. Travelling for work (Version 2)15. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use16. Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant18. The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment24. Local Authority Public Toilets
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Standard Operating Guidance No. 1

Construction (Fixed and Mobile sites)

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person or living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- COVID -19 PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Line Manager

- Ensure COVID-19 induction training has been provided.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing

General

- Complete the relevant SSWP for the works

Vehicles

- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 14 Travelling to and from site.

Site Activities

- Hand sanitisers shall be made available at main entry and exit points.
- Display HSE COVID-19 information notices at fixed sites.
- Agree work teams / crews to limit movement of staff between teams / crews.
- Regular cleaning of site welfare facilities.
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.
- Line manager to be informed where two metres physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Where it is possible to do so, put a one-way system in place.
- Determine how many can use welfare and changing / shower facilities at a time ensuring that physical distancing can be achieved.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No.16 Use of Tools and Equipment

Meetings and Records

- Inductions, toolbox talks and site meetings should be carried out, if possible, in an open-air setting.
- If indoors, rooms shall be well ventilated / windows open.
- The 2metre physical distance must be adhered to.
- Employees sign in using own pen.
- Regular cleaning of site welfare facilities.

Close Working Less than two metres

In the first instance, all options to eliminate the close working activity should be considered and exhausted.

Where two metres physical distancing cannot be avoided the following is required:

- Risk assessment to be carried out and control measures determined including PPE requirements.
- Only those required for the task shall be allowed within the physical distancing exclusion zone, erect barriers where necessary.
- Limit the amount of time of close working to the absolute minimum.
- Hygiene to be maintained to a high standard:
 - Clean hands before and after activity
 - Avoid touching face
 - Practice good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
 - Work environment and equipment to be cleaned before and after activity
- Avoid physical contact and personnel to operate side by side, facing away from each other where possible.
- PPE used is to be removed and disposed of appropriately i.e. disposable PPE to be double bagged and placed in a bin and non-disposable PPE to be sanitised.

Site Deliveries

- Deliveries to be planned with allocated times for deliveries, collections, and appointments.
- Drivers shall not exit their vehicle unless strictly necessary. If driver does need to exit the vehicle, physical distance of 2m must be maintained with other personnel on site
- Where possible, arrange for paperless delivery acceptance and request electronic copy of the delivery dockets.

- Minimise handling new stock, use old stock first.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 2 Building & Civil Engineering Contractors Covid-19 Requirements

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



PROCEDURES



Notes:

- All Contractors must comply with HSE & Government Guidelines with regard to physical distancing and other COVID 19 measures.
- Contractors should be aware that the CIF has issued “Construction Sector COVID-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures” and an associated online induction course.
- Contractors must also comply with the National Return to Work Safely Protocol, “COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers”.

All contractors should ensure they do the following:

- Revise safety statements and risk assessments to include COVID-19.
- Ensure all employees on site have completed a self-declaration form.
- Ensure appropriate posters and information are available and on display.
- Ensure physical distancing in vehicles as far as is reasonable practicable.
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times.
- Ensure physical distancing in canteens, toilets and welfare units.
- Provide sanitising stations at all entry points and throughout the site where required.
- Provide wipes for sanitising tools and equipment.
- Provide the necessary PPE.
- Provide appropriate means for disposing of PPE.
- Organise / design tasks and activities to ensure physical distancing.
- Provide a procedure for tasks where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Cordon off the works area so that only those who are critical to the work can gain access.
- Protocol for managing deliveries to ensure physical distancing and to prevent cross contamination.
- Ensure site supervision, inspections and audits include compliance with COVID-19 safety precautions.
- Paper work to be managed electronically where possible.
- Provide evidence of compliance with the above to the PSDP/PSCS, as required.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Responsibility of the Contractor to ensure Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 3 Welfare Units

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Line Manager

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been provided.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.

General

- Review of welfare facilities to determine capacity for use to comply with physical distancing requirements.
- Where possible, consideration to be given to avoiding using the canteen facilities in welfare units for the duration of the pandemic.
- employees should be encouraged to bring a packed lunch and flask and take break alone in private vehicle.
- Implement appropriate COVID-19 hygiene regime and ensure adequate provision of cleaning materials
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser must be available.
- Do not share dishes, drinking cups, cutlery and so on.
- Ensure hands are washed before eating.
- All rubbish should be disposed of in a suitable bin.

High Touch Areas

- Areas include cupboards, food storage presses, table, chairs, door handles, kettle, microwave.
- Wash or sanitise your hands before touching anything.
- If you are leaving items in the Welfare Unit ensure the wrapping / bag is clean.
- If you are leaving items in cupboards, or other storage spaces such as drawers or fridges, ensure they are clean.
- Wash cleaning materials or use clean disposable materials.
- Partly eaten food is not to be returned to communal storage, uneaten food is to be put in a bin.
- Clean all surfaces with surface contact disinfectant (for example, door, microwave, fridge, table, chairs, kettle, bin lids and so on).
- Welfare Unit to be thoroughly cleaned at the start and end of each day and when moving to a new work area.

Monitoring of Arrangement

Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 4 Gardening / Landscaping COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Line Managers shall:

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been provided.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing
- Reduce the number of people in any work area to comply with the physical distancing guideline (for example, review work schedule, work practices and task sequence).
- Work teams to be agreed so as to limit movement of staff between teams where possible.
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.
- Arrangements to be made for one individual to use the same tool, plant and equipment as much as possible.

- Where more than one person is likely to use equipment and tools then they should ensure they are wiped down between use and also hands sanitised before and after use.
- Cleaning materials and hand sanitiser must be made available for this purpose.
- Consider use of stickers for tools, equipment and mobile plant to encourage hygiene practices.
- Use toolbox talks to heighten and maintain awareness of employee responsibilities in the workplace in relation to physical distancing.

Employees shall:

- Ensure individual PPE is kept separate from other employees and under no circumstances should it be shared.
- Employees to inform line management of any works where the two-metre physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Refer to SOG No 16 Use of Tools and Equipment
- Standard manual handling and operating procedures apply except where a two (or more) person lift is required. Assess each situation to determine if the lift can be done with the use of mechanical aids / equipment. If two or more people are required and the physical distancing cannot be maintained, then suitable PPE will be required to be worn.
- Where possible the works area shall be cordoned off.
- Where an employee feels that physical distancing cannot be maintained due to the number of public in an area, they shall stop works and report to their Line Manager.

Close Working Less than two metres

In the first instance, all options to eliminate the close working activity should be considered and exhausted.

Where two metres physical distancing cannot be avoided the following is required:

- Risk assessment to be carried out and control measures determined including PPE requirements.
- Only those required for the task shall be allowed within the physical distancing exclusion zone, erect barriers where necessary.
- Limit the amount of time of close working to the absolute minimum.
- Hygiene to be maintained to a high standard:
 - Clean hands before and after activity
 - Avoid touching face
 - Practice good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
 - Work environment and equipment to be cleaned before and after activity
- Avoid physical contact and personnel to operate side by side or facing away from each other where possible.
- PPE used is to be removed and disposed of appropriately i.e. disposable PPE to be double bagged and placed in a bin and non-disposable PPE to be sanitised.

Vehicles

- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 14 Travelling for work

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 5 Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain social distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Line Manager

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been provided.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing
- Reduce the number of people in any work area to comply with the physical distancing guideline (for example, review work schedule, work practices and task sequence).
- Work teams to be agreed so as to limit movement of staff between teams where possible.
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.
- Arrangements to be made for one individual to use the same tool, plant and equipment as much as possible.
- Ensure adequate provision of hand sanitising facilities and cleaning materials.

All Employees should ensure that they do the following:

- Maintain social distancing requirements in line with public health advice.
- Avoid any crowded place and reduce social interactions.
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.
- Use long litter picking tongs, shovels, forks and brushes for cleaning, gathering and picking waste.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No.16 Use of Tools and Equipment
- Sanitise hands before eating and after removing PPE.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 14 Travelling for work
- Use surface contact disinfectant on regularly touched contact points in vehicle (door handles, switches, controls, steering wheels, steering column, windscreen wiper controls, indicator controls, elbow rests, seat positioning controls, gear-stick, buttons, handbrake, radio, and door frame), before and after each use.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 6 Meeting and Working Close to Members of the Public

Date: 17th July 2020

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Face Coverings Advice for Members of the Public

Reflecting government advice and public health advice July 2020, Local Authorities are hereby advised to erect the following signage “On foot of public health advice, customers visiting our buildings are requested to wear face coverings”.

Requirements for Meeting with External Parties

- Before meeting ask (use your Local Authority Form if available) the person / persons the following questions (if the answer to any one or more of the questions is Yes – do not meet and seek the advice of your Line Manager):

1. **Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?**
 2. **Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?**
 3. **Are you a close contact of a person who has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (less than two metres for more than 15 minutes accumulative in one day)?**
 4. **Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?**
 5. **Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?**
- Face to Face interaction must be reduced to the absolute minimum and as far as is reasonably practicable.
 - Use technological alternatives (for example, Telephone or Video conferencing) where possible.
 - Where face to face meetings are necessary:
 - Record and keep details of persons present for the purpose of Contact Tracing if required.
 - Keep room well ventilated
 - Limit the attendance numbers
 - Keep the meeting time as brief as possible.
 - Ensure a suitable cleaning schedule of public areas is in place. Adhere to General Hygiene Procedures and ensure you have washed/sanitised your hands before going to meet members of the public.
 - Welfare facilities / hand sanitiser / wipes to be made available at the meeting room or at the building location.
 - Strictly **no** Hand Shaking (or any physical contact), and the 2 metres physical distancing must be maintained at all times.
 - If a member of the public intentionally coughs/spits withdraw immediately and inform the line manager. Incidents should be reported to Gardai.

Meeting Members of the Public outside of Public Buildings for Visits / Meetings:

- Refer to SOG No 14 Travelling for work
- Aim to keep hardcopy document handling to the absolute minimum.
- Where possible meet outside and keep entering houses / buildings and so on, to the absolute minimum. Keep the meeting to the shortest time possible.
- Make members of the public aware of General COVID-19 Hygiene Requirements, for example, sneezing etiquette and so on.
- Do not accept tea / coffee or other refreshments (politely refuse).
- If any persons display symptoms of COVID-19 leave the area and contact your Line Manager immediately.

Meeting Members of the Public in Public Buildings:

- Manage physical interaction with the public as much as is reasonably practicable through revised working arrangements, for example advise the public to do business online, by phone or by appointment.

- Keep the meeting to the shortest time possible and avoid spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of members of the public.
- Keep counter / table and so on, in meeting area clear and free from unnecessary items.
- Ensure area is cleaned before and after use with contact surface disinfectant.
- Meeting Rooms should be well ventilated / windows opened to allow fresh air circulation.
- Aim to keep hardcopy document handling to the absolute minimum.
- Ensure meeting areas display posters of public health advice in relation to COVID-19
- Have hand sanitizer available and ensure members of the public use it before meeting.
- Do not offer refreshments (tea / coffee and so on)

Working close to Members of the Public

- Consider members of the public when planning work.
- SSWP's should be updated to reflect COVID-19 where necessary.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 7 Maintenance / Inspection of Parks / Playgrounds COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 20th May 2020
Potential Hazards

Version: 1.0

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice
- Inaccessibility to appropriate hand hygiene facilities

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



All Line Managers and Supervisors should ensure that they do the following:

- Provide COVID-19 Induction to all workers; covering public health advice, the workplace control measures and what to do if symptoms develop
- Keep contact log.
- Provide regular COVID-19 safety briefings/toolbox talks to all workers.
- So far as is reasonably practicable, arrange works at times when the public will not be present, or when the number of public in attendance is low.

- Review work activities to ensure Physical Distancing can be maintained. Where 2m cannot be maintained, a risk assessment should be conducted to determine any additional controls which may be required.
- Erect appropriate information signs in conspicuous locations advising of 2m Physical Distance Requirements and reminding all users that all children should be supervised by an adult who should observe public health guidance.
- If possible, consider securing parks and playground at night-time, to prevent anti-social behaviour and the build-up of waste.
- Where possible, benches and seating areas should be rearranged to provide for 2m Physical Distancing.
- Arrangements to be made for one individual to use the same tool, plant and equipment as much as possible.
- Consideration should be given, in park environments, to issuing Covid-19 Vests incorporating 2m Physical Distancing advice on the back.
- Consider implementing a system to assist with compliance with Physical Distance Requirements, particularly in larger parks.

All Employees should ensure that they do the following:

- Maintain Physical Distancing Requirements in line with public health advice at all times.
- Do not shake hands or make close contact with other people.
- Avoid any crowded place and reduce physical interactions.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 14 Travel for Work.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 15 Requirement and Use of PPE
- Avoid touching face, particularly eyes, nose and mouth, at all times.
- Use long litter picking tongs, shovels, forks and brushes for cleaning, gathering and picking waste.
- Ensure all waste is bagged and disposed of appropriately and promptly.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 16 Use of Tools and Equipment.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 18 Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment
- Sanitise or wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking, after removing PPE and at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Wipe down and disinfect regularly touched contact points in vehicle (door handles, switches, controls, steering wheels, steering column, windscreen wiper controls, indicator controls, elbow rests, seat positioning controls, gear-stick, buttons, handbrake, radio, and door frame); with surface contact disinfectant before and after each use.
- Before and after carrying out work activities (such as maintenance/inspections) wipe down and disinfect any regularly touched contact points with surface contact disinfectant
- Where more than one person is likely to use equipment and tools then they should ensure they are wiped down between use and also hands sanitised before and after use
- Cleaning materials and hand sanitiser must be made available for this purpose

- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks, where necessary

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 8 Beach/Harbour Covid-19 Requirements

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



All Line Managers and Supervisors should ensure they do the following:

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been provided.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing and ensure record kept of any administration of first aid.
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.
- Ensure adequate provision of hand sanitising facilities and cleaning materials.

All employees should ensure they do the following:

- Observe HSE advice on hand / respiratory hygiene.
- Observe HSE advice on physical distancing, so far as is reasonably practicable
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 14 Travel for work
- Do not shake hands with other people.
- Leisure craft/members of the public will be admitted to harbours/marinas in line with public health advice.
- Use surface contact disinfectant on regularly touched contact points (door handles, switches, controls, and door frame in lifeguard huts, and so on). Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 12. Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 16 Use of Tools and Equipment
- Where more than one person is likely to use equipment (body boards, life buoys, kettle, first aid box and so on); commonly used surfaces must be cleaned using a surface contact disinfectant. Hands must be washed and sanitised before and after use.
- Wash and sanitise hands before eating and after removing PPE.
- Employees are advised to if possible bring a packed lunch and own their own delph and cutlery;
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.
- Where a member of the public intentionally coughs or spits in the direction of an employee contact your line manager immediately. The incident must be reported to the Gardai.

First Aid / CPR

- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 10 Occupational First Aid

Litter Picking

- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 5. Street Cleaning / Emptying Public Bins COVID-19 Requirements

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 9

Site Inspections at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house)

Date: 15th October 2020

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with Covid-19 virus.
- Spread of Covid-19 virus to citizens or from citizens.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain social distancing when carrying out maintenance activities

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To be determined through Risk Assessment and depending on site conditions.

 Disposable Gloves <input type="radio"/>	 Face Mask <input type="radio"/>	 Tyvek Suit <input type="radio"/>	 Face Shield <input type="radio"/>	 Safety Goggles <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>
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Procedures

 Wash your hands well and often to avoid contamination	 Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue	 Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands	 Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces	 Stop shaking hands or hugging when saying hello or greeting other people	 Distance yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell
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Prior to Inspection and prior to leaving the Office:

- Check that the persons who would be visiting the private house do not have any symptoms of COVID 19.
- Make contact with the occupier by telephone and establish the following for all occupants of the house: (if necessary, inform the occupier that the inspection cannot proceed until all of these questions have been answered)

1. Is there a confirmed case of Covid-19 in the household?
2. Is the occupier or any of their household showing symptoms of a cough, fever or anything else which may be indicative of Covid-19?
3. Have they received advice from their G.P. that they should self-isolate?
4. Are they in any high-risk group as defined by the HSE?

If the occupier fails to answer any of the questions asked, assume that the answer to the question is yes and proceed accordingly as below.

Scenario 1

If the answer to all 4 questions is No, then the inspection can proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the house.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE and sanitise or wash hands
- Prior to entry, confirm the number of occupants and their health status as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier to wear a face covering, to open the door, to leave it open and to relocate all occupants away from the area to be inspected and to keep their distance while the inspection is taking place.
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces.
- Minimise the time spent in the house.
- Sanitise or hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

Scenario 2

If the answer to questions 1, 2 or 3 is yes and the inspection is not essential, then the visit should be deferred and alternative arrangements made when the status of the occupiers has changed.

Scenario 3

If the answer to questions 1, 2 or 3 is yes and the inspection is essential, then the visit should proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the house.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE taking potential presence of COVID 19 on the premises into account and sanitise or wash hands
- Prior to entry, confirm the number of occupants and their health status as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier, by telephone if possible, to open all external and internal doors (in area to be inspected), to leave them open and to relocate all occupants in rooms that are not subject to inspection. In addition, request the occupier to open the windows in the area to be inspected and to move anything in the house that might impede the inspection.
- Wait 15 minutes for the area to ventilate
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces.
- Minimise the time spent in the house.
- Sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

Scenario 4

If the answer to question 4 is yes and the answer to questions 1, 2, and 3 is No, then the inspection can proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the house.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE and sanitise or wash hands
- Prior to entry, confirm the number of occupants and their health status as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier to wear a face covering, to open the door, to leave it open and to relocate all occupants away from the area to be inspected.
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces.
- Minimise the time spent in the house.
- Sanitise or wash hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 10 Occupational First Aid/Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



All employees should ensure they do the following:-

- Standard infection control precautions should be applied when treating all patients.
- Minimise hand contamination, avoid touching your face, and clean hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol based hand gel.
- If, as a First Aid Responder, you can avoid close contact with a person who requires some level of first aid, do so. This, of course, will not be possible in the event of having to provide emergency lifesaving measures such as an incident of cardiac arrest, heart attack, choking, stroke.

Minor Injuries

- Where practical, the First Aid Responder should avoid close contact and direct the individual through the steps of treating their own injury. The patient should be provided with and encouraged to wear a disposable face mask.

CPR / Use of Defibrillator

- It is recommended not to perform rescue breaths or mouth-to-mouth ventilation.
- An FFP2 mask should be worn by the first aid responder.
- Perform chest compressions only, until a BVM (Bag Valve Mask) is available.
- If a decision is made to perform CPR, a BVM with a viral filter attached must be used. To ensure a good seal on the facemask, to minimise droplet risk, the two person operation of the BVM is recommended, where possible.
- If, under exceptional circumstances, you have given mouth-to-mouth ventilation, you should contact your GP for advice.
- If a defibrillator is required, normal hygiene protocols should be followed. A surgical mask should be placed on the patient and an FFP2 mask worn by the first aider.

Following first aid treatment

- Disposable PPE and any waste should be disposed of appropriately and as Hazmat contaminated waste, if required.
- Reusable PPE and other equipment should be cleaned / disinfected thoroughly with a surface contact disinfectant.
- Replenish PPE stock as appropriate. Liaise with your Line Manager or designated person to ensure any issues with first aid PPE are resolved in as timely a manner as possible.

First Aid Cover in Buildings with Reduced Occupancy

- Where working arrangements result in reduced occupancy in buildings, line managers should give consideration to first aid cover and ensure that a sufficient number of trained occupational first aiders are present in the building, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- First aid rooms in buildings should be disinfected after each patient treatment using a surface contact disinfectant. The room should be left with doors open for at least 20 minutes before cleaning.

Additional Guidance

- Additional guidance is available in the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council COVID-19 Advisory v1 document

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 11 Canteen / Eating COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain social distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Canteens and Eating areas

- A review should be carried out to determine the appropriate number of employees who can be facilitated in canteen, kitchen or break area at any one time.
- Put in place a seating and table arrangement which complies with the two metre distancing.
- If necessary, extend the canteen serving times.
- Employees should wash their hands before and after eating.
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the canteen or kitchen entrance and exit.

- Adhere to physical distancing and implement a queue management system with correct distance markings at food counters, tray return points and checkouts.
- COVID-19 information posters should be prominently displayed.
- Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible.
- Consider cup and lid dispensers to avoid multiple touching of cups and lids.
- Use only packaged items, tea / coffee / sugar / stirrers and so on.

Line Management

- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during break times and consider staggering breaks where necessary.
- Employees should be organised into teams who work and take breaks together.

Employees

- Maintain physical distancing while using canteen facilities.
- Employees should wash their hands before and after eating.
- Tables should be cleared by employees when finished eating and a surface contact disinfectant used between each use.
- No sharing of cups, glasses, dishes or cutlery, unless good sanitisation such as a dishwasher or hot water and detergent are available.
- Only use keep cups where self service is available.
- All rubbish should be disposed in a suitable bin.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 12 Basic Hygiene (including Buildings) COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 5th May 2021

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Hygiene:

Good hygiene and hand washing are key to preventing the spread of COVID-19. All personnel should follow this advice and encourage others to follow this advice too.

Do:

- Wash your hands properly and often.
 - You should wash your hands:
 - after coughing or sneezing.
 - before and after eating.
 - before and after preparing food.

- if you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing).
 - before and after being on public transport, if you must use it.
 - before and after being in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd).
 - when you arrive and leave buildings including your home or anyone else's home.
 - if you have handled animals or animal waste.
 - before having a cigarette or vaping.
 - if your hands are dirty.
 - after toilet use.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.
 - Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
 - Ensure clothes are cleaned regularly including Hi-Vis and so on.

Do not:

- touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups.
- shake hands with anyone.

Building Entrances

- Hand sanitisers should be made available at main entry and at locations throughout the premises.
- Ensure a visible display of HSE COVID-19 safety notices (click link) <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

Public Counters

- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 6 Meeting and Working Close to the Public.

Office Arrangements

The recommendations in relation to Office Spaces are as follows:

- Determine the occupancy levels for each work location ensuring that physical distancing in line with public health guidance can be achieved.
- Manage office layout as required to ensure employees are seated 2 metres apart
- In situations where a 2 metre separation cannot be achieved, consideration to be given to installing temporary physical barriers, such as clear plastic guards between employees for the duration of the pandemic.
- Use of face coverings in line with public health advice.
- Promote a clean desk policy and ensure that employees implement a practice of cleaning their workstation at the start and end of their working day.

- Promote use of emails, phones and I.T software rather than face to face contact in the office.
- It is important to reduce the movement of employees between offices / floors and when discussions are needed, do so by phone or email where possible.
- Eliminate, if possible, non-essential visitors attending offices.
- Regularly clean common contact surfaces in offices (for example, photocopiers, laptops, telephone, handsets, desks). Ensure that cleaning materials and waste disposal options are provided.
- Offices should be well ventilated, and windows kept open where possible.
- Modify use of hot desks to ensure that these are made available to identified staff and have appropriate cleaning materials for employees to clean the area before using.
- Minimise handling of paper documents and cash where possible.
- With the exception of fire door, doors should be kept open where possible, when the building is occupied, to reduce persons touching door handles and so on.
- Increase the cleaning regimes including a wipe down with disinfectant on door handles, stair rails and so on at regular intervals throughout the day - at least twice daily.

Ventilation:

- Refers to the movement of outdoor air into a building, and the circulation of that air within the building or room. This can be achieved through natural means (e.g. opening a window, door or air vents) or mechanical means (e.g. a central heating, ventilation and air conditioning). Buildings should be well ventilated and windows kept open where possible. Any ventilation equipment in use should be regularly inspected and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Natural ventilation should be maximised through the introduction of fresh air into the building e.g. opening doors, windows and air vents. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure security and safety measures.
- Cross-ventilation is a good option for window ventilation as it facilitates the quick exchange of room air for fresh air through widely opened windows opposite to each other where possible. Propping open internal doors may increase air movement and ventilation rate. (Note: fire doors should not be propped open unless fitted with approved automatic closers so that they function as fire doors in the event of an alarm or fire).
- Mechanical ventilation through the use of HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems. These provide comfortable environmental conditions (temperature and humidity) and clean air in indoor settings such as buildings and vehicles. Recommendations for mechanical ventilation include:
 - Regular maintenance of HVAC systems
 - Use of appropriate filters as per manufacturer's specifications
 - Increase total airflow and outside air fraction
 - Disable air recirculation systems, where possible
 - Extend operating hours, where possible
 - Avoid the use of ceiling mounted, desk and portable fans, where possible. It is recommended that fans should only be used where there is a single occupant in a room. When used, fans should be directed to exhaust directly to the exterior environment (e.g. open window), to minimise potential spread of pathogens.

Cleaning Arrangements

- It is essential that workplaces maintain thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. If disinfection is required, it must be performed in addition to cleaning, not as a substitute for cleaning.
- Implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, paying particular attention also to washroom facilities, communal spaces and high touch points such as table tops, counters, desks, equipment, communication devices, handrails, door handles, door release buttons, etc.
- Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.
- Provide employees with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).
- A cleaning log should be maintained to record the date and time of cleaning in the various buildings/offices/toilets etc.
- In an instance of an employee becoming COVID-19 positive, extra steps should be taken in the workplace to protect from further infection from the virus. These include additional cleaning measures of work areas that the employee may have been in contact with and additional precautions for waste disposal.
- Increase number of waste collection points and ensure these are emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.
- In relation to routine disposal of waste in the workplace, waste such as used tissues, wipes and cleaning material should be disposed of in the regular domestic waste stream. Hands should be cleaned immediately after disposal of these items.
- In relation to disposal of waste from a person who becomes symptomatic while at work, this waste should be disposed of in a disposable refuse bag. When the waste bag is three quarters full, it should be tied securely, placed into a second refuse bag and tied again. The bag should then be left in a safe location for three days (72 hours) before putting out for collection.

Waiting Areas / Reception Areas

- HSE posters and signage should be displayed in prominent locations advising of physical distancing and hygiene practices [COVID-19 posters and resources - HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie/en-gb/health-topics/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-posters-and-resources)
- Limit numbers of seats / organise in such a manner to ensure two-metre distance.
- Remove any unnecessary items from common areas that could be contaminated for example, magazines / toys.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 13

Attendance at Emergency Call Outs

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Communication and Consultation

- Employees to be briefed by their Line Manager on the contents of this SOG in conjunction with the relevant Risk Assessment/Safe Operating Guidance and the current HSE Coronavirus COVID-19 Public Health Advice in advance of attendance at Emergency Call Outs.

Organisation of Site Employees

- Where possible the same group of site employees should be rostered to attend emergency calls outs.
- There should be no employee gatherings before, during or after the attendance and physical distancing guidelines should be implemented for the maximum time possible.

Mobilising and Attending Site

- Prior to site attendance the Site Supervisor should determine if there is potential for exposure to COVID-19 at the site location based on available information.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 14 Travel for Work.
- Hand sanitising to be carried out by employees on arrival to the site.
- On arrival to the site location the Site Supervisor to establish if there is potential for exposure to COVID-19 at the site location based on available information.

Safe System of Work Plan (SSWP)

- SSWP to be completed by the site employees in advance of works commencing.

Physical Distancing

- Where possible works to be organised and carried out so as to ensure that physical distancing in line with public health advice is achieved at all times by all site employees.
- Adequate lighting to be provided when required to allow compliance with physical distancing arrangements on site.

Close Contact Working

- Where task specific PPE is required employees should comply with the normal PPE requirements in the first instance.
- Should employees be required to carry out Close Contact Work, that is, where it has been established that a physical distancing cannot be achieved by other measures, employees must refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 15 Requirement and Use of PPE.

Tools, Plant and Equipment

- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 16 Use of Tools and Equipment

First Aid Administration

- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 10 Occupational First Aid/Defibrillator Requirements Covid-19

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 14 Covid-19 Guidance Travel for Work

Date: 5th May 2021

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



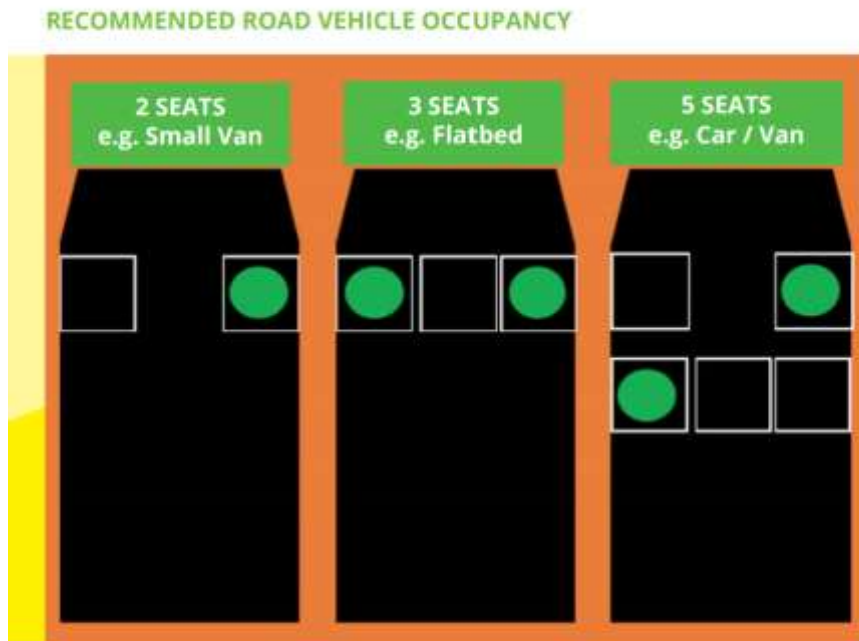
Travelling to / from Work

- Where possible, walk or cycle, to and from work.
- Where possible, travel alone in your private vehicle.
- Parking arrangements for additional cars and bicycles may need to be considered as for employees during this time.
- If availing of public transport, follow physical distancing guidelines provided by operators. Wear a face covering. Minimise contact with frequently touched surfaces, e.g. handles, roof straps, isolation bars.
- Sanitise hands on arrival at work location.

Travelling in Council Works Vehicles

- Site meetings to be conducted remotely where possible.
- The occupancy level of vehicles is to be minimised and single occupancy for vehicles is preferable.
- The number of workers who share a vehicle – at the same time or one after the other – should be kept to a minimum as far as is reasonably practicable, for example by assigning a vehicle to a fixed team or pod.
- If more than one per person per vehicle, the following measures should be followed:
 - Employees should not enter a work vehicle with others if they have any symptoms or have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - Sit as far apart as the vehicle allows. If possible, passenger to travel in the back of the vehicle at left passenger side.
 - Keep windows of vehicles open, at least partially.
 - Practice good respiratory hygiene.
 - Wear a face covering.
- Key touch points in vehicles are to be wiped regularly (e.g. door handles, steering wheel, handbrake, gear stick, radio controls) and hands sanitised before and after entering / exiting the vehicle. Hygienic wipes and hand sanitiser must be available for this purpose.
- Sanitise hands before and after entering / exiting the vehicle.
- Where employees decide to eat their lunch in their vehicle, they should do so on their own to avoid possibility of infection from others.

Recommended Maximum Road Vehicle Seating Arrangements (Ref: CIF Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic SOP)		
Number of Seats	Max Number of Occupants	Seating Arrangements
2	1	1 driver
3	2	1 in the driving seat 1 in the far passenger seat
5	2	1 in the driving seat 1 in the far passenger seat



Line Manager must:

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been provided.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing
- Ensure adequate supplies of hygienic wipes and hand sanitiser are available for use in Council vehicles.
- Arrange work crews to reduce sharing of vehicles as far as is reasonably practicable.
- If possible, designate a single driver to a specific vehicle. Similarly, if vehicle is shared with crew member/s, crew should be assigned a specific seat for the shift.
- Where possible, allow for staff to travel directly to site, to reduce numbers in depots/confined areas.

Drivers must:

- Regularly clean/disinfect all hard surfaces likely to be touched by the passenger and/or driver.
 - Keep cleaning products in the cab/vehicle.
 - Use disposable gloves and hand hygiene measures when filling fuel at service stations.
 - When sharing vehicle, wear a face covering and maintain airflow in vehicle throughout journeys, i.e. keep windows at least partially open.
- Keep personal items (PPE, clothes, lunch boxes etc.) separate.

Note 1: IPB have agreed to extend the Local Authorities motor fleet policy to provide business use for these employees using personal vehicles for the period of the

emergency. The cover level is agreed Comprehensive Cover. *Management must keep a record of the employee's name and private insurance policy number.*

Note 2: IPB has issued an advisory note in relation to the partitioning of vehicles to facilitate higher occupancy levels to Local Authorities. Local Authorities should ensure that they are informed about this item.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Procedure No. 15

Personal Protective Equipment - Requirements and Use – Covid-19

Date: 20th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain social distancing requirements in line with public health advice

Procedures



COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment

While using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other preventative measures. The most important action employees can take to protect themselves from COVID-19 is regular hand-washing, good respiratory hygiene and observing physical distancing guidelines.

Line Manager / Supervisor should ensure they do the following:

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been provided.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing.
- Ensure adequate provision of PPE as determined by Risk Assessment and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Ensure employees are provided with suitable information in relation to the use and disposal of the PPE
- Keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice in relation to wearing of PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All employees should ensure they do the following:

- Check the Risk Assessment or Standard Operating Guidance to determine what PPE is required for the specific activity or task.
- Understand that the PPE provided is to be used by one employee only and must not be shared

- Ensure that PPE selected is suitable for use and is only used for the purposes specified.
- Use the PPE in accordance with the instructions and training provided.
- Report any defects in or damage to the PPE.
- Ensure that the PPE provided is stored in an appropriate manner and disposed of/cleaned after use and replaced as necessary.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **Risk Assessment:** The requirements for PPE are to be determined in the first instance by risk assessment. The risk assessment will determine the type of PPE to be provided and to ensure that the PPE is appropriate to the risk.
- In addition, PPE should be available as appropriate, in the following circumstances:
 - **Close Working Within a Team**
Physical distancing should be maintained wherever possible. Where specific tasks require that physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. manual handling, trench work etc.), then disposable masks and eye protection are recommended, along with the normal PPE.
 - **Close Working with Members of the Public or Contractors**
Physical distancing should be maintained wherever possible. Where it has been established that close working cannot be avoided (e.g. social work, within domestic premises, visiting halting sites) and physical barriers cannot be achieved, then an appropriate mask and eye protection are recommended.
 - **Close Working in an Enclosed Space**
Physical distancing should be maintained wherever possible. Where it has been established that close working cannot be avoided and work will be over a significant period of time (e.g. maintenance repairs within a domestic property) then a disposable face mask, disposable gloves, eye protection and disposable overalls/suit are recommended.
 - **When treating First Aid Incidents:** When treating First Aid Incidents, appropriate face mask, disposable gloves and eye protection are recommended. Refer to SoG no.10 for specific occupational first aid details.
 - **Suspect Case of COVID-19:** If an employee displays symptoms of COVID-19 during work, he/she is to be moved to a designated isolation area and should be provided with a Disposable Face Mask, if one available. The employee should wear the face mask if in a common area with other people and while exiting the premises.

Face Masks

Types of Face Masks

Respirator Masks	These are intended to filter out essentially all small particles from the air inhaled by the wearer. These are normally required for employees who are considered at higher risk from occupational exposure to COVID-19. The requirement to use should be based on the appropriate risk
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	<p>assessment and should be task specific. They are intended for single use and for discarding after use.</p> <p>Guidance on fitting these masks can be found:</p> <p>https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/disposable-respirator.pdf</p>
<p>Surgical Masks</p>	<p>The use of surgical masks has two objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reduce the risk of droplet transmission of infection to the wearer. 2. To reduce the risk of droplet transmission of infection to others. <p>Use of surgical masks for these purposes is in addition to and is not intended as a replacement for other measures to reduce the risk of transmission of infection. These measures include hand hygiene and maintaining a distance of 2 m between people whenever possible. Surgical masks must be donned correctly and should remain in place covering the nose and mouth throughout the period of use. Masks should not be moved up and down over the nose and mouth.</p> <p>These masks are considered where a distance of 2 m cannot be maintained. People with COVID-19 are also asked to wear a mask to reduce the amount of COVID-19 droplets that they scatter.</p> <p>These are intended for single use and for discarding after use.</p>

Disposable Gloves

Disposable gloves are generally not required for infection prevention and control purposes. Wearing disposable gloves can give a false sense of security. Individuals may:

- sneeze or cough into the gloves - this creates a new surface for the virus to live on;
- not wash your hands as often as needed;
- touch face with contaminated gloves;
- contaminate themselves when taking off the gloves or touching surfaces.

Where gloves are necessary:

- they must not be considered a substitute for hand hygiene and hands must be cleaned whenever gloves are removed.
- Gloves should be disposed of after each use and/or if they become damaged/torn.

Disposable Overalls

- Single-Use disposable overalls may be provided for employees undertaking specific tasks e.g. close working activities. > 15 minutes within 2m.

Wearing & Removal of COVID-19 PPE

- COVID-19 PPE should be worn and removed using appropriate hand hygiene and in line with instruction and training.

The HSE advises the following sequence for putting on and removing PPE*:

Putting on PPE sequence:

1. Wash / sanitise hands
2. Put on overalls
3. Put on face mask, where required
4. Put on eye protection
5. Put on gloves
6. Prepare disposal bag at location you are working to place PPE in after task

Removing PPE sequence:

1. Remove gloves – follow standard technique
2. Wash / sanitise hands
3. Remove eye protection
4. Remove overalls
5. Remove face mask – remove by straps
6. Wash / sanitise hands
7. Double bag waste – only touching outside of bag.
8. Wash / sanitise hands

*All PPE may not be required

Disposal of PPE

- At the end of all tasks, all disposable COVID-19 PPE to be disposed of appropriately i.e. disposable PPE to be double bagged and placed in a bin and non-disposable PPE to be sanitised. Hands to be sanitised following same.
- Eye Protection to be washed thoroughly after use with suitable decontamination solution. Hands to be sanitised following same.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 16

Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant: COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 14th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Line Manager

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction training has been provided
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing
- Arrangements to be made for one individual to use the same tool, plant and equipment as much as possible.
- Ensure adequate provision of hand sanitising facilities and cleaning materials.

General Arrangement for use of Equipment, Tools and Plant:

- All tools and equipment should be properly sanitised to prevent cross contamination.
- Sharing of tools and equipment should be avoided if possible.

- Plan work for one individual to use the same equipment or tool as much as possible.
- Where this is not possible then commonly used surfaces / touch points must be wiped down with disinfectant between each use by the user.
- Cabs and touch points of vehicles and site plant to be cleaned by operator and maintained daily thereafter).
- Consider provision of posters / stickers in the workplace to encourage staff to complete ongoing disinfection of tools and equipment that is shared

Close Working Less than two metres

In the first instance, all options to eliminate the close working activity should be considered and exhausted.

Where two metres physical distancing cannot be avoided the following is required:

- Risk assessment to be carried out and control measures determined including PPE requirements.
- Only those required for the task shall be allowed within the physical distancing exclusion zone, erect barriers where necessary.
- Limit the amount of time of close working to the absolute minimum.
- Hygiene to be maintained to a high standard:
 - Clean hands before and after activity
 - Avoid touching face
 - Practice good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
 - Work environment and equipment to be cleaned before and after activity
- Avoid physical contact and personnel to operate side by side, facing away from each other where possible.
- PPE used is to be removed and disposed of appropriately i.e. disposable PPE to be double bagged and placed in a bin and non-disposable PPE to be sanitised.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 17

Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property

Date: 15th October 2020

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with Covid-19 virus.
- Spread of Covid-19 virus to citizens or from citizens.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain social distancing when carrying out maintenance activities

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To be determined through Risk Assessment and depending on site conditions.

 Disposable Gloves <input type="radio"/>	 Face Mask <input type="radio"/>	 Tyvek Suit <input type="radio"/>	 Face Shield <input type="radio"/>	 Safety Goggles <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>
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Procedures

 Wash your hands well and often to avoid contamination	 Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue	 Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands	 Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces	 Stop shaking hands or hugging when saying hello or greeting other people	 Distance yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell
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Prior to Inspection and prior to leaving the Office:

- Check that the persons who will conduct the inspection do not have any symptoms of COVID 19.
- Make contact with the occupier by telephone and establish the following for all occupants of the premises: (if necessary, inform the occupier that the inspection cannot proceed until all of these questions have been answered)

1. Is there a confirmed case of Covid-19 on the premises?
2. Is the occupier or any other person present showing symptoms of a cough, fever or anything else which may be indicative of Covid-19?
3. Has any person on the premises received advice from their G.P. that they should self-isolate?
4. Is any person on the premises in any high-risk group as defined by the HSE?

If the occupier fails to answer any of the questions asked, assume that the answer to the question is yes and proceed accordingly as below.

Scenario 1

If the answer to all 4 questions is No, then the inspection can proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the premises.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE and wash / sanitise hands
- Prior to entry, confirm the health status of those that are present as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier to wear a face covering, to open the door and to leave it open and to relocate all occupants away from the area to be inspected and to keep their distance for the duration of the inspection.
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces.
- Minimise the time spent in the premises.
- Wash / sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

Scenario 2

If the answer to questions 1, 2 or 3 is yes and the inspection is not essential, then the visit should be deferred and alternative arrangements made when the status of the occupiers has changed.

Scenario 3

If the answer to questions 1, 2 or 3 is yes and the inspection is essential, then the visit should proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the premises.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE taking potential presence of COVID 19 on the premises into account and wash / sanitise hands
- Prior to entry, confirm the number of occupants and their health status as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier, by telephone if possible, to wear a face covering, to open all external and internal doors (in area to be inspected), to leave them open and to relocate all occupants away from the area to be inspected.
- Request the occupier to open the windows in the area to be inspected and to move anything in the premises that might impede the inspection.
- Wait 15 minutes for the area to ventilate
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces.
- Minimise the time spent in the premises.
- Wash / sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

Scenario 4

If the answer to question 4 is yes and the answer to questions 1, 2, and 3 is No, then the inspection can proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the premises.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE and wash/ sanitise hands
- Prior to entry, confirm the number of occupants and their health status as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier to wear a face covering, to open the door, to leave it open and to relocate all occupants away from the area to be inspected.
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces.
- Minimise the time spent in the premises.
- Wash / sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No.18

The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment

Date: 20th May 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching items that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice
- Inaccessibility to appropriate hand hygiene facilities, particularly out on site.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



All Line Managers and Supervisors should ensure that they do the following:

- Provide COVID-19 Induction to all workers; covering public health advice, the workplace control measures and what to do if symptoms develop.

- Keep contact log.
- Provide Tissues, Hand Sanitiser, Paper Towels, Personal Protective Equipment, Surface contact disinfectant, and bin bags to all workers, as required.
- Provide regular COVID-19 safety briefings to all workers.

All Employees should ensure that they do the following:

- Maintain physical distancing requirements and good hand hygiene.
- Employees should sanitise or wash their hands before and after handling documents, cash, equipment, stationery etc.
- Desks and keyboards should be wiped down with surface contact disinfectant each morning, provided by the local authority.
- No sharing of pens or stationery.
- All unwanted papers should be disposed of in a suitable bin to allow for the desk to be thoroughly cleaned each evening.
- Desks should be cleared by employees when finished work at the end of the day.
- Employees should be cognisant at all times not to touch their face, but particularly before and after handling documents, files, cash, equipment or stationery.

Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment by Employees

- When handling physical materials employees should ensure that physical distancing guidelines are adhered to with to other staff and members of the public.
- Prior to handling documents, cash, stationery or equipment, employees must sanitise or wash their hands for 20 seconds as per HSE guidelines. Employees can then proceed to handle the item/s in question. Employees must refrain from touching their face, clothes or other surfaces throughout this process. On completion of the task the employee shall again sanitise or wash their hands for 20 seconds as per the HSE guidelines.
- Employees are to use their own pens and own stationery. Sharing of such items is to be avoided.
- Employees working at public counters taking cash payments, post and other documents should ideally have screens placed between them and the public.
- Librarians, when accepting books or DVD's from the public, are to exercise the required hand hygiene measures in place for Covid-19 as outlined in the second bullet point above.
- For office equipment that has shared use such as photocopiers, laminating machines, binders, plotters, etc, surface contact disinfectant must be made available beside these pieces of equipment for employees to use. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly will form part of new cleaning regimes.
- Core Clocking Machines and ID entry points must be cleaned and disinfected regularly each day. Staff should sanitise or wash their hands before and after use.
- Touch Screen and other frequently touched surfaces such as public counters should be cleaned and disinfected regularly

Handling of Documents & Touch Screens by the Public

- When handling physical materials members of the public should ensure that physical distancing guidelines are adhered to with staff and other members of the public.
- Prior to handling documents, touch screens, members of the public must sanitise or wash their hands for 20 seconds as per HSE guidelines and can then proceed to handle the item/s in question. Members of the public must refrain from touching their face throughout this process and where the inspection period is extended, should sanitise their hands on a regular basis. On completion of the task the member of the public shall sanitise / wash their hands again as per the HSE guidelines.
- Members of the public are to use their own pens and own stationery. Sharing of such items is to be avoided.

- Appropriate signage should be displayed and sufficient cleaning and hand hygiene materials should be provided in these areas.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Employees are to maintain the highest standard of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette at all times in the workplace. Covid-19 arrangements are to be monitored regularly by the Line Manager / Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No.19

Local Authority Vet and Veterinary Inspectors COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 20th May 2020

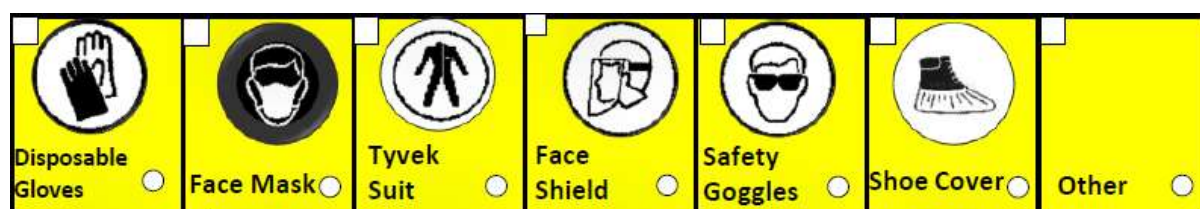
Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Notes:

- All Veterinary Inspectors must comply with HSE and Government Guidelines with regard to physical distancing and other COVID 19 restrictions.
- Veterinary Inspectors should also comply with the National Return to Work Safely Protocol, "COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers".

Local Authority Veterinary Officer should ensure that they do the following:

- Provide COVID-19 Induction to direct workers; covering public health advice, the workplace control measures and what to do if symptoms develop.
- Keep contact log for direct workers.

- Provide Tissues, Hand Sanitiser, Handtowels, Personal Protective Equipment, Anti-viral wipes, and bin bags as required to direct workers.
- Provide regular COVID-19 safety briefings to direct workers.
- So far as is reasonably practicable, pre-arrange visits / inspections.
- Review Veterinary Inspectors panel and establish contingency cover in line with HSE guidelines.
- Restrict movement of Veterinary Inspectors between Food Business Organisations (FBO) and keep inspection schedule.
- Strengthen lines of communication with Regional Chief Medical Officer (HSE), County Principal Environment Health Officer (FSAI), Veterinary Inspectors and FBO.
- Request contract Veterinary Inspectors to forward updated safety documentation including their COVID-19 controls (e.g. safety statements and risk assessments).

All Employees including contract Veterinary Inspectors should ensure that they do the following:

- Local Authority Vet and Veterinary Inspectors to comply with COVID-19 arrangements as defined by the FBO.
- As far as practicable pre-arrange visits / inspections with FBO.
- Local Authority Vet and Veterinary Inspectors to ensure that they are COVID-19 symptom free prior to attending FBO.
- Do not share paperwork/pens and is so far as it is possible, share and exchange documentation electronically.
- Bring any concerns to the attention to management of the FBO.
- Maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice at all times.
- Do not shake hands or make close contact with other people.
- Avoid any crowded place and reduce physical interactions.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 14 Travel for Work.
- Refer to Safe Operating Guidance No 15 Requirement and Use of PPE
- Avoid touching face, particularly eyes, nose and mouth, at all times.
- Sanitise and / or wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking, and after removing PPE.

1)

2) **Close Working Less than two metres (e.g. sampling)**

3) In the first instance, all options to eliminate the close working activity should be considered and exhausted.

4)

5) Where two metres physical distancing cannot be avoided, the following is required:

- Risk assessment to be carried out and control measures determined including PPE requirements.

- Only those required for the task shall be allowed within the physical distancing 6) exclusion zone, erect barriers where necessary.
- Limit the amount of time of close working to the absolute minimum.

7)

- Hygiene to be maintained to a high standard:
 - Sanitise / wash hands before and after activity
 - Avoid touching face
 - Practice good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
 - Work environment and equipment to be cleaned before and after activity
- Avoid physical contact and personnel to operate side by side, facing away from each other where possible.
- PPE used is to be removed and disposed of appropriately i.e. disposable PPE to be double bagged and placed in a bin and non-disposable PPE to be sanitised.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements to be monitored regularly by the Local Authority Vet.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/ Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 21

Local Authority Housing Maintenance Covid-19 Requirements

Date: 15th October 2020

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with Covid-19 virus.
- Spread of Covid-19 virus to citizens or from citizens.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain social distancing when carrying out maintenance activities

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To be determined through Risk Assessment and depending on site conditions.



Procedures



Prior to attending a maintenance call:

- Check that the persons who will conduct the works do not have any symptoms of COVID 19.
- Make contact with the occupier by telephone and establish the following for all occupants of the premises: (if necessary, inform the occupier that the works cannot proceed until all of these questions have been answered)

5. Is there a confirmed case of Covid-19 on the premises?
6. Is the occupier or any other person present showing symptoms of a cough, fever or anything else which may be indicative of Covid-19?
7. Has any person on the premises received advice from their G.P. that they should self-isolate?
8. Is any person on the premises in any high-risk group as defined by the HSE

If the occupier fails to answer any of the questions asked, assume that the answer to the question is yes and proceed accordingly as below.

Scenario 1

If the answer to all 4 questions is No, then the works can proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the premises.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE and wash / sanitise hands in accordance with SOG No 15 Use of Personal Protective Equipment.
- Prior to entry, confirm the health status of those that are present as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier, by telephone if possible, for occupants who will be present to wear a face covering, open all external and internal doors (in area of works), to leave them open and to relocate all occupants away from the area of works and to keep their distance while the work is being carried out.
- Request the occupier to open the windows in the area of works and to move anything in the premises that might impede the works.
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces which are not part of the works. Use surface contact disinfectant on hard surfaces where required. Ensure that electrical items are disconnected before spraying.
- Minimise the time spent in the premises.
- Wash / sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

Scenario 2

If the answer to questions 1, 2 or 3 is yes and the maintenance is not essential, then the visit should be deferred and alternative arrangements made when the status of the occupiers has changed.

Scenario 3

If the answer to questions 1, 2 or 3 is yes and the maintenance is essential, then the visit should proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the premises.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE taking potential presence of COVID 19 on the premises into account and wash / sanitise hands. in accordance with SOG No 15 Use of Personal Protective Equipment.
- Prior to entry, confirm the number of occupants and their health status as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier, by telephone if possible, to wear a face covering, open all external and internal doors (in area of works), to leave them open and to relocate all occupants away from the area of works and to keep their distance while the work is being carried out.
- Request the occupier to open the windows in the area of works and to move anything in the premises that might impede the works.
- Wait 15 minutes for the area to ventilate
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces which are not part of the works. Use surface contact disinfectant on hard surfaces where required. Ensure that electrical items are disconnected before spraying.
- Minimise the time spent in the premises.
- Wash / sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

Scenario 4

If the answer to question 4 is yes and the answer to questions 1, 2, and 3 is No, then the works can proceed under the following conditions:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and particular consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the premises.
- Employees must refer SOG No.14 Travel to Work for advice on travelling to and from premises
- Deploy required PPE and wash/ sanitise hands in accordance with SOG No 15 Use of Personal Protective Equipment.
- Prior to entry, confirm the number of occupants and their health status as previously recorded.
- Request the occupier to open the door, to leave it open and to relocate all occupants away from the area of works.

- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces which are not part of the works. Use surface contact disinfectant on hard surfaces where required. Ensure that electrical items are disconnected before spraying.
- Minimise the time spent in the premises.
- Wash / sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with best practice.

Halting Sites

- Maintenance at halting sites may present particular challenges due to inability to achieve physical distancing.
- Where a halting site has confirmed case(s) of Covid-19 then the line manager may need to co-ordinate with the HSE prior to attending site.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 22 Management of Construction Projects

Date: 3rd June 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person or living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- COVID -19 PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Notes:

- All Contractors must comply with HSE & Government Guidelines with regard to physical distancing and other COVID 19 measures.
- Contractors should be aware that the CIF has issued “Construction Sector COVID-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures” and an associated online induction course.
- Contractors must comply with the National Return to Work Safely Protocol, “COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers”.

A. On projects where the Local Authority is the Client only:

Prior to the commencement or resumption of works, the Local Authority should engage with the principal Contractor and request that the Contractor submit a declaration, on his own behalf and on behalf of all sub-contractors, confirming that the following have been undertaken to protect the staff and the public:

1. Confirm that Safety Statement and risk assessments / method statements have been reviewed and updated to take account of Covid-19 measures.
2. Confirm that Health and Safety Plan for this project has been reviewed and updated to take account of Covid-19 measures.
3. Confirm that Covid-19 induction has been provided to your company staff.
4. Confirm that appropriate monitoring of Covid-19 measures is in place.
5. Confirm that appropriate physical distancing can be achieved and maintained at all times while completing your contracted work activities on behalf of **** County / City Council.
6. If physical distancing cannot be achieved and maintained, confirm that the company has developed procedures to deal with close working within your company risk assessment/method statement.
7. Confirm that your company has suitable arrangements in place to maintain hand hygiene while work is being completed on behalf of **** County / City Council.
8. Confirm that suitable cleaning materials are available for your staff to use during the work activity e.g. disinfectant cleaners/disinfectant wipes, hand sanitiser.
9. Confirm that the appropriate PPE as specified in your company Covid-19 risk assessment/ method statement is available and in use by your staff when required.
10. Confirm that suitable arrangements are in place to dispose of PPE safely after use.
11. Confirm that revised project timelines have been taken into account in consideration of the requirement to notify the HSA of construction projects.

B. On projects where the Local Authority is Project Supervisor for Design Phase and Construction Stage:

In addition to the Project Supervisor duties outlined in the SHWW (Construction) Regulations, the Local Authority as Project Supervisor DP and CS must ensure that:

- For new projects, both the Preliminary Health and Safety Plan and the Construction Stage Health and Safety Plan include COVID-19 arrangements including adherence to 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'
- For current projects where there is an existing Construction Stage Health and Safety Plan, that this is revised and updated to include COVID-19 arrangements including adherence to 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'
- All contractors on current projects submit self-declaration as outlined at A above.

C. On projects where the Local Authority is Project Supervisor for Design Phase and construction is undertaken by Contract:

In addition to the Project Supervisor duties outlined in the SHWW (Construction) Regulations, the Local Authority as Project Supervisor DP must ensure that:

- For new projects, the Preliminary Health and Safety Plan includes COVID-19 arrangements including adherence to 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'
- Forward the Preliminary Health and Safety Plan to the Project Supervisor for Construction Stage.
- All contractors on current projects submit self-declaration as outlined at A above

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements to be monitored regularly by the staff in charge of projects.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

SOG No. 23 Libraries - COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 1st December 2021

Version: 7.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus to citizens or from citizens.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Community transmission from infected surfaces.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To be determined through Risk Assessment.



Procedures



All Line Managers and Supervisors should ensure that they do the following:

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been completed.
- Ensure Pre-Return to Work form is completed as required.
- Maintain a contact log as required.
- Review and enhance the cleaning regimes for library including public areas/toilet facilities, with particular attention to be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as public counters, handles on stairs, door handles, locks, taps etc.
- Ensure adequate provision of tissues, hand sanitiser, paper towels, surface contact disinfectant and Personal Protective Equipment as required and refer to SOG No.15 Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use - COVID-19 Requirements.

All Employees should ensure that they do the following:

- Compliance with the Libraries COVID-19 requirements is the responsibility of everyone and must be supported by all in order to protect health and reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- In the absence of a physical barrier / screen maintain the 2m physical distancing requirements with colleagues and during any interactions with members of the public.
- Practice good respiratory hygiene, that is, when coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- All physical materials to be handled by employees applying physical distancing guidelines. After handling materials, hands should be sanitised or washed for 20 seconds as per HSE guidelines.
- Employees shall at the commencement of each day clean their desk surface, phone, keyboard, mouse, display screen etc and undertake regular cleaning throughout the day with surface contact disinfectant.
- Employees are to use their own pens and own stationary. Sharing of such items is to be avoided.
- Employees should be cognisant at all times not to touch their face, but particularly before and after handling documents, files, cash, equipment or stationery.

Wearing of Face Coverings

- Members of the public: With effect from 10th August 2020 the wearing of face coverings by members of the public entering public library buildings is now mandatory as provided for under SI 296/2020. All local authorities should erect appropriate signage in libraries advising of this.
 - This does not apply to a person under the age of 13 years, a member of An Garda Síochána or a responsible person or a worker where –
 - There is a screen that separates the responsible person or worker from other persons, or
 - the responsible person or worker takes all reasonable steps to maintain a distance of at least two metres between himself or herself and other persons
 - **On a temporary basis, subject to review in mid-February 2022, the wearing of face masks/coverings is recommended for children aged 9 years and over on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings.**
 - A responsible person(s) should be appointed within each building. The responsible person(s) shall take reasonable steps to engage with persons entering the library premises to inform them of the requirements of public health legislation and to promote compliance with those requirements.
 - Persons may be exempted from these requirements if:
 - the person cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering –
 - because of any physical or mental illness, impairment or disability, or
 - without severe distress,
 - the person needs to communicate with a person who has difficulties communicating (in relation to speech, language or otherwise),

- the person removes the face covering to provide emergency assistance or to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person,
 - the person removes the face covering to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury,
 - the person removes the face covering in order to, and only for the time required to, take medication,
 - the person removes the face covering at the request of a responsible person, or of a worker, in order to enable him or her to ascertain the person's age by reference to photographic identification for the purposes of the sale of goods or services in respect of which there is a minimum age requirement or where the responsible person, or worker, has lawful authority to verify the person's identity, or
 - the person removes the face covering at the request of a responsible person, or of a worker, in order to assist the responsible person or worker to provide him or her with healthcare or healthcare advice.
- The enforcement of the statutory provisions provided for under SI 296/2020 is a matter for An Garda Síochána, who should be contacted in the event of unreasonable refusal to comply with the Statutory provisions for face coverings.
- Employees - should wear appropriate face masks/coverings when in communal areas as an extra preventative measure, e.g.
 - Entering and leaving the workplace
 - Not sitting at your desk/work area/base or moving between floors/areas/bases
 - Public access areas of buildings including receptions/foyers and public counters
 - In toilets and other welfare facilities
 - Moving around work locations
 - During breaks (prior to and after eating)

If an employee has a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering they should inform their Line Manager. Please continue to refer to the most up to date advice in relation to the wearing of face coverings².

- **Physical Distancing** – Library layouts wherever possible should be arranged to comply with 2m physical distancing requirements. This may involve re-evaluating spaces (reception areas, shelving areas, corridors, storage area etc.), using new methods/engineering controls such as screens at public counters/desks, clear floor /route markings or scheduling/allotting times for public engagement with library services. Managing occupancy levels will assist in maintaining physical distancing. Limit the numbers of seats / organise in such a manner to ensure two-metre distance. Remove any unnecessary items from open areas that could be contaminated for example toys. Consideration must be made for people with disabilities, vulnerable users and other distinct user groups including children.
- **Designated collection and returns areas** – These will be established at each library, from where library items may be returned and/or collected. Clear signage indicating where users are to collect and return items in the designated and marked bins/areas of the library and at designated times where applicable.
- **Close Working Measures (<2m apart)** – Ongoing processes should be in place to eliminate close working where possible. Risk assessments, pre-planning of

² <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

procedures, rotas and alternative methods of work/building layout should be considered. Where this is deemed not possible then ensure suitable controls are in place such as minimising time taken on tasks, using engineering controls such as barriers, using PPE, avoiding the sharing of items, cleaning of equipment between users. Where work inside within 2 metres of a colleague is unavoidable then further guidance should be sought from Line Manager.

- **Library Entrances** – Ensure Hand sanitiser is made available at main entry and exit points. Ensure a visible display of HSE COVID-19 information posters and signage at entrances and at prominent locations in the building³.
- **Library Access/Egress points** – Control public access and avoid congregation of large numbers at any one point. Make provisions for a queue management system outside of library with clear directional and floor markings to ensure 2m physical distancing. Consideration must be made for people with disabilities, vulnerable users and other distinct user groups including children. Ensure emergency routes are maintained.
- **Walkways/stairs and corridors** – Consider and ensure there are suitable arrangements to maintain physical distancing e.g. signage, one-way systems, barriers, floor markings to guide users through the building etc.
- **Sanitizer** - Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer in public areas and ensure that supplies are maintained.
- **Cleaning Arrangements** - Enhanced cleaning regimes should be implemented ensuring that all frequently touched objects and surfaces are regularly cleaned and disinfected. Workspaces and public spaces, including tabletops, door handles, book drops, computers, self-service checkouts and telephones, must be regularly sanitized. Essential cleaning materials shall be available in the workspace for personnel to use themselves. Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day. Increase number of waste collection points and ensure these are emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.
- **Ventilation⁴**: refers to the movement of outdoor air into a building, and the circulation of that air within the building or room. This can be achieved through natural means (e.g. opening a window, door or air vents) or mechanical means (e.g. a central heating, ventilation and air conditioning). Libraries should be well ventilated and windows kept open where possible. Any ventilation equipment in use should be regularly inspected and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
 - **Natural ventilation** should be maximised through the introduction of fresh air into the building e.g. opening doors, windows and air vents. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure security and safety measures.
 - **Cross-ventilation** is a good option for window ventilation as it facilitates the quick exchange of room air for fresh air through widely opened windows opposite to each other where possible. Propping open internal doors may increase air movement and ventilation rate. (Note: fire doors should not be

³ <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

⁴ Detailed guidance available at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/employeremployeeesguidance/Guidance%20on%20non%20HCbuilding%20ventilation%20during%20COVID-19.pdf>

- propped open unless fitted with approved automatic closers so that they function as fire doors in the event of an alarm or fire).
- **Mechanical ventilation** through the use of HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems. These provide comfortable environmental conditions (temperature and humidity) and clean air in indoor settings such as buildings and vehicles. Recommendations for mechanical ventilation include:
 - Regular maintenance of HVAC systems
 - Use of appropriate filters as per manufacturer's specifications
 - Increase total airflow and outside air fraction
 - Disable air recirculation systems, where possible
 - Extend operating hours, where possible
 - Avoid the use of ceiling mounted, desk and portable fans, where possible. It is recommended that fans should only be used where there is a single occupant in a room. When used, fans should be directed to exhaust directly to the exterior environment (e.g. open window), to minimise potential spread of pathogens
 - **Outdoor events** - Must be in accordance with current public health guidelines as outlined in the Government's COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021 – The Path Ahead.
 - **Travelling to / from Work** – Refer to SOG No. 14 Travelling to and From Work.
 - **Public Toilet Facilities** – Refer to SOG No. 24 Local Authority Public Toilets COVID-19 Requirements.
 - **Equipment** –
 - **Public:** When library equipment (e.g. printers/photocopiers/self-service checkouts/tablets/phones) is made available for public use, it should be on a single-user basis, and cleaned between use. Clear signage should be displayed to inform users to clean down equipment between use. Cleaning materials must be available for this purpose.
 - **Employees:** The sharing of work equipment should be avoided as much as possible. Where more than one employee is likely to use equipment then they should ensure they are wiped down between use e.g. printers/photocopiers/phones. Cleaning materials must be made available for this purpose.
 - **Deliveries** – Where possible, deliveries should be planned in advance and made without physical contact by prior agreement with suppliers. All deliveries should be carried out maintaining physical distancing and follow good hygiene practices.
 - **Passenger Lifts** –Where possible, encourage employees not to use the passenger lift and to use the stairs instead. If passenger lift is being used, ensure physical distancing can be maintained e.g. only one user at a time unless additional user is a household member/partner etc. Ensure signage informs lift users of the rules of usage of the lift for the duration of the pandemic. Hand sanitizer should be placed outside of the lifts.
 - **Canteens** – Refer to SOG No.11 Canteen / Eating COVID-19 Requirements.
 - **Suspect Case of COVID-19** - Ensure procedure is in place for Dealing with COVID-19 Suspect Cases at Work.
 - **First Aid Measures** – Refer to SOG No.10 Occupational First Aid.

Provision of Library Services to the Public

- Provision of Library Services will be in accordance with the Government's COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead, which can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/resilience-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/> and the CCMA Local Authority Services Framework for Future Covid-19 Pandemic Response.
- Users will have to queue at the designated library entrance in designated physical distancing marked spaces to utilise library services. Physical distancing rules will apply, and floor coverings and signage will be erected, posted up and laid on floor/pavement areas to denote the 2 metre guidelines.
- Install physical barriers like clear plastic guards at points where regular interactions with the public occur e.g. counters. These screens will be of a perspex/hard plastic nature.
- Physical barriers to be wiped down at regular intervals during library opening hours and prior to opening and at day end. Cleaning materials must be available for this purpose.
- Ensure designated return bins/boxes provided for patrons to return items.
- Any movement of bins/boxes should be carried out in accordance with manual handling procedures.
- Clear signage should be displayed to inform users that before handling any physical library material (books, DVDs etc) they should wash/sanitise their hands and that everyone should perform respiratory hygiene and good cough etiquette and avoid touching their face while using library property.
- Clear signage should be displayed informing all users that they must not borrow from the library if they or someone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19.
- Clear signage should be displayed informing all users that if they have borrowed and then they or a household member has developed symptoms then they should not return borrowed items until they have followed HSE advice in relation to self-isolation⁵.
- In cases where users are required to present identification for the collection of items by appointment employees should not handle the user ID, whether library card or other form of identification.
- Children under 12 should be accompanied by an adult at all times to ensure the maintenance of physical distancing.

Management of Mobile Library Service during COVID-19

- Maintain 2m physical distancing requirements with colleagues and during any interactions with members of the public.
- Review and assess access levels / capacity of mobile library units to maintain the 2m physical distancing requirements.
- If more than one employee is travelling in the mobile unit, the following measures should be followed:
 - Employees should not enter the vehicle with others if they have any symptoms or have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - Sit as far apart as the vehicle allows.
 - Keep windows of vehicles open as much as possible.
 - Face mask and face visor to be worn.

⁵ <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/testing/test-positive-covid-19.html>

- Practice good respiratory and hand hygiene.
 - Sanitise hands before and after entering / exiting the vehicle.
- Key touch points in vehicles are to be wiped regularly (e.g. door handles, steering wheel, handbrake, gear stick, radio controls) and hands sanitised before and after entering / exiting the vehicle. Adequate supplies of hygienic wipes and hand sanitiser must be available for this purpose.
- If 2m physical distancing is not possible within mobile cab units to separate driver and staff then installation of a vehicle safe dividing physical barrier should be considered to enforce separation during driving of the vehicle.
- Where possible, implement a queue management system / provision of directional signage / 2 m distance marking outside of mobile library unit to ensure members of the public adhere to the 2m physical distancing requirements.
- Admit only one household/bubble to the mobile library at any time.
- Driver to ensure key touch points in vehicles are to be wiped regularly (e.g. door handles, steering wheel, handbrake, gear stick, radio controls) and hands sanitised before and after entering / exiting the vehicle. Wipes and hand sanitiser must be available for this purpose.
- Mobile libraries must display clear signage to inform users that before handling any physical library material (books, DVDs etc) they should wash/sanitise their hands and that everyone should perform respiratory hygiene and good cough etiquette while using library property.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 24

Local Authority Public Toilets COVID-19 Requirements

Date: 3rd June 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with Covid-19 virus.
- Spread of Covid-19 virus to citizens or from citizens.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Dealing with body fluids.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing in line with public health advice.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To be determined through Risk Assessment.



Procedures



Line Managers / Supervisors should:

- Provide COVID-19 Induction to all workers; covering public health advice, the workplace control measures and what to do if symptoms develop
- Keep contact log.

All Employees should ensure that they do the following:

- Maintain 2m physical distancing requirements with colleagues and during any interactions with members of the public.

- Practice good respiratory hygiene, that is, when coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Refer to SOG. No.15 Personal Protective Equipment - Requirements and Use – Covid -19.
- Refer to SOG No.14 Travel to Work

Local Authority Public Toilets

- Determine numbers that can use the public toilet facilities to ensure the 2m physical distance can be maintained. Provide signage at entrances advising of same.
- Ensure adequate provision of COVID-19 signage and posters in conspicuous locations reminding the public to adhere to 2m physical distancing requirements and to observe good hand hygiene requesting people to wash their hands before and after using the facility.
- Ensure adequate provision of tissues, hand washing / sanitising facilities and paper towels.
- Consider implementing a queue management system / provision of directional signage / 2 m distance marking outside of public toilet facilities.
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins with regular removal and disposal.

Cleaning Arrangements For Local Authority Public Toilets

- Review and enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities, paying particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, locks, taps and the toilet flushing mechanisms. Where possible, cleaning should be performed at least twice per day.
- Public toilets should be closed to the public and ventilated for 15 minutes before cleaners enter to undertake cleaning activities. They should remain closed until cleaning is complete.
- Additional care is required when dealing with body fluids. Normal PPE for hygiene protection should be used - refer to SOG No. 15 Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Use Covid-19. Any waste material should be double bagged and disposed of appropriately. If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, use protection for the eyes, mouth and nose, as well as wearing gloves and an apron.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 25

Delivery of Training – Regional Training Centre

Date: 1st December 2021

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person or living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- COVID -19 PPE requirements should be determined by risk assessment



Procedures



Line Managers and Supervisors should ensure the following:

- Ensure all delivery of training complies with HSE & Government Guidelines with regard to physical distancing and other COVID 19 measures.
- Delivery of all SOLAS Training Courses must comply with “The SOLAS Standard Operational Pandemic Containment Guidelines”. (Copies available on the SOLAS web site).

- Ensure COVID-19 Induction has been provided.
- Keep a contact log.
- Cleaning regime of facilities to be in compliance with Government Return to Work Safely Protocol

All Employees should ensure the following:

- Compliance with the Regional Training Centre COVID-19 requirements is the responsibility of everyone and must be supported by all in order to protect health and reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Employees maintain the 2m physical distancing requirements with colleagues and during any interactions with course attendees/visitors where possible.
- Break times to facilitate course attendees & staff and ensure the implementation of physical distancing.
- Sharing of pens and own stationary is to be avoided.
- Employees should be cognisant at all times not to touch their face, but particularly before and after handling documents, files, equipment or stationery.
- Refer to SOG. No.15 Personal Protective Equipment - Requirements and Use – COVID -19.

A. Prior to the commencement of training:

- Regional Training Centre should comply with the organisational COVID-19 procedures and guidance.
- Ensure good hygiene practices are implemented and maintained.
- Training Centre Manager & host Local Authority (Lead Worker Representative) shall monitor and assist in the implementation of COVID-19 procedures and guidelines relevant to the Regional Training Centre.
- Prepare a response plan to deal with any suspected case of COVID-19 and designate an isolation room for use in the event that a course participant or staff member displays signs of the COVID-19 symptoms.
- Develop a cleaning process for training rooms, canteen area, toilet facilities and particularly in areas of high footfall throughout the training venue.
- Provide for cleaning / sanitising stations where required throughout the facility.
- Where possible all course bookings and administration should be arranged online.
- Regional Training Centre to prepare a site specific Procedure / Guidelines in compliance with COVID 19 requirements to manage safe access and egress to and from the Training Centre
- All training rooms, workshops and practical training areas to be set up in such a manner that physical distancing can be maintained.

- Where physical distancing is not possible additional control measures to be detailed in the site specific risk assessment.
- In respect of group exercises ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- Erect and maintain COVID–19 information posters throughout the Regional Training Centre.
- Regional Training Centre/outreach host Local Authority to communicate with all staff, trainers, trainees, contractors, visitors, etc. on compliance with COVID-19 requirements.
- COVID-19 Self Declaration Form and Contact details completed where required.
- Where SSWPs apply (site practical) these should include COVID-19 requirements.
- Sanitise all plant, tools, equipment and relevant contact points before commencement of training and refer to SOG No. 16 – Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant.
- Refer to SOG No. 14 Travelling to Work / Site.
- Refer to SOG No. 11 Canteen/Eating COVID-19 Requirements.
- Refer to SOG No. 15 Personal Protective Equipment – Requirements and Use – COVID-19.

B. Delivery of Training

- Classroom based training and site practical based training to comply with COVID-19, HSE, Government and SOLAS current guidelines.
- Course induction, which is to include COVID-19 requirements, shall be delivered to trainees before the course commences.
- Training packs to include information sheet on COVID 19 best practice.
- Risk assessment / SSWP's to be completed and must include COVID-19 control measures.
- Physical distancing to be implemented throughout all elements of the training, (classroom / site / canteens/ toilets, etc) including use of appropriate barriers, shields, PPE, etc where required.
- Individual course attendee packs/consumables to be prepared with due regard to hand hygiene.
- In order to reduce the amount of paperwork and signatures on communal paperwork, trainer will record attendees where practicable (attendance sheets, SSWPs etc)
- Where practicable, trainers to ensure that only those who are relevant to the training have access to the site.
- Trainer/trainees/staff must advise the Training Centre Manager if aware of any confirmed case of COVID 19 amongst their close contacts during the training period.
- In the event of a course participant displaying COVID-19 symptoms they must be directed to the isolation room immediately and the course suspended until further notice.

- Hand washing and sanitising of plant, tools, equipment and training area is essential prior to use, during the course of the day and on completion of practical exercise.
- On completion of practical exercises all disposable PPE must be removed in the established de-gowning area prior to returning to the classroom.
- Trainer /Trainees to agree work patterns so as to limit movement where possible. This will also assist with contact tracing if required.
- Course participants must go directly to the training venue and avoid congregating in groups etc.
- Refer to SOG No. 14 Travelling to Work / Site.
- Refer to SOG No. 11 Canteen/Eating COVID-19 Requirements.
- Refer to SOG No. 15 Personal Protective Equipment – Requirements and Use – COVID-19.

C. Outreach training

(a) Outreach Local Authority Venues:

All delivery of training shall comply with HSE, Government Guidelines and other statutory bodies with regard to physical distancing and other COVID-19 measures. The host Local Authorities' policies, procedures, risk assessments, etc. will apply to any training event conducted within their jurisdiction.

(b) Other Outreach Venues (eg hotels)

It is the responsibility of the RTC to ensure non local authority venues used for training comply with HSE, Government guidelines and other statutory bodies with regard to physical distancing and other COVID-19 measures.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- COVID-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Line Manager / Site Supervisor.

COVID-19 Questionnaire/Self-Declaration

To be completed prior to commencement of training.

In the interests of the safety of **all course participants**, training venue staff, families and the community at large, Trainer Centre Management require that you complete the following questionnaire/self-declaration.

Question	Yes	No
1. Do you have symptoms of COVID-19 now or in the last 14 days? For a full list of symptoms click here: Symptoms of COVID-19 - HSE.ie		
2. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3. Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?		
4. Are you a close contact of a person who is confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days? <i>If yes, follow HSE advice in relation to close contacts if you are a close contact of COVID-19 - HSE.ie</i>		
5. Have you been advised to self-isolate at this time?		
6. Have you been advised to restrict your movement at this time?		
7. Have you returned from overseas travel in the past 14 days? <i>If yes, ensure you are aware of, and follow the requirements on arrival into Ireland: gov.ie - New rules for travelling to Ireland (www.gov.ie)</i>		

I confirm that the information I have provided in this form is correct at the date of completion.

I also commit to advising the Training Centre Management if there is any change to my circumstances during the duration of the course.

Name: _____

Employer: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

In the event of you (course participant) developing symptoms of COVID-19 please contact RTC Manager

Name _____ Contact Number _____

Failure to complete this form by participant will result in non entry to the course.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 26

Non-Routine Complaint or Unannounced Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property or Private Residential Property

Date: 15th October 2020

Version: 2.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with Covid-19 virus.
- Spread of Covid-19 virus to citizens or from citizens.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person; living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing when carrying out maintenance activities

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To be determined through Risk Assessment and depending on site conditions.

 Disposable Gloves <input type="radio"/>	 Face Mask <input type="radio"/>	 Tyvek Suit <input type="radio"/>	 Face Shield <input type="radio"/>	 Safety Goggles <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>
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Procedures

 Wash your hands well and often to avoid contamination	 Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue	 Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands	 Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces	 Stop shaking hands or hugging when saying hello or greeting other people	 Distance yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell
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Prior to Inspection and prior to leaving the Office:

- Check that the persons who will conduct the inspection do not have any symptoms of COVID 19.

- As the site to be inspected is the subject of a complaint or the inspection needs to be unannounced for operational reasons, it is not possible to call the occupier of the premises or household in advance as to do so could jeopardise the potential to verify the complaint or detect the offences alleged by a complainant or jeopardise the operation.
- Where possible carry out desktop survey to determine site location, type of activities on the site and to determine level of activity on site. This could also include engaging with colleagues in your Local Authority or other agencies to understand the activities that normally take place on site and potential numbers of people on site.

Inspection:

- SSWP must be completed before work commences and consideration must be given to COVID-19 as part of the SSWP, to protect the safety of the staff **and** the occupants of the premises.
- Employees must refer to SOG No.14 Travel to Work/Site for advice on travelling to and from premises.
- Deploy required PPE and wash / sanitise hands in accordance with SOG No. 15 Personal Protective Equipment – Requirements and Use Covid-19.
- Where possible, employee should observe the site of interest from a distance or try to identify a suitable vantage point to observe/verify/detect activity on the site. Where possible engage technical equipment such as camera or drone in accordance with relevant powers of entry and ensuring DPIA and other relevant risk assessments in place.
- Where entry is required to non-residential private property be conscious of physical distancing and do not enter enclosed poorly ventilated spaces.
- Request the occupier to wear a face covering and to open all external and internal doors (in area to be inspected), to leave them open and to relocate all occupants away from the area to be inspected. In addition, request the occupier to open the windows in the area to be inspected and to move anything in the premises that might impede the inspection.
- Where possible, wait 15 minutes for the area to ventilate
- Ensure that activities / tasks are managed to minimise employee contact with surfaces.
- Minimise the time spent in the premises.
- Wash / sanitise hands after exiting the premises and remove / store / dispose of PPE in accordance with SOG No. 15 Personal Protective Equipment – Requirements and Use Covid-19.
- Where entry to a private residential dwelling is required, this normally requires advance notification as per powers of entry legislation. In this instance, refer to SOG No. 9 Site Inspection at a Private House (including the curtilage of a private house)

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the Site Supervisor.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP and Human Resources Department.

Standard Operating Guidance No. 27

Local Authority Only, Operated Leisure, Gym & Sports Centres

Date: 6th December 2021

Version: 6.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person or living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice
- Contact with bodily fluids.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Procedures



Notes:

- Local Authority Operated Leisure Centres, Gyms & Sport Centres must comply with local leisure centre COVID-19 arrangements and relevant guidance from National Governing Bodies e.g. FAI, GAA, Ireland Active, Sports Ireland etc.

Line Manager / Facility Manager

- Ensure COVID-19 induction training has been provided to staff.
- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing.
- Ensure Public Health Advice Posters prominently displayed including:
 - HSE COVID-19 Poster - information signage for the general public
 - Floor Markings
 - Changing room capacity
 - Shower capacity
 - Toilet capacity
 - Public viewing area capacity
 - Payment online / card
 - HSE Handwashing technique

Leisure / Sports Centres

- Occupancy levels:
 - These may operate in line with the broader permissions for indoor facilities as outlined in the Government's *Reframing the Challenge, Continuing our Recovery and Reconnecting* available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3361b-public-health-updates/>
 - Carry out a risk assessment in each facility. Determine occupancy numbers based on users, activity, physical capacity and time (including stationary time).
 - Indoor sporting events- with effect from 7th December to 9th January there is a maximum 50% spectator capacity. As with previous guidance spectators at these events must be fully seated.
 - Facilities should be extra vigilant of potential congestion points such as entrance/exit points, changing rooms and reception areas ensuring that physical distancing and other public health measures are maintained at all times.
- Where necessary install physical barriers and clear markings to ensure that contact between staff and users is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues or bottlenecks do not form between users as they wait to use facilities.
- Floor markings should be used to ensure 2m physical distancing, for example at reception and within group exercise areas or sports halls being used.
- Implement enhanced specific sanitation and hygiene measures (set out in further detail below)
- A system for the scheduling, screening and pre-booking should be implemented.
- The use of pre-paid and contactless payment is preferable.
- Consider allocating suitable dedicated times for vulnerable users to use facilities.
- Face coverings to be worn in line with public health advice.

COVID Pass (EU Digital COVID Certificate or HSE vaccination record)

- With effect from 7th December, Government has introduced the requirement for COVID pass (vaccination or recovery) for gyms and leisure centres (excluding access to swimming pools or standalone swimming pool facilities). For details on EU Digital COVID Certificate Checker please see: [gov.ie - How to use the EU Digital COVID Certificate Checker \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie)

Sanitation and Hygiene

- Facilities should ensure that users and staff clean hands on entering and exiting the building; Ensure adequate supply of hand washing facilities, additional hand sanitiser stations, wipes and appropriate signage are in place for this purpose.
- Implement enhanced cleaning regimes for any activity / work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.
- Ensure that high touch surfaces (e.g. sports equipment, counters, desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) are wiped with disinfectant regularly.
- Provide staff with essential cleaning materials to keep their own designated areas clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).
- Provide increased numbers of bins and ensure these are emptied throughout and at the end of each day.

Gym/Studio Areas

- These may operate in line with the broader permissions for indoor facilities as outlined in the Government's *Reframing the Challenge, Continuing our Recovery and Reconnecting* available at: [gov.ie - Reframing the challenge, continuing our recovery and reconnecting \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie)
- Facilities should be extra vigilant of potential congestion points such as entrance/exit points, changing rooms and reception areas ensuring that physical distancing and other public health measures are maintained at all times.
- Physical distancing of 2m should be maintained when using gym, attending classes and using equipment.
- Exercisers/participants should not congregate before or after classes/activities, and facilities should design internal flows to reflect this.
- Booking of time slots should be employed in order to enable safe management and recording of users in the facility.
- When taking the appointment, staff must ask the member of the public COVID-19 screening questions. The member of the public must be informed that changing and shower facilities are not available. Users should arrive dressed for the gym and shower at home.

- Ensure adequate ventilation of facilities. The HSA has published a new COVID-19 Work Safely Protocol employer checklist on ventilation which is available at www.hsa.ie
- Enhanced cleaning regimes to be implemented.
- Users should not share towels, water bottles etc.
- Spacing of exercise machines/equipment should be undertaken to ensure 2m distance in between equipment. This may involve rearrangement of equipment or for example using every second piece of equipment or the closing of certain stationary equipment to ensure 2m physical distancing.
- Equipment which is 2m apart should not be placed where exercisers are facing each other. Spin bikes should be staggered and spaced 2m apart to avoid spray back.
- Loose equipment such as dumbbells, kettlebells, free weights etc. should be used by one exerciser and cleaned in between each use by users/staff.
- Water fonts should not be available for use.
- Consider allocating suitable dedicated times for vulnerable users to use facilities.
- Cleaning materials should be available to allow users wipe down equipment after each use.
- Signage to be displayed reminding users of their requirements to clean equipment before and after use.
- Face coverings to be worn in line with public health advice.

Personal Training/Outdoor Fitness instruction

- There should be no hands-on adjustments or physical contact during group fitness classes or personal training sessions.
- Any demonstration of equipment should ensure that 2m physical distancing is maintained.
- Details of each personal training session should be maintained to assist with any possible contact tracing.
- Pre-booking of sessions with a gap in between to allow for cleaning should be allowed for.

Sports Halls/Pitches/Outdoor spaces

- Team and individual sports should be carried out in accordance with the relevant National Governing Body guidance/protocols [e.g. Sports Ireland, GAA, FAI etc.]

Showers / Changing Rooms

From September 20th, Showers & Changing Rooms can begin to reopen with protective measures in place. Recommended measures may include:

- Ensure only necessary participants/ sports teams/ support staff have access to changing rooms.
- Limit overall number and duration of individuals in a changing room.
- Continue to implement adequate physical distancing measures in changing areas for example the use of every second changing space/lockers/shower head etc.

- Recommend the wearing of masks in shared areas (showers an exception).
- Provide clear signage highlighting COVID measures in place.
- Close off any unnecessary spaces or those not in use/not permitted.
- Monitor toilets with agreed capacity numbers and limit to participants/patrons only.
- Implement flow management systems where necessary.
- Ensure adequate ventilation of shower / changing rooms.
- Provide sanitisation stations as appropriate on entrances and in shared areas.
- Continue to promote hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette through signage, posters etc.
- Ensure deep cleaning of shared areas on a regular basis.

Suppliers / Deliveries

- Management should contact suppliers for their COVID-19 process for deliveries and servicing.
- All deliveries should be carried out maintaining physical distancing and follow good hygiene practices.
-

First Aid Responder

- Ref to SOG No. 10 Occupational First Aid/Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements

Canteens/Cafes

- See SOG No. 11 Canteen Eating Arrangements

Personal Protection Equipment

- Refer to SOG No.15 Requirements and Use of PPE

Contractors

- Refer to SOG No.2 Contractors COVID-19 Requirements

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the relevant Manager.
- If a member of the public intentionally coughs/spits withdraw immediately and inform the line manager. Incidents should be reported to Gardai.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Appendix 1 National Framework for Living with COVID-19					
Activity	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
Sports Training (Indoor)	Normal training sessions and games can take place indoors and outdoors with protective measures.	Training, exercise, and dance classes can take place in pods of up to 6 inside (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).	Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes.	Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes can take place.	Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes.
Sports Training (Outdoor)	Normal training sessions and games can take place indoors and outdoors with protective measures.	Training can take place in pods of up to 15 (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).	Non-contact training only in pods of up to 15 (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship)	Non-contact training can take place but only in pods of up to 15.	Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes.
Gyms & Leisure Centres	These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing.	These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing.	Open with protective measures, for individual training only.	Gyms/leisure centres closed.	Gyms/ leisure centres closed.
Matches and Events	Indoor: A maximum of 100 spectators can attend indoor matches or games. Outdoor: A maximum of 200 spectators can attend outdoor matches or games. Up to 500 spectators can attend outdoor stadia or other fixed outdoor venues with a minimum accredited capacity of 5,000.	Indoor: Up to 100 patrons/spectators outdoors and 50 patrons/spectators indoors Outdoor: Up to 200 for outdoor stadia or other fixed outdoor venues with a minimum accredited capacity of 5,000	No matches or events to take place. Exemption: Professional/elite/inter-county/club championship/horse-racing can take place behind closed doors.	No matches or events to take place. Exemption: Professional and elite sport/inter-county/horse-racing can take place behind closed doors.	No matches or events to take place

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/resilience-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/roadmap/>

Standard Operating Guidance No. 28

Local Authority Only, Operated Swimming Pools

Date: 7th October 2020

Version: 3.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person or living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice
- Contact with bodily fluids.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Procedures



Notes:

- Swimming Pools must comply with relevant guidance from National Governing Bodies (Swim Ireland, Ireland Active) links provided below
<https://www.swimireland.ie/news/return-to-water-roadmap>
<https://irelandactive.ie/news/ireland-active-framework-for-safe-operation-version-3/>
- Swim Clubs must comply with local swimming pool COVID-19 arrangements and Swim Ireland COVID-19 Guidance.
- Swimming Pool Operators to refer to the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) guidance note TN45 and TN46 which are available at the following link:
<https://www.pwtag.org/swimming-pool-technical-operation-after-covid-19-shutdown/>

Line Manager / Facility Manager

- Ensure COVID-19 induction training has been provided to staff.

- Ensure a log of contact / group work is kept to facilitate contact tracing.
- Ensure Public Health Advice Posters prominently displayed including:
 - HSE COVID-19 Poster - information signage for the general public
 - Floor Markings
 - Changing room capacity
 - Shower capacity
 - Toilet capacity
 - Public viewing area capacity
 - Payment online / card
 - HSE Handwashing technique
 - HSE Alcohol Handwashing Technique

Prior to re-opening:

- Heating and cooling systems to be checked by a competent person.
- Where water systems have been shut down / have had low water usage / modified control regimes during the pandemic period, risk assessment review and water testing should also be carried out. The system may require recommissioning (thorough flushing, cleaning and disinfection and/or controlled flushing of outlets such as taps, showers and toilets).
- Plant rooms should be inspected to ensure they are working properly after a period of closure.

Resilience and Recovery 2020 – 2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19

On 15 September 2020, the Government published a framework for restrictive measures to guide Ireland over the short to medium-term in managing Covid-19. The framework consists of 5 Levels. The lower Levels of the framework will be activated when there is low incidence of the disease, with isolated outbreaks, low community transmission. The higher Levels will be used to deal with higher incidences of the disease. It will be possible for different regions and counties to be at a different Level to the National Level, depending on the incidence of the virus in that particular region or county

Protocols and restrictions should reflect each of the relevant levels. There should be clear differences in sporting activity between the higher and lower levels of the plan. The restrictive measures in place for each of the levels is summarised at Appendix 1.

Note: Swim Ireland has published a comprehensive '[Living & Swimming with COVID-19](#)' Framework. This plan, approved by the DTTAS/Sport Ireland Return to Sport Expert Group, is aligned with the Government of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive's risk management strategy for the next 6-9 months.

Swimming Pools

- Occupancy Levels:

- Carry out a risk assessment in each facility. Determine occupancy numbers based on users, activity, physical capacity and time (including stationary time).
- Occupancy levels to be in line with Government's National Framework for Living with COVID-19 which can be accessed here <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/resilience-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/covidplan/>
- Facilities should be extra vigilant of potential congestion points such as entrance/exit points, changing rooms and reception areas ensuring that physical distancing and other public health measures are maintained at all times.
- Where it is not possible to manage the pool in a lane format, facilities should encourage physical distancing between swimmers.
- Risk assessments should consider the risk factors for getting COVID-19 - that of distance, activity, time and environment. Pool Operators and Lesson Providers should include controls such as managed entry and exit, participant direction of travel, improved hygiene facilities, and regular cleaning to limit the risk factors.
- Adherence to the appropriate chlorine guidelines (see PWTAG) will control risk from waterborne COVID-19 virus in pools as per the March 5th guidance note by the HSE/HPSC.
- Where necessary install physical barriers and clear markings to ensure that contact between staff and users is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues or bottlenecks do not form between users as they wait to use facilities.
- The local admittance policy in relation to unaccompanied minors will apply.

Outdoor Pools

- Refer to PWTAG Technical Notes for public pools at: <https://www.pwtag.org/swimming-pool-technical-operation-after-covid-19-shutdown/>

Pre-Booking

- In order to control capacities in these areas, operators may choose to run using bookable sessions only, which will be subject to the new maximum occupancy levels in the pool and the impact changing room arrangements may have on these numbers. Operators should implement an effective method of controlling and recording the numbers of pool users.
- The use of pre-paid and contactless payment is preferable.
- Implement a Covid-screening system/procedure for swimmers
- Consider allocating suitable dedicated times for vulnerable users to use facilities.

Information for Pool Users

- Any pool will be safer if users are aware of the potential of COVID-19 transmission and act responsibly, as far as reasonably practicable. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, such as notices and signs displayed at reception, in changing areas and on the pool deck and information on websites.

Showers, Lockers, Changing Rooms and Toilets

- Lockers can be closed and swimmers asked to bring their bag on to the deck. Where lockers remain open, spacing between lockers should be implemented to allow for physical distancing. Lockers should be cleaned in between use.
- Establish occupancy levels to ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- When receiving bookings, encourage members of the public to turn up ready to swim to minimise time spent at the pool.
- Ensure adequate provision of hand washing facilities.
- Shared amenities (spin dryers, hairdryers etc) should be avoided.
- Implement enhanced cleaning regimes, paying particular attention to touch points
- Facilities may also want to consider requesting Swimmers to use shower facilities promptly to minimise time spent in shower cubicles and to ease congestion.

Sauna, Steam Rooms, Jacuzzis and Spa facilities

- The Irish Spa Association and Failte Ireland has issued guidelines for reopening spas which can be accessed at <https://www.irishspaassociation.ie/covid-19-resources>

Family Swimming

- Swimming with members of the same household would not require the physical distancing measures detailed above. However, swimmers must be well informed and aware that they must maintain the physical distancing guidance with any other swimmers and staff.
- For carers, the same principles would apply.

Children

- It is widely understood that early years and primary age children will find it difficult to remain 2 metres apart from each other. Therefore, when considering this, any programmed session in the pool for children of this age group should be supervised at all times and measures should be introduced.

Sanitation and Hygiene

- Facilities should ensure that users and staff clean hands entering and exiting the building; Ensure adequate supply of hand washing facilities, additional hand sanitiser stations, wipes and appropriate signage are in place
- Implement enhanced cleaning regimes for any activity / work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.
- Ensure that high touch surfaces (e.g. counters, desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) are wiped with disinfectant regularly
- Provide staff with essential cleaning materials to keep their own designated areas clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).
- Provide increased numbers of bins and ensure these are emptied throughout and at the end of each day.

Swim Equipment

- Refer to SOG No. 16 Use of Equipment, Tools and Plant -COVID-19 Requirements
Note: enhanced cleaning regime to be applied to the hoist.

First Aid Responder/Pool Rescues

- Ref to SOG No. 10 Occupational First Aid/Defibrillator COVID-19 Requirements
- Refer to <https://watersafety.ie/lifeguard-resuscitation-and-first-aid-guidelines/>

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the relevant Manager.
- If a member of the public intentionally coughs/spits withdraw immediately and inform the line manager. Incidents should be reported to Gardai.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP/Line Manager and Human Resources Department.

Appendix 1

National Framework for Living with COVID-19					
Activity	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
Swimming Pools	These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing.	These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing.	Open with protective measures, for individual training only.	Swimming pools closed.	Swimming pools closed.



Standard Operating Guidance 30 Attendance at Council Meetings by Elected Members & Council Officials / Others (Media & Public) and attendance at other meetings or Council Buildings.

Date: 25th September 2020

Version: 1.0

Potential Hazards

- Contamination with COVID-19 virus.
- Spread of COVID-19 virus.
- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing and sneezing. Close contact includes face to face contact; spending more than 15 minutes within two metres of an infected person or living with an infected person.
- Touching surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- Inability to maintain physical distancing requirements in line with public health advice
- Contact with bodily fluids.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Procedures



Pre-Meeting Considerations

- Maximum occupancy and seating capacities to be assessed to ensure the recommended physical distancing of 2m can be achieved for meeting venue.

- Capacity will depend on the venue and the ability to physically distance and ensure other protective measures are in place. Availability and capacity of public gallery should be considered.
- The overall numbers at any one time within the meeting facility should be in accordance with the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19, which can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/resilience-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/>
- Venue size and seating capacity will dictate the number of media, and public (if any) in attendance.
- If meeting is being hosted in an external venue check local guidelines in place.
- Ensure welfare facilities / hand sanitiser / wipes available at or adjacent to the meeting room.
- COVID-19 Self Declaration form to be sent electronically to all attendees in advance of meeting.
- On the day of the meeting and prior to the meeting, all attendees to complete COVID Self Declaration Form to determine the following questions (*if the answer to any one or more of the questions is Yes – that person should not attend the meeting*).
 6. Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness, flu like symptoms or loss or change to your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days?
 7. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?
 8. Are you a close contact of a person who has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (less than two metres for more than 15 minutes accumulative in one day)?
 9. Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?
 10. Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?
 11. Have you returned into Ireland from a non-green list country in the last 14 days?
- COVID-19 Self Declaration Form to be returned to the Meeting Administrator prior to the meeting.
- Ensure attendees are advised that they must not attend the meeting if they have any COVID-19 symptoms or feel unwell (or suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19).
- Ensure a response plan is prepared, in line with the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol, in the event that someone at the meeting becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Vulnerable or those who the HSE categorise as being very high risk may be facilitated to access the meeting remotely if they so request, however they must be advised that they will not have voting rights if accessing meeting remotely.

Meeting Room Considerations

- Ensure adequate welfare facilities / hand sanitiser / wipes available at or adjacent to the meeting room.

- Display COVID-19 posters prominently.
- Ensure cleaning schedule in place.
- Ensure meeting room is set up to facilitate 2m physical distancing.
- Provide one-way systems for access/egress routes where practicable.
- Keep meeting rooms well ventilated during use ideally through open windows.
- No tea/ coffees or food.
- No roaming mics.

At the Meeting

- Wash/sanitise hands before going into the meeting.
- Attendees should access the meeting room at the designated time and not earlier.
- Attendees to adhere to the 2m physical distancing and follow the public health advice in relation to hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Access to the meeting room should be controlled with only those on the attendance list permitted access.
- A record of attendees and contact details must be kept for contact tracing purposes. Use of own pen for sign in or alternatively one person to record contact details.
- Attendees to be encouraged to bring minimal personal belongings into the meeting room to avoid risk of contamination.
- Chair must inform all attendees at the start of the meeting the COVID-19 control measures in place.
- Ensure attendees are aware of the response plan in place in the event that someone at the meeting becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms.
- It is recommended that a face covering is worn on entering and leaving the building and until attendee enters seat.
- No congregation in the building before or after the meeting.
- Meeting of members in venue before or after meeting to be actively discouraged.
- Strictly **no** Hand Shaking (or any physical contact).
- Aim to keep hardcopy document handling to the absolute minimum, use of electronic means as an alternative, where possible.
- Reflecting best practice, time of attendance at meeting to be kept to a minimum and within a recommended maximum of 1 hour 55 minutes. Chair to outline at the start and advise of meeting finish time.
- Standing orders may need to be amended to accommodate these new time restrictions.
- Chair to consider allocation of time to agenda items to get through the agenda in the allotted time and to advise the members in advance.
- It is recommended that the Chair and members give consideration to the effective and efficient management of Notion of Motions e.g.:
 - Only the Proposer and the Seconder to speak to a Notice of Motion.
 - If the Proposer is happy with the written reply, the matter is then concluded and move on.

- Written replies by the Executive to Notice of Motions to be shared with all Members at commencement of meeting preferably by electronic means.

Attendance at Council Buildings

- Attendance at Council buildings should only be for essential business reasons. Technological alternatives (email, phone or video conferencing) to be used as much as possible.
- If attending Council buildings, it should be by pre-arranged appointment if possible and Council Officials should make every effort to accommodate Elected Members in this regard.
- If attending at Council buildings Elected Members should limit their movements.
- Elected members should avoid contact with any Council employees other than those directly related to their visit.
- It is recommended that a face covering is worn when moving through Council buildings.
- Elected Members attendance at Council buildings and interactions with staff should be recorded for contact tracing purposes, as required.
- Adhere to public health advice in relation to hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Maintain a 2m distance with interactions with employees or members of the public
- Keep durations of interactions to a minimum.

Monitoring of Arrangements

- Covid-19 arrangements on site to be monitored regularly by the relevant Manager.

If you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP and Meeting Administrator / Line Manager

APPENDIX 20 –

Priority Actions in Reopening Services within the Planning System



Prepared by: LUTS/DHPLG Working Group on Reopening Services within the Planning System
by Local Authorities

Date: 20th May 2020

Introduction

The cessation of the current s.251A⁶ Order has been extended to 23rd May. From Monday May 25th the emergency extension period for statutory timelines within the planning system will be removed. This cessation is to be accompanied by a phased re-commencement of the full suite of local authority planning services which have been necessarily impacted upon by the COVID-19 emergency and related public health measures taken by Government. There are a number of key steps required to ensure satisfactory compliance of this phased recommencement with established legislative and Aarhus⁷ Convention requirements.

It should be noted that with the cessation of the emergency legislation, all statutory planning requirements will again apply including for example at least 30 days statutory notice to comply with the EIA Directive.

This document sets out a number of topics for consideration by planning departments in ensuring a consistent national approach to the recommencement of planning system activities.

Communications

The reopening of the planning system to members of the public in the initial period will be by appointment only. All transactions with the public should be encouraged to be on-line through emails or over the phone in line with national guidance.

Where dissemination of information is required, the contact in the first instance should be via the local authority website. For example, the weekly planning list should be available on-line as quickly as possible post-validation of the planning file and its availability should be clearly communicated to the public through the normal communication channels.

⁶ *Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act 2020 (2/2020)*, enacted 27 March 2020, and all statutory instruments up to and including the *Planning and Development Act 2000 (Subsection (4) of Section 251A) Order 2020* (S.I. No. 131 of 2020), made 16 April 2020

⁷ The *Aarhus Declaration*, ratified in 2012 has three pillars, all of which have implications for public participation in the various activities undertaken by the planning system.

Standard Operating Guidance (SOGs)

The Health & Safety Operational Committee of the CCMA has issued a number of Standard Operating Guidance (SOG) documents (*COVID-19 LA Standard Operating Guidance*) to local authorities as part of the recommencement of services in line with the Government Roadmap⁸ for re-opening services. Among these is guidance on meeting and working close to members of the public and in the interaction of staff and members of the public where inspection of files is concerned. Of particular relevance are:

- 1) SOG No. 6 – “Meeting and Working Close to Members of the Public”
- 2) SOG No. 9 – “Site Inspections at a Private House (Including the Curtilage of a Private House)”
- 3) SOG No. 15 – “Requirement and Use of PPE – Covid-19”
- 4) SOG No. 17 – “Site Inspections of Non-Residential Private Property”
- 5) SOG No. 18 – “The Handling of Documents, Cash, Stationery & Equipment”

Site Inspections

The carrying out of visits to sites are considered to fall into Phase 1 as set out in CCMA guidance on re-opening of local authority services.

Local Authorities should put in place clear protocols for resumption of site visits/inspections by local authority staff for all appropriate planning and development functions. In this regard the following should be considered:

- Where site access is considered necessary into a development site (e.g. commercial premises, private dwelling, etc.), such visits should:
 - be coordinated among local government departments, as necessary
 - be by prior arranged appointment
 - observe the HSE Public Health advices and the relevant COVID-19 LA Standard Operating Guidance
- Facilitate other necessary site investigations (e.g. environmental surveys/site surveys, etc.) to allow Part VIII proposals to be prepared/proceed.

⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/58bc8b-taoiseach-announces-roadmap-for-reopening-society-and-business-and-u/>

Guidance on Construction Hours

The DHPLG have issued a circular (PL 06/2020) on the matter of working hours conditions attached to planning permissions in the context of Covid-19. In considering any alteration to hours of operation, planning departments should consider the adequacy of site construction, management procedures, including any community liaison plan. Additionally, the phase of construction and nature of works (e.g. indoor/outdoor) will be relevant in determining the LA response.

Operation of Development Management Function

As the planning system re-opens the levels of communication with the public will increase as the normal functions of the planning department ramp up to meet demand. Similarly, the challenges of office working will need to be met to ensure routine operations continue while managing all public health risks for staff. Adherence to the relevant sectoral Standard Operating Guidance (SOG) should be noted and the appropriate local measures taken.

Each local authority shall communicate the new opening arrangements of planning departments to the public through normal media channels. Requests for appointments should be made via email and/or designated phone line. When a physical meeting with the planning department is arranged, a written confirmation of this appointment should be provided on request as proof of eligibility to travel (as access to an essential service is covered by legislation).

In order for the public to be in a position to engage with the planning system, validated planning applications should be made available on council websites as soon as possible. A focus of LA resources on this work area should reduce the need for physical interaction between staff and the public.

As an important channel for public participation, local authorities should prioritise the publication of weekly lists of applications received and decisions made.

Enforcement

It is important that emphasis be given to existing cases with enforcement notices whose timelines fell during the 251A Order period, as the section 251A Order did not extend these timelines as they may have been set out in a particular enforcement notice.

Part VIII Schemes

For Part VIII schemes, on-line display and electronic means of consultation should be maximised.

Pre-planning

Pre-planning communication methods should be established to maximise the capacity for public engagement, i.e. by written submissions, phone calls, email and video-conferencing as appropriate.

Statutory Plans

General provision is allowed for extending these timelines in the Planning and Development Act. Prioritisation should be given to those plans which are legally required.

This matter will require further consultation between the local government sector and the DHPLG.

Members of the Group:

Mr. Liam Conneally (Chair)	-	Clare County Council
Mr. John O 'Hara	-	Dublin City Council
Mr. Tony Larkin	-	Wexford County Council
Mr. Paul Hogan	-	Department of Housing Planning & Local Government
Mr. Colin Ryan	-	Department of Housing Planning & Local Government
Mr. Stewart Logan	-	Department of Housing Planning & Local Government
Mr. Terry Sheridan	-	Department of Housing Planning & Local Government

APPENDIX 21-

Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers

Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19

In relation to working arrangements
and temporary assignments across
the Public Service

26 November 2021

Local Authority Sector

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Updated List of Acronyms

DSP	Department of Social Protection
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
FAQs	Frequently asked questions
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HSA	Health and Safety Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
HPSC	Health Protection Surveillance Centre
NSSO	National Shared Services Office
PHRA	Public Health Risk Assessment
SLWP	Special Leave with Pay
T&S	Travel and subsistence
WFH	Working from Home
VOC	Variant of concern

Background

This guidance document for Civil and Public Service employers supersedes previous guidance and FAQs issued relating to Civil and Public Service working arrangements and temporary assignments during COVID-19. These arrangements apply to all Civil and Public Service employees.¹

The public service focus is to support reopening Ireland whilst continuing to protect the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. To achieve this, and to keep delivering crucial services to society, we must work together as a unified public service.

The FAQs have been prepared to assist employees and management in the Civil and Public Service to understand the process, rules and expectations associated with work arrangements during the COVID-19 recovery period across the public service.

These arrangements apply in the case of COVID-19 as a notifiable infectious disease.

These FAQs will be updated in response to queries that are received centrally. The most up-to-date version of these FAQs will be available at www.gov.ie/per.

The Civil and Public Service need to ensure that our services have the potential to be flexible and responsive to any changes that may be needed based on public health advice. Should there be a requirement for a further lockdown, previous versions of the guidance, or parts thereof, may need to be implemented. The guidance is continually reviewed, and employers will be advised of any changes.

Subject to expert public health advice in light of developing circumstances on COVID-19, the general principles or FAQ material may be subject to updating or other amendment. Employers retain the right to withdraw or amend provisions in light of developing circumstances.

¹ Individual employers will need to identify which employees fall into the category of public service employees.

Principles (updated)

The Government, taking into account the latest public health advice, has decided that, with effect from midnight on Thursday 18 November, everyone should return to working from home, unless it is necessary to attend the workplace in person. This new guidance marks a return to the situation as it applied prior to the phased return to the workplace which started on 20 September.

The general principles to apply to the working arrangements during COVID-19 in the Civil and Public Service include:

Public health	Business need	One Public Service
Safeguarding the health of both the public in their interaction with the public service, and employees, is central to how we organise work. Public service employers and employees must comply with measures for safeguarding public health and safety of the workplace, including related legislation and Government advice.	We must deliver the services that the public need and expect in a changing delivery environment. Openness, transparency and consistency will underpin service delivery and decision-making. The employer determines the criteria for return to the workplace according to business needs.	Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have operated as a unified, One Public Service and accordingly these FAQs are developed in order to ensure transparency of decision making and agree on the overriding principles which apply, while recognising individual needs of certain sectors.

1.Attendance in the work premises during COVID-19

UPDATED 1.1 Work premise attendance

The Government, taking into account the latest public health advice, has decided that, with effect from midnight on Thursday 18 November, everyone should return to working from home, unless it is necessary to attend the workplace in person. This new guidance marks a return to the situation as it applied prior to the phased return to the workplace which started on 20 September.

Where attendance in the workplace is necessary, the [Work Safely Protocol](#) continues to provide clear and important guidance on the Public Health infection prevention and control measures required in every place of work to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19. If concerns arise in the workplace, workers should engage with the employer through the Lead Worker or other representative.

Attendance at work premises should be for specific business purposes appropriate to each sector and taking into account the updated guidance regarding working from home. The LEEF Consultative Group published a [guidance note](#) on 17 November 2021 and updated the Work Safely Protocol on 18 November 2021 which takes into account the latest public health advice.

For those who must attend the workplace, the HSA has produced a checklist for the return to the work premises, including a checklist on [Returning to the Office](#), which has been drafted based on the *Work Safety Protocol* and should be read in conjunction with it. Employers, in conjunction with the Lead Worker Representative and employees, should work together to ensure that on return, all necessary and practicable steps are in place in the workplace to prevent the spread of COVID-19. How this will work in practice is dependent on the individual circumstances of each workplace/premises, having regard to issues such as physical distancing and other public health measures.

While physical distancing requirements remain in place in relation to the work premises, employers may continue temporary alternative arrangements or implement new temporary arrangements, e.g. flexible shifts, staggered hours, longer opening hours, blended working patterns, weekend working etc. to continue to facilitate physical/social distancing and public health requirements, where feasible. There should be engagement between management and unions/associations, in line with appropriate arrangements, for any such continued or new arrangements.

Employers must ensure that all work premises have implemented robust pre-return to workplace procedures, where not already in place, and that all procedures comply with the Work Safely Protocol. These procedures should be clearly communicated to employees. The [Protocol](#), which is a revision of the previous Return to Work Safely Protocols, was updated on 18 November 2021 and incorporates current public health advice. It outlines the measures needed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to facilitate the re-opening of workplaces following temporary closures. The protocol is supported by a guidance note on returning safely to the workplace.

For further information on recommended health measures, employers should read the Protocol in detail.

Employers should ensure that they have properly implemented the advice in the Protocol and ensure that it is tailored, where necessary, to meet the unique set of circumstances pertaining to each sector and workplace location.

Some employers have continued to have employees in their work premises throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers should ensure that the Protocol is reviewed in respect of all employees i.e. employees required to return to the work premises and those employees who have continued to work on site. There may be additional issues to consider to ensure compliance with the Protocol for those employees who are already working onsite.

All employees have a critical role in ensuring that the procedures of the Protocol are followed to suppress COVID-19 in their workplace. It is incumbent on all employees who are required to attend the workplace to fully comply with their organisation's COVID response plan. Cooperation between employees, the lead worker representative(s) and the employer are fundamental to ensuring that the measures are adhered to.

1.2 How should employers appoint lead worker representative(s)?

The process for the selection and appointment of lead worker representative(s) should be discussed at an organisational level between employers, employees and employee representatives. There should be engagement between management and unions/associations, in line with appropriate arrangements, for engagement on the implementation of the Protocol. The lead worker representative may be a union member, or another member of staff, and will be appointed by the employer. Any arrangements should have the confidence of all parties.

1.3 What is the role of the lead worker representative(s)?

Organisations should ensure they continue to communicate with staff on any changes to working arrangements, and engage with their Lead Worker Representatives, on any future or additional return to work premises plans.

The Protocol requires that each workplace should appoint at least one lead worker representative who will assist employees and together with the employer be responsible for ensuring safety measures are being followed. Lead worker representatives should be clearly identifiable, and the employer should ensure they receive the necessary training to carry out the role.

Lead worker representative(s) should:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining physical/social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

1.4 When should the COVID-19 Return to Work Form be completed?

The Work Safely Protocol COVID-19 Pre-Return to Work Form is one of the measures designed to assist with the safe return to the workplace.

Whilst the Return to Work Form is only to be completed once and the form itself does not need to be resubmitted, employers may request employees to reconsider the questions in the return to work form, for example following an extended period of absence from a workplace (e.g., following annual leave, travel or where the employee may only access the work premises infrequently). **Employees should**

have regard to any changes in their circumstances in relation to the questions and notify their manager/HR immediately.

The content of the pre-return to work form is special category data under GDPR and accordingly sufficient safeguards should be put in place to ensure that the process for collection, processing and storing of the information is proportionate and secure. The form should be destroyed upon the employee's return to the work premises. Employers may wish to keep a log of employees who have completed Return to Work form for audit purposes. Any such log must not contain special category personal data.

1.5 What if an employee shows symptoms of COVID-19 in the employer's work premises?

It is important to emphasise that any employee who is displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 – regardless of vaccination status - does not attend the workplace.

The health and wellbeing of employees is of utmost importance. If an employee becomes unwell in the work premises, employers should ensure that arrangements are put in place which take account of the requirements in the [Work Safely Protocol](#), the [Health and Safety Authority](#), and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre ([HPSC](#)) website for guidance. These arrangements should be clearly communicated to employees. Sectors may need to refer to their own emergency protocols or arrangements as necessary where these exist.

1.6 What happens if an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19?

In line with the [HSE Contact Tracing Process](#), contact tracers will directly contact all relevant persons who have been in contact with a confirmed case, or the person will be notified through the COVID Tracker App. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and employee confidentiality is essential at all times.

Employees are encouraged to download the [COVID Tracker App](#) to their mobile device as this will assist with the contact tracing process. It should be noted that in incidents where a full Public Health Risk Assessment is undertaken, information from the COVID19 tracker application is included as part of this assessment. Individuals should follow any actions which are advised by the Medical Officer of Health / Health Protection Medical Team.

For information on management of a case or cases (an outbreak) in the workplace, please refer to the Appendix 9 in the Work Safely Protocol and the HPSC website.

1.7 Is temperature testing required?

The Protocol notes that temperature testing should be implemented in line with public health advice. Currently there is no general public health requirement to undertake temperature testing/screening in the workplace, apart from in certain sectors and workplaces where public health have advised its use. If undertaken, the results of temperature testing are considered special category data under GDPR.

1.8 Are face coverings required in the workplace?

Observing physical/social distancing, appropriate hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette are the most important measures individuals can take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 in the workplace. Face coverings should not be used in lieu of following physical/social distancing or proper hand and cough etiquette, but they may be used in addition to these protective measures, especially where maintaining physical/social distancing is difficult.

Office locations are not currently listed as locations where faces coverings must be worn. (Please refer to this list <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/> for guidance.) Public Health advice remains that face coverings should be worn in places or situations where it may be difficult to achieve or maintain physical/social distancing. This might include:

- When entering and exiting buildings.
- Public access areas of buildings, including receptions/foyers and public counters.
- When moving throughout buildings to toilets, photocopiers, on stairwells etc.
- Canteens and kitchen areas (prior to and after eating) or when using facilities such as boilers, toasters.

2. High Risk & Very High Risk Categories

2.1 Should employees who are at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 attend the work premises?

Employers should continue to facilitate this group where possible in terms of flexible working arrangements, including working remotely where such arrangements are appropriate to the business needs. Employers are working to implement measures to ensure the safety of the workplace for all employees, as provided for in the Work Safely Protocol.

High risk employees who are required to attend the work premises, in accordance with HSE advice, should take extra care to practise physical/social distancing where possible and wash their hands regularly and properly.

2.2 Should employees who are at very high risk for COVID-19 attend the work premises?

Employees should declare to their employer if they believe that they are at very high risk of COVID-19. Please refer to the [HSE website](#) for more information.

The employer's Occupational Health service should be consulted for employees in the very high risk category, or to determine if an employee falls into this category, and to advise on whether the employee can attend the work premises.

The Civil Service CMO advises that as our knowledge of COVID-19 has increased, some conditions that previously placed employees in the very high risk category now place them in the high risk category or in some instance in the normal risk category. In addition an employee's risk categorisation may now have changed due to vaccination and / or history of recent confirmed COVID infection.

Therefore if an employee has previously been placed in the very high risk category, and their work activities now cannot be performed offsite, then referral to occupational health for updated COVID risk categorisation may be appropriate to see if they can resume onsite.

In instances where an employee is very high risk and has been advised to work from home, and their current role is not suitable for remote working, then they may be assigned work outside their usual core duties/given a new role.

Employees in the very high risk category who wish to return to the work premises should contact their HR unit for further information.

3. COVID-19 special leave with pay arrangements

UPDATED 3.1 When does special leave with pay apply during COVID-19?

Special leave with pay is used in lieu of sick leave for COVID-19 to assist in the prevention of the possible onward spread of COVID-19 in the work premises.

[Circular 2/1976, which covers special leave with pay](#) should only apply in lieu of sick leave for COVID-19 when an employee is required to self-isolate and is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or had a positive PCR test. Medical or HSE advice should be followed. The HSE sets out the latest criteria for self-isolation at [this link](#).

Special leave with pay in all sectors **does not** apply to individuals who are restricting their movements, or who are in the very high risk category and are cocooning.

Special leave with pay only applies to employees who were rostered or due to be working. Special leave with pay cannot be substituted for other forms of leave, for example annual leave. If employees are on annual leave and have valid certification they can opt to apply for sick leave as per the normal rules.

Please see the Quick Guide of Scenarios at Appendix 4 for further details of when special leave with pay applies.

The general principles applying to the management of sick leave, for example the requirement of employees to contact managers, and for ongoing contact with employees who are on special leave for this purpose, will apply. As per normal practice, all sickness absences of 28 days duration must be referred to occupational health, including absence attributed to COVID-19. This includes any period of special leave with pay for COVID-19.

Any special leave with pay granted for the purpose of self-isolation and/or diagnosis of COVID-19 will not be counted as part of the employee's sick leave record. Appropriate medical/HSE confirmation of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required for the duration of the absence. The confirmation may be in the form of the PCR test result e.g. in cases of self-referral.

Note that at any stage if an employee states that they feel well enough to work, but have tested positive for COVID-19 or are self-isolating because they were symptomatic, the employer may facilitate working from home instead of special

leave with pay, if this is feasible and agreeable to both parties. They must not attend the work premises and must also follow Medical and HSE advice as it relates to self-isolation.

From 1 January 2021, in instances where an employee has a confirmed case of COVID-19, special leave with pay may continue for up to 28 calendar days if necessary and where it is supported by a positive PCR test for COVID-19 and ongoing medical certification. If an employee is still unwell after 28 calendar days they will move to ordinary sick leave arrangements, including a referral to occupational health.

In certain circumstances, where an employee had been in the work premises² (outside the home) during the 14 days prior to commencing the self-isolation period of a positive case of COVID-19, special leave with pay may be extended beyond 28 calendar days if necessary and where it is supported by a positive PCR test for COVID-19, ongoing medical certification and the involvement of occupational health. Occupational health will need to confirm that the individual's absence relates primarily to ongoing COVID-19 illness, and that they are accessing appropriate medical care.

Managers will be required to certify that the employee was in the work premises in any of the 14 calendar days prior to commencing the self-isolation period. Any work premises attendance must have been known to and agreed by the manager in advance. Employees who attended the work premises without the knowledge or approval of their manager will not be considered to have attended for the purposes of the continuation of special leave with pay.

When granting special leave with pay, the officer will be expected to comply at once with any directions which may be given by [their] Department and to take all practicable steps to resume duty as soon as possible. Otherwise, unless adequate reason is shown for non-compliance, the question of withholding pay will arise. Employees are not entitled to days in lieu of bank holidays whilst in receipt of special leave with pay.

In the event of non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay (including the requirement to provide bona fide³ confirmation of self-isolation/diagnosis of COVID-19) existing procedures, including disciplinary measures may be invoked.

² The work premises includes any location, outside the home, an employer requires an employee to attend as part of the role, e.g. field work

³ Bona fide in relation to a representation or communication means in good faith and well founded in fact. The employer reserves the right to request further confirmation.

The arrangements relating to the application of special leave with pay for COVID-19 is temporary, and will be kept under regular review.

▲ **UPDATED 3.2 Close contacts and restricted movements**

The HSE sets out the latest criteria for restricted movements following close contact at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html>

For individuals who are fully vaccinated, or had a positive COVID-19 PCR test in the last 9 months, and have no symptoms there is no requirement to restrict movements as a close contact of a confirmed case⁴ unless you are a household close contact⁵ or specifically requested to do so by Public Health. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated will need to restrict their movements and get a PCR test. Please see the HSE information at [this link](#).

Employers should ensure that they are aware of the most up to date information on gov.ie in relation to close contacts. Special leave with pay does not apply to employees who are required to restrict their movements as they are not ill.

Where an employee is required to restrict their movements the employer must facilitate working from home. If remote working in an employee's current role is not feasible, then the assignment of work may be outside of their usual core duties. Employees must cooperate with all such flexibilities while they are restricting their movements.

In all such cases, employees remain available for work whilst at home, where they have been advised to restrict their movements as a precautionary measure.

This FAQ does not apply to employees who are required to restrict their movements arising from travel abroad (see FAQ 4.4).

3.3 What if an employee has another illness?

Any non-COVID-19 illness will be recorded as ordinary certified sick leave and the usual rules governing [sick leave](#) will apply.

⁴ In certain instances a weakened immune system may change this guidance – the contact management team will advise based on the individual's circumstances.

⁵ Please see the Quick Guide of Scenarios at Appendix 4 for further details in relation to household close contacts.

UPDATED 3.4 What documentation is required from the employee for special leave with pay?

If an employee is displaying symptoms and/or has a positive PCR test for COVID-19 then the period should be recorded as special leave with pay. Special leave with pay for COVID-19 is being used in place of sick pay. As noted, special leave with pay should only apply when an employee is required to self-isolate and is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or had a positive PCR test. Medical or HSE advice should be followed. As the public health advice allows for self-referral for COVID-19 testing when someone has COVID-19 symptoms, SLWP may also be granted to employees in this scenario, providing they produce the results of their PCR test as confirmation.

Appropriate medical/HSE confirmation of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required. In the event that written confirmation is not available, this may take the form of a self-declaration in certain circumstances, where it is accompanied by text message confirmation, for example. How this will work in practice will vary based on the unique circumstances of each employer. For example, employers may wish to implement a self-declaration form on return to work (see appendix 2 for a sample), which is completed by the employee and signed off by the employer. In instances where the employee has undertaken a COVID-19 PCR test, they may be required to provide the results to their employer, for example for occupational health purposes.

The employer should clearly communicate to employees the information required to be provided and the notification process. See guidance at the end of this document for more details on notification requirements.

Self-declarations and/or accompanying certification/confirmation should be retained by Local HR on the individual's personnel file and should be subject to audit.

For employers within the NSSO customer group the notification process will include the requirement that managers raise a case, in the same way as for sick leave, for special leave with pay on the PeoplePoint system. (Note that the employee will need to engage with management in their Department/Office in terms of certification/documentation/confirmation of PCR test, rather than sending it to the NSSO.)

3.5 An employee is on special leave with pay, can they claim the DSP Illness Benefit for COVID-19?

Public Service employees who can avail of the special leave with pay for COVID-19 are excluded from claiming the special DSP COVID-19 illness benefit payment. Any instances of civil or public servants found to be in receipt of both special leave with pay and the COVID-19 illness benefit will be subject to disciplinary action.

3.6 What is the process for a return to the employer's work premises after a positive case of COVID-19?

Please note that this FAQ relates to a return to work in the employer's work premises. These arrangements do not preclude employees from returning to work at home at an earlier stage if this is feasible, depending on the situation of each case.

Note: Sectors may need to refer to their own arrangements as necessary where these exist.

The Civil Service CMO advises where the individual has had a positive PCR test for COVID-19 an employee needs to be 10 days post onset of symptoms and also 5 days fever free (which may run concurrently) before returning to the workplace. Please note that the 10 days is from onset of symptoms and not the date of receiving a positive COVID-19 PCR test result.

If employees cannot provide certification they will be asked by their manager to complete a self-declaration form (see appendix 2 for a sample form). Managers should be mindful of confidentiality and alert the employee to any follow up actions that are required on their return to work.

Any forms and/or, where applicable, accompanying certification, should be forwarded by managers to and retained by Local HR on the individual's personnel file and should be subject to audit.

NSSO customer group employees should be advised not to forward the forms or certificates to the NSSO but rather to their own organisation.

The HSA has produced guidance for a return to the work premises. Please refer to [this link](#) for more information.

3.7 What if an employee has had a negative PCR test for COVID-19?

For individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms: For individuals who were tested because they had symptoms of coronavirus and receive a negative PCR test result, they should continue to self-isolate until they have not had any symptoms for 48 hours. They can return to normal activities once 48 hours without symptoms. The usual rules applying to certification/self-declaration (as per FAQs 3.1 and 3.6) continue to apply. **For individuals who are close contacts:** Please refer to FAQ 3.2 and Appendix 4.

4. Working arrangements during COVID-19

4.1 How should flexi-time operate during the period of COVID-19?

The normal operation of flexi-time, or equivalent attendance management rules, including any flexi-time accruals and deficits, continues to remain temporarily suspended for those employees who are working under different arrangements. This includes those who are working from home and working different shift patterns etc., which are required in order to support physical/social distancing and public health requirements.

Flexi-time arrangements were re-introduced with effect from 24 August 2020 and/or commencement of the organisation's next viable flexi period. This arrangement applies only in circumstances where employees are attending the employer's work premises and are working their normal, pre-COVID work attendance patterns.

For those employees where flexi-time remains temporarily suspended, this arrangement does not preclude employers from using clocking in and out arrangements for monitoring purposes. Any balances accrued by employees before the suspension of flexible working hours arrangements can continue to remain and be held over until the COVID-19 working arrangements are no longer in place.

4.2 Is special leave with pay available for caring responsibilities?

There is no special paid leave available for COVID-19 caring arrangements during this time.

Any employee who wishes to avail of existing leave allowances during this time is entitled to have such requests considered by their employer, as always, including parental leave, annual leave etc.

4.3 Should employees who live with very high risk individuals attend the work premises?

Employees who live with very high-risk individuals should follow the HSE guidelines to protect themselves and to minimise risk of transmission. The

implementation of the Work Safely Protocol is intended to minimize the risk of transmission in the workplace.

4.4 Guidance on international travel

From 19 July 2021, new advice and rules for international travel came into effect in Ireland. For more information on the new rules, including information on the EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) for travel originating within the EU/EEA, refer to [gov.ie at this link](#).

Employees who intend to travel abroad should ensure that they are aware of any testing and quarantine requirements in place at the time of travel, and pertaining to their own circumstances, both for their intended destination and on return to Ireland. Where a restricted movement period is required as a result of travel, all employees must make provision by way of an annual leave or unpaid leave application for that period of restricted movement, in line with the normal rules applying in the relevant sector. This arrangement is applicable to all civil and public servants, regardless of whether they can work from home.

An emergency brake system may be applied quickly to countries where a variant of concern or interest arises. Employees should be aware that whatever restricted movement (quarantine) requirements are in place and applicable to them on their date of return to Ireland will apply. Employees are required to notify their employer as soon as possible if they have to take additional annual leave or unpaid leave in order to satisfy any restricted movement (quarantine) requirement.

4.5 What arrangements are in place for employees to attend a COVID-19 vaccination appointment?

Where an employee in the public service has an appointment to attend a COVID-19 vaccination during working hours, they will be facilitated to attend based on the health/medical appointment arrangements which apply in each sector.

4.6 What arrangements are in place where an employee may have a reaction to a COVID-19 vaccination?

Where there may be a reaction to a COVID-19 vaccination and the employee is unfit for work, the absence will be recorded as ordinary certified sick leave and the usual rules governing [sick leave](#) will apply.

4.7 What is the legal basis for processing employee data in relation to COVID-19?

Civil and Public Service employers are obliged to provide a safe workplace, which may include the processing of health data in order to ensure that safety. Articles 6(1)(c), 9(2)(b) and (g) of GDPR, along with section 53 of the Data Protection Act, 2018 (which permits the processing of special categories of personal data for purposes of public interest in the area of public health) will likely be the most appropriate legal bases for processing this data.

For further information please visit the [Data Protection Commission website](#).

4.8 Do employers have a right to know if an employee has been vaccinated or had COVID-19?

As noted in the Work Safety Protocol the decision to get a vaccination against COVID-19 is voluntary and workers will therefore make their own individual decisions in this regard. The Data Protection Commission has produced a guidance note on [Processing COVID-19 Vaccination Data in the context of Employment](#). The guidance notes that “[a]s a general position, the DPC considers that, in the absence of clear advice from public health authorities in Ireland that it is necessary for all employers and managers of workplaces to establish vaccination status of employees and workers, the processing of vaccine data is likely to represent unnecessary and excessive data collection for which no clear legal basis exists”. However, the note does provide for specific employment contexts where collection of information may be lawful and each sector may issue its own guidance.

Employers may ask employees for information in relation to their COVID-19 special category data in certain circumstances, for example where an employee who requests to avail of special leave with pay will be required to provide details of the results of their COVID-19 PCR test. At all times the data collection and processing must be necessary, proportionate and safeguarded.

4.9 Can public sector employees on unpaid leave (e.g. parental leave etc.) claim the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?

No. The COVID-19 pandemic unemployment payment was designed as a short-term response for those individuals working in the private sector who became unemployed as a result of the pandemic.

4.10 How should employers treat requests for a working from home allowance?

Public service employers should not pay a daily allowance (e.g. €3.20 per day) to their employees in respect of WFH. It is open to employees to make claims directly from Revenue in respect of actual costs incurred in working from home at the end of the relevant tax year, in accordance with the relevant tax laws. Any claim in this regard is solely a matter for the individual concerned. Further details for individuals on how to claim expenses on tax returns are available at: <https://www.revenue.ie/en/tax-professionals/tm/income-tax-capital-gains-tax-corporation-tax/part-05/05-02-13.pdf>

5. Temporary assignments

5.1 What is the Temporary Assignment Scheme (TAS)?

The TAS was set up on 18th March 2020 to support the health and wellbeing of all our citizens during COVID-19. Organisations' senior leadership teams were asked to determine which services were essential at the time to critical business continuity in the context of their organisational Business Continuity Plan and to identify roles and employees for temporary release to ensure essential public services across all the public sector continued to be delivered.

Our primary focus in the Civil and Public Service is to support the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. To achieve this, and to keep delivering the essential services to society, especially for the most vulnerable and at-risk, we need to be flexible and responsive in how work is managed, including coming together and working as a unified public service.

The scheme received great support from both the civil and public service, and resulted in a large number of employees being made available for placements to support crisis areas. The system proved to be extremely useful by quickly matching assignees with essential roles when required. There were also significant transfers of employees under the temporary assignment policy between departments and sectors in advance of the TAS panel.

5.2 Is the TAS currently in operation?

The scheme was reactivated on 17th September 2020 following an increase in COVID-19 cases – see Circular 15/2020 at Appendix 3.

This reactivation will safeguard the Government's priority to ensure the health of the public, whilst at the same time ensuring the continuation of public services, especially essential public services.

The Public Appointment Service, who are the administrators of the scheme, may periodically issue detailed requests to organisations seeking employees who are deemed to be releasable in the context of their business continuity plan for the temporary assignment scheme. The scheme will be used to help ensure critical services continue to be delivered during this unprecedented pandemic.

Managers of employees who are assigned through the scheme should maintain regular contact with them.

5.3 What organisation will employees be assigned to?

This is an evolving situation and demands may change. The temporary assignment scheme will be used to ensure essential public services across all the public sector continue to be delivered during the pandemic.

While the initial call is from the Health Service Executive, many other essential public services may require additional short term support.

All Civil and Public Service organisations are included in the scheme and may offer or request temporary assignees.

5.4 What employees will be included in the temporary assignments scheme?

Employees at all grades and work patterns/arrangements across the Public Service will be included in the scheme.

5.5 How will employees be informed, and what will they be required to do?

Employees will be notified through their Local HR who will send on details either to the Public Appointments Service or directly to the organisation requesting temporary assignees. Details will include name, contact details, and the percentage of whole-time equivalent available. Additional information may be required on the basis of the specific demands of the role.

5.6 Do all releasable employees have to accept the placement?

Yes, all employees identified by their organisation as currently releasable, are required to attend the temporary placement in order to support the delivery of essential public services as needs are identified by public service bodies.

A skills and location match may be facilitated through the Public Appointments Service or between organisations as required.

5.7 What roles will employees be temporarily assigned to?

Employees may be temporarily assigned to work in a different role and organisation in order to support the delivery of essential public services. The Public

Appointments Service/Department of Public Expenditure and Reform/requesting organisation will advise of role details upon issuing the request for staff.

5.8 What location will employees be temporarily assigned to?

The actual location will be determined by the particular needs and circumstances of the requesting organisation.

5.9 Is there a potential to work remotely while on temporary assignment?

The requirements of the role will determine if they can be carried out remotely. All details of the assignment will be provided by the Public Appointments Service/Department of Public Expenditure and Reform/requesting organisation when issuing the request for staff.

5.10 When will employees be expected to start their assignment?

All employees identified by their organisation as currently releasable, will receive details from the receiving organisation e.g. HSE, regarding their start date, role, location and hours of service.

5.11 How long will the assignment be for?

It is envisaged that the temporary assignments may be for a period of up to six months, with a possible extension where required. The situation will be reviewed in line with COVID-19 contingency measures. Local HR and employees will be notified of any developments.

5.12 What HR system will leave and performance be recorded on while on assignment under the Temporary Assignment scheme?

Assigned employees will transfer temporarily to a different employer to carry out essential duties and direct management and supervision will be provided by a temporary line manager.

They will however remain 'as is' for all functions on the HRMS/equivalent system. The temporary line manager will be required to keep all HR records for forwarding to the parent organisation upon completion of assignment.

5.13 Can employees on TA return to meet business needs in parent organisation if required?

Where more urgent business needs arise, employees may be required to return to their parent organisation.

5.14 Will employees transfer to a different employer for pay purposes for the temporary assignment?

Assigned employees will remain as employees of and be paid by their parent organisation. They will continue to receive their basic salary, any fixed, periodic, pensionable allowances in the nature of pay and other pensionable remuneration that they are in receipt of at the date of assignment. The payment of any allowance to an employee which is due to cease before the end of the temporary assignment period will terminate as previously scheduled.

5.15 Is Travel and Subsistence (T&S) payable to employees on temporary assignment?

Employees who are temporarily assigned should be treated as being headquartered at the new location. In this regard, normal Public Service and Revenue rules on non-payment of T&S for home to work travel apply.

5.16 Can employees claim overtime while on temporary assignment?

As a rule, overtime is not expected to arise for employees on temporary assignment and public servants re-assigned under these arrangements will continue to adhere to their already contracted weekly working hours.

However, should this arise, overtime may be paid in the temporary assignment post only where it has been identified as being necessary in that role; has been approved at the appropriate managerial level, and agreed by HR in the employer organisation or paying authority; and is in accordance with the agreed procedures applying to that sector/organisation. Where an employee is already in receipt of an allowance for extra hours, and where this allowance is being retained, overtime will not also be payable in the temporary assignment.

5.17 Where can queries be raised in relation to remuneration while on temporary assignment?

For individuals: Queries arising in relation to remuneration while on temporary assignment should be raised in the first instance with the employee's own local HR Unit.

For HR units: These rules are for general application. Where there are particular sectoral arrangements which give rise to questions, these should be directed to the Public Service Pay and Pensions Division of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for consideration.

5.18 Will a temporary assignment affect eligibility on the Civil Service Mobility scheme?

No, the temporary assignment will not affect the eligibility or waitlist position on the Civil Service Mobility scheme.

Appendix 1: Procedure for employees and managers for absences due to COVID-19

1 (a) Procedure for employees

1. Telephone your manager⁶ before 10am on the first day of isolation to as would normally be the case for sick leave. You will be required to notify your manager of number of days you have been required to self-isolate. You will be required to complete a self-declaration and/or provide confirmation/medical certification/satisfactory evidence of a positive PCR test for COVID-19.
2. Please note that Public Service employees cannot claim DSP COVID-19 illness benefit in cases where they are receiving special leave with pay. Any claim for DSP COVID-19 illness benefit whilst on special leave with pay will be treated as a disciplinary matter.
3. Your manager will record you absence as special leave with pay on the commencement date.
4. By applying for special leave with pay, you agree that in the event of non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay (including the requirement to provide bona fide⁷ confirmation of self-isolation for COVID-19) existing procedures, including disciplinary measures may be invoked.

1 (b) Procedure for managers

1. Employees who are advised to self-isolate with symptoms of COVID-19 must inform their manager as per sick leave requirements.
2. Managers should record the absence as special leave with pay and ask the employee to provide dates and confirmation/medical certification/satisfactory proof of COVID-19 PCR test, including date of test. The arrangements for the recording of this will vary based on each organisation's payroll/HR facilities.
3. Managers should record if the employee was/was not in the work premises (outside the home) in the 14 calendar days prior to the date of self-isolation. This will be required if the employee has a confirmed case of COVID-19 and the duration of COVID-19 related illness continues on beyond 28 days.

⁶ If your manager is not available, please contact another manager in your area or your HR team. In rare situations where that is not possible, make a note of the date and times of call made and continue to try to contact your managers until contact is made.

⁷ Bona fide in relation to a representation or communication means in good faith and well founded in fact. The employer reserves the right to request further confirmation.

Employees who were not in the work premises will move to ordinary sick leave thereafter.

4. Managers should make employees aware of the need to stay in regular contact and advise them of any employee assistance programme available to them.
5. Managers should alert the employee to any follow up actions that are required, including occupational health referrals, the need to provide documentation and actions on their return to work (for example return to work protocols etc.).

Appendix 2: Sample special leave with pay self-declaration for COVID-19

Employee Details

Name	
Grade	
Department	

Dates of Special Leave with Pay for COVID-19 related self-isolation

Dates	From DD/MM/YYYY to DD/MM/YYYY
-------	-------------------------------

Advised to self-isolate by (✓)

GP	<input type="checkbox"/>	HSE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Advice received via (✓)

Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter/email/text (please attach copy to this form)	<input type="checkbox"/>
In person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Details of Advice to Self-Isolate

Name of adviser (e.g. name of GP, HSE worker)	
Date and time advice given	
Details provided to the adviser by you (e.g. places and dates of exposure etc.)	

Declaration for Special Leave Pay

I confirm I have read and understand the provisions of Special Leave with Pay	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that in the event of non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay (including the requirement to provide bona fide ⁸ confirmation of self-isolation/diagnosis of COVID-19) existing procedures, including disciplinary measures may be invoked.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that any overpayment of salary which may arise from non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay will be repaid.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have attached relevant documentation (where applicable)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee signature		
Date		

Manager Approval

Manager signature		
Date		

Data Protection

The data requested in this form will be used to process your application for Special Leave with Pay (COVID-19 related) and will be retained as part of your personnel record for the appropriate period of time. The employer will treat all information and personal data you give according to the law.

⁸ Bona fide in relation to a representation or communication means in good faith and well founded in fact. The employer reserves the right to request further confirmation.

Appendix 3: Circular 15/2020

Reactivation of Temporary Assignment Policy and Scheme across the Civil and Public Service

17th September 2020

Circular 15/2020

Dear HR Managers,

Further to *Circular 07/2020 – Arrangements for temporary assignments across the civil and public service in response to the challenge of COVID-19*, and *Circular 11/2020 - Deactivation of Temporary Assignment Scheme across the Civil and Public Service* **the Temporary Assignment Policy and Scheme are now being reactivated following the recent nationwide increase in COVID 19 cases.**

While the current staffing demand from the HSE is for 50 whole time equivalent employees (full/part time) to support the work within the Contact Tracing Centres, this circular will also cover any future demands in relation to COVID from the civil and public service.

The Public Appointments Service, who are the administrators of the scheme, will issue detailed requests to Local HR Units as and when required to support any crisis areas.

We would once again like to extend our appreciation to all of you for your continued assistance and support throughout this unprecedented time. The scheme has resulted in a large number of employees being made available to support crisis areas.

Key Principles

All assignments will be temporary in nature and:

- Assigned staff will continue to remain staff members of their parent organisation;
- Assigned staff will continue to be paid by their parent organisation;
- Staff skills and experience may be factored into any temporary assignment;
- Local HR will be responsible for the identification and release of staff;
- Appropriate HSE recommended physical/social distancing will be adhered to in the context of workplace assignments;
- Training and up-skilling will be provided as necessary; and

- On completion of the temporary assignment, staff will return to their parent organisation.

Please see [Guidance and FAQs on working arrangements and leave associated with COVID-19 for Civil and Public Service](#) which will updated as required.

If you have any further queries relating to the Temporary Assignment Scheme, these can be sent to Temporaryassignment@publicjobs.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Civil Service HR Division and Public Appointments Service



UPDATED Appendix 4: Quick guide on working arrangements

COVID-19 work arrangements – Quick Guide for Public Service Employers

Please note the scenarios are based on current public health advice available on 16 November 2021, and have been produced as a guide only. Employers should ensure that they base decisions on current public health advice. In relation to Home Working and Return to the Work premises, different advice may apply in the health sector. Please see hse.ie for further advice.

#	Scenario	Employee	Special leave with pay	Sick leave	Home working / remain available for working at home ⁹	Return to work premises ¹⁰
1	COVID-19 symptoms – employee is awaiting a COVID-19 PCR test	Self-isolate until outcome known	Yes - until outcome known, then assess and follow subsequent advice (see below scenarios)	No	No	Cannot be determined until outcome known (see other scenarios)
2a	COVID-19 symptoms – employee received positive PCR test result and is unwell. Employee was not in the work premises in the 14 calendar days prior to onset of symptoms	Self-isolate until 10 days from onset of symptoms and last 5 days fever free	Yes - until 10 days from onset of symptoms and last 5 days fever free	Yes – after day 28. This takes effect for any new or open cases on 1 January 2021	No	After 10 days from onset of symptoms and 5 days fever free, which may run concurrently.

⁹ See FAQ 3.2 in the Guidance document on [gov.ie at this link](#) for further details on "remain available for work". Note that at any stage if an employee states that they feel well enough to work, but have tested positive for COVID-19 or are self-isolating because they were symptomatic, the employer may facilitate working from home instead of special leave with pay, if this is feasible and agreeable to both parties. They must not attend the work premises and must also follow Medical and HSE advice as it relates to self-isolation.

¹⁰ Refers to any work location outside the home

#	Scenario	Employee	Special leave with pay	Sick leave	Home working / remain available for working at home ²¹	Return to work premises ²¹
2b	COVID-19 symptoms – employee received positive PCR test result and is unwell. Employee was confirmed by their manager to be in the work premises in any of the 14 calendar days prior to onset of symptoms ²¹	Self-isolate until 10 days from onset of symptoms and last 5 days fever free	Yes - until 10 days from onset of symptoms and last 5 days fever free	No	No	After 10 days from onset of symptoms and 5 days fever free (which may run concurrently)
3	COVID-19 symptoms – employee received negative PCR test result, but has been advised to attend for a second test	Continue to self-isolate until 2nd test results known	Yes - review after 2nd test results known	No – review after 2 nd test result known	No	Cannot be determined until outcome known (see other scenarios)

²¹ Special leave with pay may be extended beyond 28 days for certified COVID-19 related illness in circumstances where a manager determines that all 4 criteria below are met:

- An employee had been in the work premises (any work premises outside the home) at any time during the 14 calendar days prior to commencing the self-isolation period of a positive case of COVID-19. The attendance must have been known to and/or approved by the manager in advance.
- The employee provides their employer with medical evidence of a positive COVID-19 PCR test including the date of this test.
- In accordance with the standard management referral process, the Occupational Health Physician (OHP) confirms that they are medically unfit to resume work.
- The OHP confirms that their absence relates primarily to ongoing COVID-19 illness, and that they are accessing appropriate medical care.

#	Scenario	Employee	Special leave with pay	Sick leave	Home working / remain available for working at home ¹	Return to work premises ²
4	COVID-19 symptoms – employee required to self-isolate and subsequent negative PCR test result.	Continue to self-isolate until 48 hours after symptoms have resolved.	Yes - up until date of negative test	Yes - after date of negative test if employee continues to be unwell.	Where the employee is well, symptoms have resolved and awaiting the end of the 48-hour period - they can work from home/remain available for work for that period.	48 hours after symptom free
5	Employee is concerned they have COVID-19 symptoms and they are not well enough to work , but GP advises that they do not meet the criteria for COVID testing	GP may advise to restrict movements until 48 hours after symptoms have resolved.	No	Yes - where the person has been advised that they do not meet the criteria for testing for COVID.	No	On advice of GP
6	Household close contact - Member of employee's household has tested positive for COVID-19 - the employee has no symptoms of COVID-19.	<p>Employees who are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms need to follow HSE advice (link) which is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restrict movements for 5 days • do 3 antigen tests <p>If any of these antigen test prove positive HSE advice (link) should be followed.</p> <p>Different arrangements apply for individuals who have not been fully</p>	No	No	Yes	Cannot attend for 5 days whilst restricting movements.

#	Scenario	Employee	Special leave with pay	Sick leave	Home working / remain available for working at home ¹	Return to work premises ²
		vaccinated. Refer to HSE website for full details.				
7	Close contact – Employee has been vaccinated or had COVID-19 and has no symptoms.	No restriction of movement required, providing they meet the criteria set out on the HSE website . Different arrangements apply for individuals who have not been fully vaccinated. Refer to HSE website for full details.	No	No	No	Can attend if criteria met. Refer to HSE website for full details.
8	Employee has expressed concern to their employer that they may be a close or casual contact ¹² .	The employee does not need to restrict their movements unless they are advised by contact tracers that they are a close contact of a confirmed case. In instances where they are a casual contact they should continue as normal and be aware of COVID-19 symptoms.	No	No	No	N/A – can attend. If subsequently advised they are close contact of a confirmed case then follow scenario 8.
9	Member of employee's household has respiratory symptoms but the GP advises they are not sent for a test – the employee has no symptoms of COVID-19.	If household member is not being tested then the employee should continue their activities as normal.	No	No	No	N/A – can attend.

¹² <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html>

#	Scenario	Employee	Special leave with pay	Sick leave	Home working / remain available for working at home ¹³	Return to work premises ¹⁴
10	Member of employee's household is a close contact of a confirmed case and the close contact feels well	If the household member feels well, then other members of the household do not need to restrict their movements.	No	No	No	N/A – can attend
11	Employee is in very high risk (extremely vulnerable) ¹⁵ category	Please refer to FAQ 2.2 ¹⁴	No	No	Where advised by occupational health	See FAQ 2.2 for further details.
12	Employee is in high risk ¹⁶ category	Employee can attend workplace.	No	No	No	N/A – can attend
13	Advised to self-isolate pre-surgery .	Restrict movements	No	Yes – during/following surgery	Yes for self-isolation period pre-surgery. Person needs to be available for work (see FAQ 3.2 in the Guidance) for period pre-surgery.	When sick leave finishes post-surgery.
14a	Overseas travel where a quarantine period is required	Restrict movements (quarantine) for 14 days ¹⁶ - the employee must take annual/other leave for the restricted movement period	No	No	No - Annual/other unpaid leave must be taken for restricted movement period. See FAQ 4.4 in the Guidance	After 14 days (or earlier if negative PCR test result – see FAQ 4.4 and gov.ie for details)

¹³ <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html#very-high-risk>

¹⁴ Some conditions that previously placed employees in the very high risk category now place them in the high risk category or in some instance in the normal risk category. In addition an employee's risk categorisation may now have changed due to vaccination and / or history of recent confirmed COVID infection. Consult Occupational Health

¹⁵ <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html#high-risk>

¹⁶ On arrival from certain countries, if a further test is taken at day 5 and the employee receives a negative test result they can stop restricting their movements. This does not apply to arrivals from Category 2 Countries and Territories. See <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/75d92-covid-19-travel-advice/> for further details.

#	Scenario	Employee	Special leave with pay	Sick leave	Home working / remain available for working at home ¹	Return to work premises ²
14b	Overseas travel where no quarantine is required	Can return to work	No	No	Not required	Yes
15	Possible reaction to COVID-19 vaccination	If an employee is unfit for work, then usual sick leave rules apply	No	Yes	N/A	As per provisions of sick leave, if required



An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe
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