

14 MAY 2020

Return to Work Safely



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

Review of government and NSAI advice with suggested measures to equip organisations to getting workplaces functional and safe, by 2468.

The Covid-19 protocol

The Irish Government issued the Covid-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol for Ireland on the 8 May 2020. We've summarised key points here with some additional detail from the NSAI and insights from workplace design & FM experts. We've also listed measures and equipment employers will need to implement the requirements here.

It's important also to visit government websites for up to date information, because this document doesn't address every possible situation for all organisations. Here are some useful links for information:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

<https://www.nsaie.ie/images/uploads/general/NSAI-Guidelines-COVID-19-20200514.pdf>

signage <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/02cd5c-covid-19-information-resources/#logoguidelines>

Employer responsibilities

We've summarised key actions employers need to think about under: Planning, Distance and Separation, Movement and Circulation, Hygiene Health and Safety, Travel and Visitors, Customer-facing staff, and Covid-19 isolation. Our recommended measures are on page 6.

Planning

Employers must

- Have in place a Covid-19 Response plan a Covid-19 co-ordinator and worker
- Update Health & Safety risk assessments and safety statements
- Communicate these plans to workers
- Develop policies for isolation of workers with Covid-19 symptoms
- Post signs reminding of symptoms of Covid-19 and public health advice
- Record employee contacts to facilitate contact tracing
- Issue a Pre-Return to Work form for workers to complete 3 days prior to return
- Provide Induction training

Employers **should** review sick leave policies, make available public health advice from HSE.

Distance and Separation

Employers must

- Provide for 2 metres physical distancing across all work activities
- Stagger breaks, canteen use
- Re arrange break areas and consider closing canteens
- Organise into small fixed teams with own facilities
- Reduce meetings, apply physical distancing, record attendees, supply sanitiser
- Install physical barriers – desk sneeze guards where 2m not possible
- Make handwashing / sanitisation available wherever activity takes place



HSA Inspectors will provide advice and support to employers and employees on how they are implementing the measures. They also have the power to serve an improvement notice requiring that certain improvements be carried out .

Minister Heather Humphreys 11th May 2020

Movement & circulation

Employers must

- Use distance markings to avoid queues
- Provide one way systems for access / egress routes where practicable
- Adapt sign in / sign out procedures so as maintain physical distancing



With limited seating available and essential workers identified, organizations can plan for phased reentry to the office based on role criteria.

*Gensler Research
April 20 2020*

Hygiene, Health & Safety

Employers must

- Provide hand sanitisers at suitable locations including entrances and exits
- Supply adequate hand washing facilities including soap hand towels & dryers.
- Implement thorough cleaning and disinfection of all rooms, ventilated afterwards
 - NSAI advises that this is carried out twice a day, visibly to provide reassurance
- Ensure contact surfaces are cleaned at least twice a day
- Increase number of waste collection points
- Provide employees with their own essential sanitisation supplies for work station
- PPE use in line with guidelines on HPSC website
- First Aid Workers provided with updated training on infection prevention
- Test temperatures in line with up to date health advice



It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions. The period of survival may vary under different conditions. Studies indicate that it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning. Simple household disinfectants can kill the virus.

NSAI Guidelines, 14 May2020

Covid-19 Isolation



Knowing where employees are assigned and their likely circulation paths throughout the day can support a focused cleaning response if an employee does exhibit symptoms.
Gensler April 20 2020

Employers must

- Develop a response plan for covid-19 infection at work
- Designate an Isolation area equipped with wipes, gloves, masks, tissues, bags
- Designate access route to isolation area
- Record all contacts for any unwell person for contact tracing
- Fully clean & disinfect areas occupied by unwell person

Travel and Visitors

Employers must

- Reduce business trips and face interactions to absolute minimum
- Avoid employees travelling in same vehicle
- Limit visitors where possible.
- Make visitors aware of site infection control measures
- Install barriers to enforce physical distancing in reception areas- eliminate queuing
- Provide sign in cards for visitors checking health status



7 out of 10 workers are fearful about returning to their workplace in the age of coronavirus. You're wanting to see visible measures taken. It reassures and provides confidence.

*Peter Miscovich,
JLL head of strategy and innovation*



A health check desk with masks, sanitiser & temperature controls for visitors. Installations like this provide reassurance for all.

Safety check list

Equipment and supplies you will need in place

- Signs to communicate traffic flow throughout including floor arrows and distance reminders
- Covid-19 policy & public health information posters for staff, handwash reminders
- Hand sanitisation stations - wall mounted and/or free standing units
- Hand washing stocks - soaps, paper towels, dryers in washrooms / kitchens
- Reception screens, sneeze guards, queue barriers, and anti microbial pens for sign in
- Employee hygiene kits for every work station with sanitiser, sprays, paper towels & bags
- Increased cleaning supplies like anti bacterial sprays, paper towels, bins and bin bags
- Personal pens, mug, bottle, cutlery & glass for each staff member with labelling
- PPE for Isolation Room : masks, gloves, wipes, sanitiser & bin bags
- Disposable gloves & gowns for cleaning staff
- Increased number of bins for staff
- Contact log books for employees and visitors

Equipment and supplies you might want to consider

- Contactless technology where possible, or contact eliminators (see below)
- More and smaller coffee, tea and snack stations including packaged food /meals
- Contactless thermometers - in line with public advice

We recommend also visiting nsai.ie/covid-19workplaceprotection for good detail on this

Cushman & Wakefield's 'Six Foot Office' prototype uses circular floor stickers to create safe flow & movement



Tools like the 'grab keyring' allow people to grab and push buttons without contact



Visit 2468group.com to see our full range of safety equipment or talk to your usual 2468 contact about your needs.

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