

COVID-19 Safety Measures advice for businesses.

We are aware of the current concerns, relating to the safety measures being implemented by some businesses, who are essential and continue to operate.

Health and safety law requires employers, who continue to operate under current circumstances, to do 'what is reasonably practicable' to protect their staff and members of the public.

To fulfil this duty in addressing the risk from COVID-19 all companies must review their risk assessments and put in place measures to ensure the PHE / PHA guidance available from the GOV website is implemented.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>).

Specifically, all employers should

- encourage their employees to work at home, wherever possible;
- have systems in place to ensure that if someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home and advised to follow the advice to stay at home;
- employees should be reminded to wash their hands regularly throughout the day for at least 20 seconds on each occasion, and to sneeze into tissues and dispose of the tissues promptly – Catch it, Bin it, Kill it. (suitable washing facilities with soap and warm water **or** hand sanitisers must be provided);
- frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products.

Companies should also take account of measures in the risk assessment, to follow general advice regarding distancing and ensure that it is observed between employees both at their workstations and in other areas of their premises.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

Where this cannot be achieved within the normal working environment additional means of protection should be considered.

For example:

1. reduce number of workers on site at any one time;
2. relocating workers to other tasks;
3. redesigning processes to allow social distancing in place;
4. put in place temporary barriers between staff;
5. utilise technology such as teleconferencing instead of face to face meetings;
6. adjust workflow or production line speeds.

We are aware that employers are currently experiencing significant issues obtaining PPE.

Public Health guidance on the use of PPE (personal protective equipment) relates to health care settings. In all other settings individuals are asked to observe social distancing measures and practice good hand hygiene behaviours

Further advice is available from the UK Government, PHA and HSENI websites on specific issues.