

Health and Safety Advice for Businesses During COVID-19

Navigating our way through the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for everyone. The categories of premises permitted to open is changing with periodic updates from the Northern Ireland Executive therefore, many businesses are re-opening or planning to re-open after a period of closure, some with a different business model. The Environmental Health Team and Ards and North Down Borough Council are here to give advice to businesses on health and safety and social distancing to help get your business back up and running in a safe manner. If after reading this document you need any help or advice, please feel free to contact us.

Tel:- 0300 013 3333

Email:- Covid19Enquiries@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Website:- www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Environmental Health COVID-19 Update

Environmental Health Officers are continuing to monitor and engage with businesses and are also continuing to deal with health and safety complaints and notifications of accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences. In addition, we are dealing with social distancing complaints in premises for which the council is the enforcing authority for health and safety legislation.

This document provides useful links to advice and guidance to help businesses during the pandemic.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

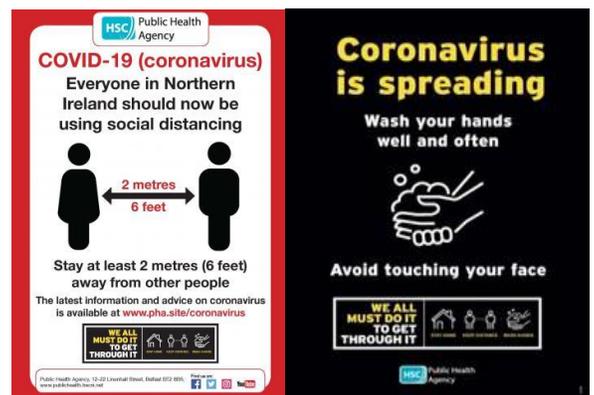
COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered Coronavirus. Symptoms include a new continuous cough, high temperature and loss of or change in your normal sense taste and smell. To reduce the risk of illness everyone should wash their hands regularly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. It is especially important to wash hands before preparation, handling or eating food.

Links to PHA guidance and posters

The posters for handwashing and social distancing will be useful for display and available from the link below:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/social-distancing-poster>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/COVID-19handwashingposter>



Reopening checklist for businesses during COVID-19

Checklists to support you in re-opening your business and building safely during COVID-19 and after a period of inaction are available at the link below:

[Covid-19 Business H&S and Business re-opening checklists](#)

Working safely during COVID-19

The link below is to a practical guide to making your workplace safer. This guidance sets out principals and practical steps for employers and employees to keep themselves and their workplaces safe. It also sets out necessary steps to be followed if employers and employees are concerned about safety.

[Working Through This Together.pdf](#)

While the above guidance is specific to Northern Ireland, HM Gov. sector specific guidance should not be overlooked.

Such Guidance issued by BEIS may be accessed using the link below;

[HM Gov Sector specific guidance](#)

This guidance has been prepared taking account of PHE Guidance, and in relation to premises allowed to re-open in England. There may be variations from Northern Ireland, so it is important to check the local lists of premises permitted to open and local PHA guidance.

[nibusinessinfo-coronavirus-workplace-safety-guidance-and-priority-sector-list-published](#)

Risk Assessment

If you employ people, then you should review your risk assessments based on the most up to date information provided by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and take appropriate action.

In Northern Ireland the Public Health Agency (PHA) are taking the lead and coordinating all advice and information. Its website can be accessed via the link below and should contain the most up to date local information and guidance:

[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): Situation in Northern Ireland](#)

Example risk assessment for COVID-19 in workplaces

HSENI has produced an example risk assessment that shows the kind of approach a small business or workplace is expected to take when carrying out a risk assessment for COVID-19 in the workplace.

You can download an 'Example Risk Assessment Template' here:

[coronavirus-covid19-risk assessment template](#)

Use it as a guide to think about:

- The additional hazard that COVID 19 introduces into your business

- The steps you need to take to control the risks.

Don't just copy it and put your company name to it as that would not satisfy the law - and would not protect your employees. Every business is different - you need to think about the hazards and control measures your business needs to take to keep workers safe and healthy. The control measures you adopt may have to be different from those in the example to meet the particular conditions in your workplace.

You should ensure that you follow the latest advice from the Public Health Agency and incorporate this information into your risk assessment.

Remember: A risk assessment is only effective if you and your staff act on it. You must follow through with any actions required and review it on a regular basis.

Legionella Management

When buildings re-open after being closed for a period, it is essential that hot and cold water systems such as hot and cold taps, showers, and water features are not put back into use without consideration being given to the risk of legionnaires disease from legionella bacteria. These bacteria may have grown in the water storage tanks, pipework, shower heads etc. while the premises were closed. The guidance in the links below aims to assist those in control of business premises to assess and manage any potential risk prior to reopening.

<https://www.cieh.org/media/4208/legionella-guidance-covid-19.pdf>

[ESGLI Guidance for managing Legionella in building water systems during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Information can also be found on the HSENI and HSE websites:

[managing-legionella-during-covid-19-lockdown.pdf](#)

Drinking Water

Find out what you need to do if you are re-opening your business after a period of closure. If you are responsible for a business and the water supply has not been used for a while, as part of your planning for reopening, read the following guidance:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-businesses-re-opening-after-temporary-closure>

Recovery Planning

The Council's Economic Development Team has a range of support available to help your business put a recovery plan in place and signpost you to additional support resources during this time. For more information, visit www.andbusiness.co.uk