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Are Your Leisure and Hospitality Premises COVID-Secure?

On 23 June 2020, the UK government announced it was permitting more businesses in England to reopen on 4 July in the wake of the COVID-19 lockdown, while also lessening social distancing guidelines to one metre or more where two metres is not physically viable.

Businesses that will be resuming operations include pubs, bars, restaurants, hotels, hairdressers, barbers, cinemas and theatres, although employers are legally required to carry out a detailed COVID-19 risk assessment to keep the risk of transmission as low as reasonably practicable.*

Risk assessments

When safely reopening in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that employers undertake a 'suitable and sufficient' and detailed return to work risk assessment. This will help to determine whether all of the required control measures have been taken to prevent/reduce the transmission of COVID-19. If premises reopen having not carried out a risk assessment and employers are identified as not having complied with COVID-19 health and safety guidelines, legal action can be enforced by either the HSE or the local authority.

By performing a risk assessment for your return to work, employers will be able to manage the risks associated with reopening their business in the wake of the global pandemic and identify preventative measures that need to be put in place to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

Employers with five or more employees must write down the findings of their risk assessment, while employers of 50 or more must upload their risk assessment onto the website. [Click here](#) for further information on how SOCOTEC can support you with your COVID-19 risk assessment.

General preventative measures

Below, SOCOTEC's Health & Safety Consultancy has put together a list of general control measures that employers across these sectors can take to help keep the transmission of COVID-19 to a minimum. Many of these will form part of your business' social distancing risk assessment template:

- ▶ Encouraging clients and staff to use handwashing/sanitising stations prior to entering the premises and frequently thereafter
- ▶ Rigorous cleaning of touchpoints, surfaces and common areas such as toilets, lifts, canteens

- ▶ Using contactless payment/electronic signatures to avoid physical contact
- ▶ Adopting one-way flow and entry systems around premises and floor markings to encourage social distancing
- ▶ Ensuring good ventilation across the premises
- ▶ Back-to-back/side working in designated shift patterns/fixed teams when workers have to be in close proximity
- ▶ If staff must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, assessing whether the activity can safely go ahead.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out how SOCOTEC can support your organisation in safely returning to work, [click here](#) or [contact us](#).

More specific examples of how employers in pubs, restaurants, bars, hotels, cinemas and hair salons can safely reopen while adhering to COVID-19 health and safety guidelines are listed below.

Pubs, restaurants and bars

In light of the new guidance, the UK government has issued a 43-page document entitled [Keeping Workers and Customers Safe During COVID-19 in Restaurants, Pubs and Bars](#). All employers must adhere to these guidelines, which include:

- › Implementing screens and barriers implemented for front of house/bar staff
- › Reducing the number of people each member of staff interacts with
- › Encouraging customers to wait outside/in cars for collections to limit the number of people entering the venue
- › Assisting with NHS Test and Trace by keeping a 21-day temporary record of customers to help contain clusters and outbreaks (ensuring records are compliant with data protection regulations).

Theatres and cinemas

The UK Cinema Association has also issued a document dedicated to social distancing in cinemas, entitled [Cinemas – Keeping Workers and Customers Safe During COVID-19](#). Suggested control measures include:

- › Socially distanced queueing systems which ensure that customers are adhering to floor markings and one-way systems at all times
- › Awareness of gathering limits for customers (split rows, allocated seating and managing occupancy levels per screening)
- › Frequent cleanings between screenings/reduced showings to ensure a thorough cleaning regime is carried out
- › Continuing to refrain from hosting live events which may encourage shouting or singing (which increase the risk of aerial transmission).

Hairdressers and barbers

The UK government published the following guidance document – [Keeping Workers and Clients Safe During COVID-19 in Close Contact Services](#) – for businesses whereby the nature of their work entails them coming into close contact with customers, such as hairdressers, barbers, nail bars and beauty salons (the latter two of which are still awaiting further guidance as to when they can safely reopen). Guidelines include:

- › Assisting with NHS Test and Trace by keeping a 21-day temporary record of customers to help contain clusters and outbreaks (ensuring records are compliant with data protection regulations)
- › Calculating the maximum number of clients that can adhere to social distancing guidelines and limiting the number of appointments held at any given time
- › Maintaining social distancing in waiting areas/having a one in/one out policy
- › Adjusting how staff and clients move through the premises to avoid congestion.

Hotels and other guest accommodation

Up-to-date government guidance on hotels and other guest accommodation can be found [here](#). Considerations and risks will vary depending on the size/type of accommodation, but will generally include:

- › Taking measures to make receptions safer, such as implementing screens for front of house staff/reducing activity time between staff and customers
- › Introducing cleaning regime during and at the end of the day, with a particular focus on shared facilities
- › Closing shared facilities such as showers and changing rooms or permitting usage to an assigned household group per stay
- › Ensuring that the handing over of keys to accommodation is done in a socially distanced way.

How can SOCOTEC help?

To ensure that your facilities are safe, operational and compliant following the COVID-19 pandemic, SOCOTEC has developed its Business Ready programme, comprising a series of support packages to provide employers with the peace of mind that they can safely return to the workplace. As part of SOCOTEC's [Secure and Secure Plus packages](#), clients will receive virtual COVID-19 risk assessment training, and will also be provided with a printable risk assessment template and additional guidance documents for pubs, restaurants, hotels and hair salon owners to apply to their individual workplace environments.

**Please note that this guidance is for England only, and that different guidelines and legislation concerning which businesses can reopen in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will differ.*