



Back to Work

Retail, Hospitality & Office sectors
Social Distancing, Hygiene & PPE Protection Planning

A pragmatic employer guide to implementing social distancing & safety measures in the workplace

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COVID-19 IMPACT - RETAIL, HOSPITALITY & OFFICE SECTORS

Executive Summary

This white paper analyses the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on the **Retail, Hospitality & Office** sectors (primarily focussed on England with some guidance on the different rules for Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland), providing a guide and aide memoire for employers on best practices and current regulatory advice for the implementation of effective social distancing, PPE and hygiene regulations and processes.

Key issues addressed

- Covid-19 Lockdown impacts on all travel/transport in the UK – consumer & commuter mobility
- Trend data on easing of Lockdown on these mobility profiles
- Essential current staff definitions and working condition guidelines
- Social distancing measures, PPE recommendations and current restrictions
- Best practice guidelines

Key data extracts

Commuting & Lifestyle Mobility

- Tube, bus, and rail commuter transport usage since the beginning of April 2020 has dropped nationally by over 80%
- All motor vehicle usage dropped to circa 32% of normal levels but has risen steadily back to around 65% of normal levels up to mid/late June 2020
- Pedestrian footfall traffic has had the largest drop of 85%+ of normal levels but is rising back up to 40% with easing of lockdown contact conditions (+ good weather impact in June)

Retail Sector

- High street retail footfall is reduced 77.8% year on year
- The non-essential retail shopping experience needs to finesse for an equitable balance between safety and shopper satisfaction

Hospitality Sector

- 3rd largest employer sector in the UK with 3.2 million staff with 99% of business are SME'S
- Some furloughed staff return to work from July 4th (England) with an expected rise in high street spending as the Hospitality sector tentatively reopens

Office Sector

- Commercial office space capacity expected to drop by up to 50% to accommodate effective social distancing regimes and staggered back to work times creates a return to a new normal work environment
- In 2019 an estimated 1.7m staff worked from home with predictions for 2021 expecting this to rise significantly to over 3.5m

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Who's saying what exactly?

Quoted remarks from leading Government & Industry bodies

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, "I do think that face coverings will be useful, both for epidemiological reasons, but also for giving people confidence that they can go back to work".

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said, "This guidance provides a framework to get the UK back to work in a way that is safe for everyone. These are practical steps to enable employers to identify risks that COVID-19 creates and to take pragmatic measures to mitigate them. And as we are able to reopen new sectors of the economy, we will continue our collaborative approach working with a wide range of stakeholders, to provide guidance for additional workplaces".

Sarah Albon, Chief Executive, Health and Safety Executive added, "The BEIS guidance issued today sets out practical steps employers can take to enable staff to continue and return to work. We have worked with BEIS to ensure businesses have access to the information they need to put in place measures to help them work safely. This will assist employers in carrying out risk assessments and putting practical measures in place. At the heart of the return to work is controlling the risk posed by the virus. Ensuring safe working practices are in place will help deliver a safe return to work and support businesses across the country".

Andrew Kenny, Managing Director, Just Eat UK said, "These are some of the most challenging times the restaurants we work with have ever faced, and we want to see them return to full capacity safely. That's why we're supportive of getting the economy back up and running again, while ensuring the safety of employees and customers is protected at all times. We welcome the government's decision to issue dedicated guidance for restaurants offering takeaway or delivery, in recognition of the specific challenges facing these businesses. The guidance is an important part of giving confidence to everyone working in the sector – from restaurant operators and managers, to chefs and delivery couriers".

Thomas Heier, People Director, Wagamama added, "We were appreciative of being included in the government's consultation process and the opportunity we were given to shape the guidance for our sector. In particular we appreciated the quality, clarity and pragmatic nature of the guidance which will now inform our safe operating procedures".

Craig Beaumont, Director of External Affairs and Advocacy at the Federation of Small Businesses commented..."FSB has engaged through this process with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and we appreciate that our points have been taken on board for the UK small business community. Today's guidance is practical, workable and proportionate for small businesses. It will be a long journey, but this guidance will provide the basis for small employers to have the positive conversations needed with their staff. This is the first step to getting the economy back on its feet".

1. Background

Summary of The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) rapid risk assessment from 12 March 2020.

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology was reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. On 9 January 2020, China CDC reported a novel coronavirus as the causative agent of this outbreak, which is phylogenetically in the SARS-CoV clade. The disease associated with the virus is referred to as novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). As of 11 March 2020, 118,598 cases of COVID-19 were reported worldwide by more than 100 countries. Since late February, the majority of cases reported are from outside China, with an increasing majority of these reported from EU/EEA countries and the UK.

The Director General of the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. Key recommendations adopted by the UK were:

The ECDC recommended Social distancing measures in order to mitigate the impact of the epidemic and to delay the epidemic peak. This can interrupt human-to-human transmission chains, prevent further spread, reduce the intensity of the epidemic and slow down the increase in cases, while allowing healthcare systems to prepare and cope with an increased influx of patients.



1.1 March 23, 2020 UK Lockdown period starts

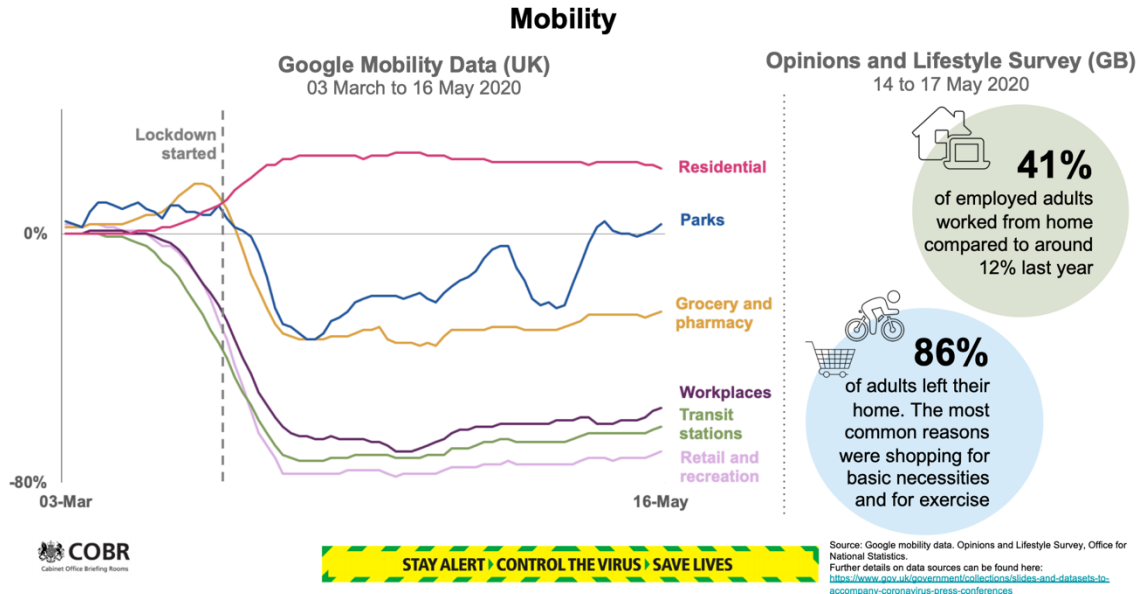
Effective from March 23 the UK entered a 'Lockdown' period to mitigate the rapid spread of COVID-19 to prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed. The modeling done by scientists assisting the Government and Public Health Authorities showed that the current capacities of available intensive care beds, qualified medical staff, appropriate PPE supplies and the required number of appropriate intubation medical devices were all insufficient to cope with a rapid spread of the coronavirus so stringent social distancing and hygiene measures would be the only way to combat the pandemic in the short term until such time as a vaccine was developed. A Lockdown was required to restrict mobility and P2P interactions so de-facto stop to all social interactions with anyone outside of the home unit and a halt to all non-essential commercial activity, commuting and travel.

2. Transport & Travel Sector impact

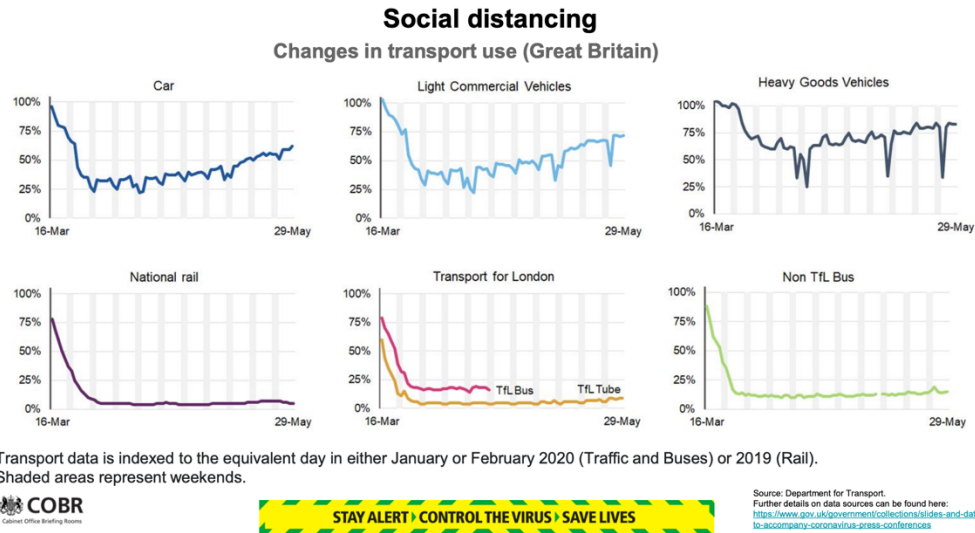
The general mobility trend impact was swift with overall mobility outside of the home dropping fast down to less than 20% of normal for all road, rail and air transport with the exceptions being essential road and air freight as well as home delivery of essentials such as groceries and medicines as well as key infrastructure maintenance of electricity power grids, water and gas supply & telecommunications facilities plus the call out of emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance staff & vehicles.

2.1 Transport mobility changes during Lockdown

The impact on social and commuting mobility in the first 3-month period of Lockdown measures.



2.2 Social distancing impact on Road, Rail & Coach/Bus travel



HM Government daily COVID-19 (COBR) briefing data shows several trends over the past 3 months:

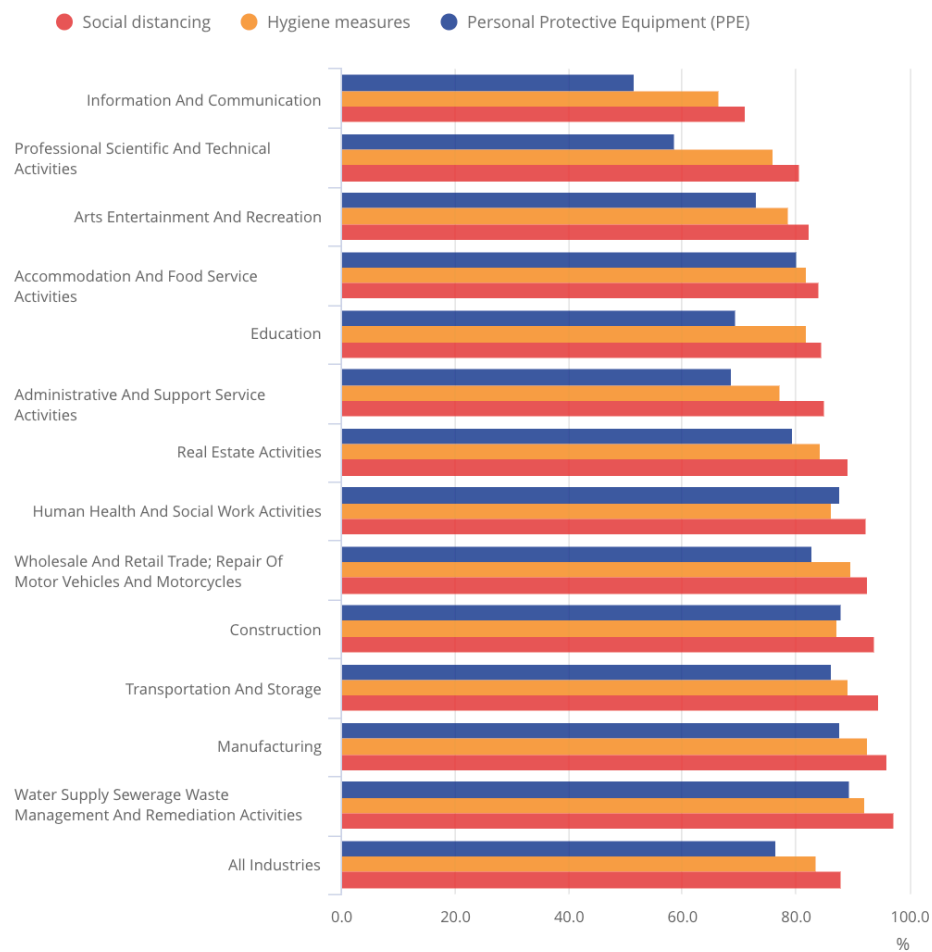
- UK iPhone & Google user 'requests for directions' for walking, driving and public transport dropped by over 80% since lockdown commenced
- Pedestrian traffic saw the largest drop at over 85% with only marginal afternoon increase due to good weather and potential outdoor exercise uptake
- All Car usage dropped by circa 75% but gradually increased back up to just over 60% of normal since the beginning of May as back to work starts & public transport is avoided

- Cyclists initially decreased slowly to 75% of normal but with significant increase since late May & the reported record bicycle sales and government travel advice on preference for walking & cycling to work especially within urban to city centre locations
- Light goods vehicles dropped by 45% but has increase likely due to some return to work influence and increased home shopping

2.3 Employer sentiment – PPE, Social distancing & Hygiene – ONS Survey June

Figure 6: Over 50% of businesses across all industries, had responded they were implementing, or intending to implement, the top three most common safety measures

Safety measures, businesses who have not permanently stopped trading, broken down by industry, UK, 18 May to 31 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey

Key Findings

Implementing the wearing of Facemasks, Hygiene measures and Social Distancing regimes are the top3 considerations by those companies whose workforce is returning from home working or furlough status

3. Workplaces - Risk assessment

Introduction - How to reopen your business safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

This guidance can help you carry out your risk assessment to make sure you keep employees and other people on site safe when opening during coronavirus (COVID-19).

You should also consider the security implications of any decisions and control measures you intend to put in place, as any revisions could present new or altered security risks that may require mitigation. Always Record your risk assessment. You need to write down the findings of your risk assessment. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has a [risk assessment template](#) and [information on how to do a risk assessment](#) here.

Health and Safety Executive

Risk assessment template

Company name: Assessment carried out by:
 Date of next review: Date assessment was carried out:

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done

More information on managing risk: www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/
 Published by the Health and Safety Executive 10/19

Your employees can help with the risk assessment. *You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce by displaying it prominently in your workplace, as well as on your website.*

3.1 Key worker/staff selection

Decide who should be on site

Only essential employees and people who cannot work from home should be on site, for example because they need specialist equipment, or you need them to operate safely and efficiently.

Clinically [extremely vulnerable people](#) or [vulnerable people](#) should always work from home.

To keep employees safe, you should: minimise the number of people on site

- make sure on-site employees can [spot symptoms](#)
- tell workers with symptoms to [quarantine immediately](#)
- explain new procedure and provide training where necessary

To support employees working remotely you should:

- provide the right equipment for people to work from home
- keep remote and on-site employees connected
- send updates to employees when the situation changes
- make sure disabled workers and new and expectant mothers can do their work from home (you have a responsibility to [prevent discrimination at work](#))
- [look after people's mental health](#)

3.2 Entrances and exits

You should: stagger arrival and departure times

- open more entrances and exits to the site
- use screens in reception areas
- mark a one-way flow where possible
- provide hand washing facilities or hand sanitiser
- provide more parking
- provide facilities to help people cycle, run or walk to work, for example bike racks
- make sure people touch things as little as possible, for example deactivate turnstiles and keypads
- make sure it's safe to queue and not in the way of traffic (for example, you can route the queues behind permanent physical structures such as street furniture, bike racks or bollards, or put up barriers)

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON predicts mask wearing by Americans would save 34,000 lives by October 2020

Moving around the site

You should:

Consider - employees have access to Protective Surgical Face Masks, preferably made in the UK to EN14683:2019 Type IIR ≥98% BFE (Bacterial Filtration Efficiency)

- close off areas that are not essential
- reduce the number of people using lifts
- put up signs to use stairs instead of lifts whenever possible
- keep workstations 1 meter+ apart where possible
- avoid sharing workstations, for example by assigning employees to one role
- avoid people passing objects, for example by having drop-off stations
- have a dedicated space for each team (you might have to change the layout of your site)
- ask people to store personal items in lockers if possible
- control the use of corridors, lifts and similar areas, for example with markings on the floor
- make sure transport around the site is not crowded and drivers are protected
- have 1 meter+ floor markings where people queue, for example toilets, changing rooms and other common areas
- stagger break times and, if possible, have breaks outdoors
- use freed up space from people working remotely to create break areas
- arrange seating in break areas 1 meter+ apart
- provide packaged meals instead of opening the canteen

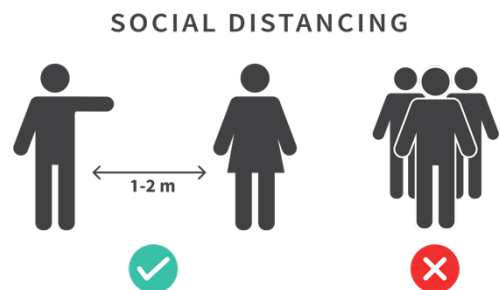
4. Social distancing:

4.1 Offices and contact centres

You should:

- avoid hotdesking as much as possible
- sanitise workstations between occupants where people share
- rearrange desks to avoid face-to-face working

Consider - employees have access to Protective Surgical Face Masks, preferably made in the UK to EN14683:2019 Type IIR ≥98% BFE (Bacterial Filtration Efficiency)



4.2 Restaurants with takeaway and delivery

Restaurants can only offer takeaway or delivery. All seated areas and bars must be closed. Ask employees to change into work uniforms on site (providing changing areas where social distancing is possible). You should wash their uniforms on site and not let employees take them home.

When preparing food, you need to:

- limit access to kitchen
- limit contact between kitchen workers and other employees (also when on breaks)
- put people on shifts
- move equipment further apart where possible
- have screens between equipment in larger kitchens
- have floor markings to work 1 meter+ apart
- have one person at a time getting things from pantry, fridge and freezer
- minimise contact with other employees when handing over food

4.3 Retail - General

You should:

- use 1 meter+ floor markings outside the shop to organise queues
- have a one-way flow through the shop where possible
- minimise contact when customers are paying, for example by using contactless
- think about how to display promotional materials to allow employees and customers to stay 1 meter+ apart
- encourage employees to stay on site during the day - if they go out, for example for lunch, they should social distance

4.3.1 Close Contact services – Retail

Close contact services include

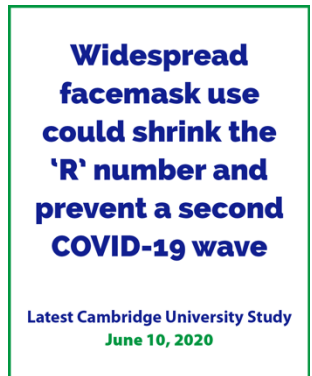
Hairdressing, barbershops, beauty and nail bars, makeup, tattoo and spray tanning studios, spas, sports and massage therapy, well-being and holistic locations, dress fitters, tailors and fashion designers.

Hairdressers and barbershops will be permitted to reopen for services that relate to cutting or treating hair on the head only from 4 July 2020. The other services outlined above will remain closed until further notice subject to the five tests, but this guidance will help them prepare for reopening

- Encouraging clients to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises or before treatment.
- Calculating the maximum number of clients that can reasonably follow social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable) and limiting the number of appointments at any one time. Take into account total floorspace as well as likely pinch points and busy areas.
- Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people.
- When booking an appointment, asking the client if they can attend on their own, where possible.
- Reminding clients who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines.
- Informing clients and contractors of guidance about visiting the premises prior to and at the point of arrival, including information on websites, on booking forms and in entrance ways.
- Adjusting how people move through the premises to reduce congestion and contact between clients, for example, queue management or one-way flow. This may only be possible in larger establishments.

Specific social distancing guidelines – Close contact services

- You must maintain social distancing in the workplace wherever possible.
- When providing close contact services, the nature of the work is such that maintaining social distancing will not usually be possible when actively serving a client. In these circumstances, both employers,



employees and the self-employed should do everything they reasonably can to reduce risk. Mitigating actions include:

- Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
 - Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.
 - Using screens or barriers to separate clients from one another. If the practitioner is wearing a visor, screens will not provide additional protection between the practitioner and the individual.
 - Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.
 - Using a consistent pairing system if workers have to be in close proximity.
-
- Only opening client waiting areas where social distancing can be maintained.
 - Maintaining social distancing between the treatment or service areas, such as client chairs.
 - Social distancing applies to all parts of a business or home, not just the room where the service is delivered, but waiting rooms, corridors and staircases, where applicable. These are often the
 - most challenging areas to maintain social distancing and workers
 - should be specifically reminded.



Full details here at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ef2889986650c12970e9b57/Keeping-workers-and-clients-safe-during-covid-19-close-contact-services-230620.pdf>

5. Cleaning

If someone has symptoms follow the [specific instructions for cleaning after a case of COVID-19](#).

To minimise the risk of the virus spreading you should:

- clean the site before you reopen
- clean work areas, surfaces and equipment frequently between use with your usual cleaning products
- clean busy areas more often and more thoroughly
- restrict the use of items that are touched often
- provide more bins and empty them more often
- clear workspaces and remove waste and belongings from the area at the end of a shift
- Handwashing, toilets, changing rooms and showers
- You should:
 - use signs and posters with instructions for employees to wash their hands for 20 seconds as often as possible, to avoid touching their faces and to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues
 - remind employees regularly to wash their hands, especially if they handle goods and merchandise
 - provide hand sanitiser throughout the site and in washrooms
 - provide handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser where people handle goods and merchandise
 - make sure toilets are kept clean at all times
 - provide paper towels or electric dryers
 - close changing rooms and showers, if you can
 - If you cannot close changing rooms and showers, keep them free of all personal items (such as clothes, towels and toiletries). Clean everything, including lockers, more often and thoroughly during and at the end of the day.

Handling goods, equipment, merchandise and vehicles

There may be a risk of the virus coming into the workplace through goods, merchandise or vehicles.

To avoid this, you should: make sure workers handling goods/merchandise know to wash their hands more often

- provide more handwashing facility if possible and hand sanitiser, if not
- have a process for cleaning goods and merchandise coming into the workplace or onsite
- regularly clean any vehicles that workers take home
- clean things like reusable delivery boxes regularly



5.1. Cleaning the workplace - Offices

Before you reopen you should:

- check if you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example they shouldn't automatically reduce ventilation when there are fewer people on site
- get advice from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineer if your systems serve several buildings and you're not sure if they need adjusting
- open windows and doors to get as much ventilation as possible
- Once you're open you should:
- frequently clean objects and surfaces that are touched regularly
- limit or restrict the use of 'high-touch' items such as printers or whiteboards
- restrict non-business deliveries, for example personal deliveries to workers

5.2 Cleaning the workplace: Restaurants with takeaway and delivery

You should follow [government guidance on cleaning food preparation and service areas](#) at all times.

Before you reopen:

- check if you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example they shouldn't automatically reduce ventilation when there are fewer people on site
- get advice from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineer if your systems serve several buildings and you're not sure if they need adjusting
- open windows and doors to get as much ventilation as possible
- Once you're open you should:
- wedge doors open, where appropriate, to reduce touchpoints (not fire doors)
- clean laminated menus or dispose of paper menus after each use
- provide only disposable condiments or clean non-disposable condiment containers after each use
- take special care when cleaning any portable toilets
- When cleaning kitchens or cafes you should:
- ask workers to wash their hands before handling plates and takeaway boxes and regularly throughout the day
- keep your kitchen area as clean as possible - follow [government guidance on cleaning food preparation and service areas](#)
- have bins for collecting used towels and employees' overalls
- clean the parts of shared equipment you touch after each use
- handle laundry in a way that prevents contaminating surrounding surfaces, raising dust or dispersing the virus

5.3 Cleaning the workplace: Shops and branches

Before you reopen you should:

- check if you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example they shouldn't automatically reduce ventilation when there are fewer people on site
- get advice from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineer if your systems serve several buildings and you're not sure if they need adjusting

Myth Buster!

Are hand dryers effective against COVID-19?

No. Hand dryers are not effective. To protect yourself against the new coronavirus, you should frequently clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

- Once you're open you should frequently clean objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as:
- self-checkouts
- trolleys
- coffee machines
- employees' handheld devices
- You need to make sure you have adequate disposal arrangements.

Customer fitting room

You should: consider very carefully if you want to keep fitting rooms open

- clean after each customer has used them
- create procedures to manage clothes that have been tried on, for example delaying their return to the shop floor
- limit contact between customers and employees during fitting, for example by suspending fitting help

6. Handling goods, merchandise and other materials

You should:

- encourage more handwashing and either provide more handwashing facilities or, if that's impractical, hand sanitiser
- limit how much the customer handles merchandise, for example by using different methods of display, signs, or rotating 'high-touch' stock
- set up picking-up and dropping-off points if possible, rather than passing goods hand-to-hand
- set up 'no-contact' returns where customers can return goods to a designated area
- try to do contactless refunds
- keep returned goods separate from displayed goods and stock
- give workers guidance on how they can safely help customers when selling large items

7. Protecting customers, visitors and contractors on site

To manage the number of people on site you should: explain social distancing when visitors arrive (you can also use signs)

- limit the number of visitors or customers at any one time so people can social distance
- get contractors to work from home unless it's essential for them to be on site
- keep contact with contractors to a minimum
- keep a record of visitors if you can
- put up signs to stay 1 meter+ apart
- have 1 meter+ floor markings for queues
- make sure it's safe to queue and not in the way of traffic (for example, you can route the queues behind permanent physical structures such as street furniture, bike racks or bollards, or put up barriers)

Consider - employees have access to Protective Surgical Face Masks, preferably made in the UK to EN14683:2019 Type IIR ≥98% BFE (Bacterial Filtration Efficiency)

8. Keeping safe in meetings

You should:

- only have meetings in person if you cannot meet remotely
- stay 1 meter+ apart in meetings
- use signs on the floor to help people stay 1 meter+ apart
- have meetings outdoors or in ventilated rooms
- not share objects like pens
- have hand sanitiser in meeting rooms and

- the option to wear a facemask

Consider - employees have access to Protective Surgical Face Masks, preferably made in the UK to EN14683:2019 Type IIR ≥98% BFE (Bacterial Filtration Efficiency)

9. Keeping employees safe when they travel for work

You should:

- only travel for essential work
- have fixed groups of people travelling so that any contact happens between the same people
- clean company vehicles between shifts
- make sure accommodation meets social distancing guidelines
- keep a log of who is staying where

Consider - employees have access to Protective Surgical Face Masks, preferably made in the UK to EN14683:2019 Type IIR ≥98% BFE (Bacterial Filtration Efficiency)

10. Receiving and sending goods safely

You should:

- minimise contact at drop-off and collection
 - minimise contact when people pay for or exchange things, for example by using contactless and electronically signed documents
 - minimise contact at security, yard and warehouse
 - minimise the frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger amounts at a time
 - have single workers load or unload vehicles if it's safe to do so
 - have fixed pairs or teams where you need more than 1 person for loading
 - encourage drivers to stay in the vehicle where it's safe
-

11. More help with your risk assessment

Read the [detailed guidance for your sector](#). This guidance can help you carry out your risk assessment to make sure you keep employees and other people on site safe when opening during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Final word from leading coronavirus expert organization:

Johns Hopkins University

CAN A FACE MASK PREVENT CORONAVIRUS FROM SPREADING?

Face masks help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Because it's possible to have coronavirus without showing symptoms, it is best to wear a face covering even if you think you are healthy. A mask helps contain small droplets that come out of your mouth and/or nose when you talk, sneeze or cough. If you have COVID-19 and are not showing symptoms, a face mask reduces your chance of spreading the infection to others. If you are healthy, a mask may protect you from larger droplets from people around you.

12. Research Sources:

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10. COVID-19 Press Conference Slides - 16_04_2020
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