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National restrictions in England from 5 November 2020

Business in Focus

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

A retail guide

SEPTEMBER 2020

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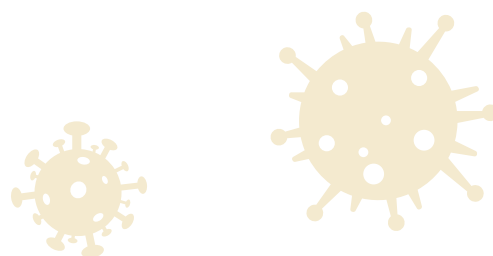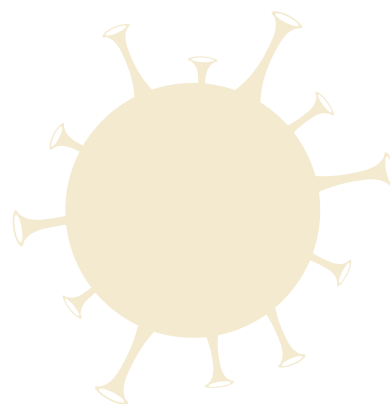
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Flash Update
November 2020

This update is a supplement to: Working safely during Coronavirus (COVID-19); A retail guide (including the annexes: Other people's homes, Outdoor businesses, Vehicles, Food and drink, Shops).

Like the main body of the Retail Guide itself, this applies only to England.

New national restrictions apply in England from 5th November and will last until 2nd December (as a minimum).

It is likely that the regional tiered approach will resume afterwards. These changes are based on data and are necessary to help control the spread of the virus.

More detail on the national restrictions can be accessed here: *https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november*

The priorities contained within the new national restrictions are that:

- we stay at home, except for specific purposes;

- we avoid meeting people we don't live with, except for specific purposes; and

- certain businesses and venues must close.

Food shops, supermarkets, garden centres and certain other retailers providing essential goods and services can remain open.

All non-essential retail, including, but not limited to clothing and electronics stores, vehicle showrooms, travel agents, betting shops, auction houses, tailors, car washes, tobacco and vape shops, must close.

Non-essential retail can remain open for delivery to customers and click-and-collect.

Food take-away, click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery may continue (before 10pm and not including alcohol).

The national restrictions are underpinned by law. The Police and local authorities have powers to enforce the new rules: The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020.

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The last substantial update of the Retail Guide was in August 2020. Since then, the following aspects have been introduced and will still be relevant for those businesses operating during the national lockdown.

NHS Test and Trace requirements

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace

In some types of retail premises where customers and visitors spend time in one place and commonly come into close contact with people outside of their household, business are being asked to take more steps to manage the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

A summary of the business types included at the current time, are:

- hospitality, including pubs, bars, restaurants and cafés

- tourism and leisure, including hotels, museums, cinemas and amusement arcades

- close contact services, including hairdressers, barbershops and tailors

- facilities provided by local authorities, including community centres, libraries and village halls

The full list of those in scope is in Annex A:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace

This may be subject to change.

Those NOT in scope at the moment include most traditional retail businesses, such as food shops or other types of shops, market stalls, pharmacies, betting shops etc.

Businesses in scope must:

- Register for an official NHS QR code and display the official NHS QR poster in a prominent place at the entrance to the premises: *https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster*

- Encourage customers and visitors to scan the code with their smartphones (having previously downloaded the NHS Test and Trace app).

- When customers and visitors are not able or willing to scan the QR code then the business must collect key details instead, such as the name, contact number, date of visit and departure too (if possible), etc. You may already have these details as part of an appointment system, which may be electronic or paper details. Keep these for 21 days. You don't have to do this if the person has already checked-in via the QR code.

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■ Staff details must also be held by businesses in scope.

■ There are a few exemptions for some people, including those under 16 or people without the mental capacity to provide the details.

■ Other than those individuals exempted, if a person doesn't wish to scan the QR code or to provide their information, or they are providing incorrect information, do your very best to encourage them to participate correctly, as above. You do not need to verify their details using identification, unless you think the person is giving you incorrect information. If they become unruly, refuse them entry and follow your own security procedures.

The legal requirement to collect these details rests with the person with overall responsibility for the business. Note that there are fixed penalty fines for non-compliance.

If your business is a hospitality business (e.g. a restaurant, café, hotel bar or pub), then you must refuse a person entry if:

» they refuse to scan the QR code; or

» they refuse to provide the required details; or

» they are not part of a group for whom the 'lead member' has provided information instead.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace

Visit the link above for more details on data handling (GDPR and the steps required), the type of information you should collect from those who don't/won't use the QR code and what happens if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace.

Remember to communicate this to your workers.

Visit the Information Commissioner's Office (website) to check that you're registered with the ICO – every organisation (or sole trader) who processes personal information – including for contact tracing for COVID-19 – must be registered.

https://ico.org.uk/

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Working from home - or not?

Retail workplaces should be COVID-19 secure so that anyone who cannot work from home can be confident about being in the workplace.

Of course, in a retail sector, working from home is not usually an option for some, especially those involved at the point of sale. But if it is an option, then working from home should be encouraged.

Those who do make the trip to the workplace should be able to do so safely, taking into account their journey, any caring responsibilities or their own protected characteristics and any other circumstances. Extra consideration should be given to those at higher risk.

It's a good idea to talk to your employees about who comes in, who works from home and the timings/phases of this.

Your COVID-19 risk assessment should help you determine how many workers can be on site at any one time as well as how best to mitigate the risks to workers, visitors, customers, delivery drivers, volunteers etc. when in the workplace.

For those who work from home, you should keep in touch and help them stay connected to other workers, for health and safety as well as wellbeing reasons.

Those at higher risk include those who are:

» older males

» have a high body mass index (BMI)

» have health conditions such as diabetes

» are from some Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds

...and this should be taken into account in your COVID-19 risk assessment.

People who need to self-isolate?

Those advised to stay at home according to existing government guidance should not come to the workplace to work. This means individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 and those who live in a household with them or are in a support bubble with them.

From September 28th, businesses are not allowed (by law) to require a self-isolating employee to come into work. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are strongly advised to work from home during the national restrictions. If they cannot work from home, they should not attend work during this time.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19 stay-at-home-guidance

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Face coverings for staff

Staff in retail settings must now wear a face covering (by law), unless they have an exemption. This includes shops, supermarkets, bars, pubs, restaurants, cafes, banks, estate agents, post offices and public areas of hotels and hostels.

This means a simple covering which covers the mouth and nose. It is not a 'face mask' (i.e. a surgical mask worn by health and care workers), nor is it formal PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) as worn in an industrial environment to protect the wearer against dust.

Remember that face coverings are not the best way to minimise risk of transmitting COVID-19. The other measures, like keeping socially distanced and increased handwashing, are far superior ways. Therefore, face coverings should not be included as a mitigation measure in your COVID-19 risk assessment.

Face coverings should be worn by staff in areas that are open to the public or where they might come into contact with a member of the public. They should be provided by the employer though staff may choose to wear their own, if preferred.

Face coverings for staff won't be needed where there's a physical barrier/screen between workers and members of the public.

See here for further details on the wearing of face coverings: *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own*

Serving food and drink   (Suspended during national lockdown)

To minimise interactions between people and maintain social distancing;

- Orders and payments should be taken remotely from seated diners, whether via an app or from staff visiting the table; this applies to indoor and outdoor tables;

- Food and drink should only be consumed by seated diners;

- Aim to keep diners seated (not mingling with others) at all times;

- Cutlery and condiments should be delivered to seated diners;

- Asking that customers remain at a table (or not to lean on counters if collecting takeaways);

- Keep music volumes low to prevent the need for shouting, which might generate aerosol droplets and no singing or dancing allowed, under current rules.

Closure between 10pm and 5am is now a legal requirement for restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaways. This does not apply to food/drink delivery services.

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Groups of six

(Suspended during national lockdown)

This recent measure affects everyone and is governed by new legislation that is enforced by the police. Read more about it here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing

There are numerous exceptions, including in a work environment (when other risk mitigation measures will be in place).

Venues that are workplaces (such as pubs, restaurants, shops etc.) may host more than six at a time but no one group should consist of more than six.
The 'group of six' restriction is a bigger challenge for the restaurant/pub sector given that this is where people are most likely to socialise in groups.

The law requires that people from different households must not meet in groups larger than six. This applies whether indoors or outdoors.

Venues such as restaurants, pubs and bars are allowed to host more than six in total, but groups present should not be greater than six. Those in a group who are from different households (or support bubbles) should remain socially distanced. Sufficient distance should also be maintained between groups.

This means that business operators must provide sufficient space per table to accommodate groups of six, including social distancing between members of the group, as well as distance between the groups. This should be considered as part of the COVID-19 risk assessment for the premises. Indoor and outdoor seating environments will be different so should be considered separately.

Sufficient details should be taken from customers when booking, to ensure that sufficient space can be made available. Websites should be updated with arrangements so that customers can see them in advance, particularly regarding things like queues, parking etc. which will be more of a challenge in the winter.

On arrival, signage about distancing, hygiene, entrances/exits, toilets, queuing etc. and other COVID-19 arrangements on site will be helpful to remind everyone about what's required of them.

The business operator is required to ensure that customers are compliant with the rules when in the premises. Regulations exist which can result in a business being closed if the risk of transmission is not controlled.

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Who is this guidance for?

This Retail Guide is written for retailers across all sectors in England, unless local restrictions are in place. See here for the latest guidance on local restrictions: *https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-covid-19*

It draws primarily from the Government's 'Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)' guidance, produced in its original format on 11th May 2020 and updated several times since.

This Retail Guide summarises the elements of Working Safely that are likely to be most relevant to retailers when they are allowed to open for business and in preparation for it.

Check here to see if your business is allowed to be open[1]: *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance*

Working Safely has been produced to help employers get their businesses back up and running, safely, whilst giving people the confidence to go back to work, thus protecting jobs and restoring livelihoods. In doing so, it is hoped that the economy will restart and jobs will be protected. The full document has been produced with input from 250+ organisations, including business representatives and industry bodies, Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

It can be accessed here: *https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19*

This guide will be updated periodically following changes to the Government's guidance.

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1. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (as amended)

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The key points of Working Safely

1

Operating safely

Employees may work from home or in a COVID-19 secure workplace. Clinically extremely vulnerable workers may choose to work from home wherever possible, but may return to the workplace when it's COVID-19 secure.

Workers and customers who feel unwell must stay at home.

2

Assess the risk

A COVID-19 risk assessment must be carried out to establish what arrangements will be needed. Do this in consultation with unions or workers, as best you can.

3

Stay 2m apart or 1m + mitigation

Maintain 2-metre social distancing, wherever possible (via workstation redesign, altering work activities, staggering start/ finish times, etc).
Where 2-metres is not viable, then 1-metre + risk mitigation measures, is acceptable.

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Risk mitigation measures (if 2m can't be achieved)

Keep activity time short, use physical screens, back-to-back or side-to-side working, fixed teams or partnering, etc.

5

Keep cleaning

Enhanced cleaning – more frequently and including handwashing, door handles, keyboards and other frequently touched surfaces.

These rules apply to all business types. This guide will explain each of these five points in more detail as they might apply in a retail environment.

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What do we mean by 'retail'?

A retail business is one which sells goods or services directly to a consumer for their own use. Typically, a retailer doesn't manufacturer their own items, but instead purchases them from a manufacturer or wholesaler for onward trade.

Retailers may be independent or part of a retail chain. A retailer could also be a franchise with a trademarked name and pre-determined products and it could also be a dealership, licenced to sell a brand of products.

Retailers operate as shops (and 'pop-ups'), department stores, supermarkets, market stalls, homewares, electricals, pharmacies, jewellers, banks and betting shops and arcades, to name but a few. Retailers also retail online – especially during COVID-19.

To make this guide as useful as possible, 'retail' is given the widest possible definition and aims to provide all the information that all types of retailer should be aware of, whatever the size of the business or the nature of its retail activity.

> " To make this guide as useful as possible, 'retail' is given the widest possible definition "

Online retail

Supermarkets

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Shops

Department stores

Market stalls

Pharmacies

Banks

Electricals

Jewellers

Homewares

Betting shops and arcades

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COVID-19:
The virus

A little reminder of why this is all so important. COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus. It sticks to all sorts of surfaces, including skin, and can survive for hours or days, according to the surface material. Plastic keeps the virus viable for up to 72 hours, whereas stainless steel is up to 48 hours. For cardboard it's 24 hours and for copper, just 4 hours.*

Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 spreads between people through direct, indirect (through contaminated objects or surfaces), or close contact with infected people via mouth and nose secretions. These include saliva, respiratory secretions or secretion droplets. These are released from the mouth or nose when an infected person coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings, for example. People who are in close contact (within 1 metre) with an infected person can catch COVID-19 when those infectious droplets get into their mouth, nose or eyes.**

There are things that every retail workplace can do to minimise the spread of COVID-19.
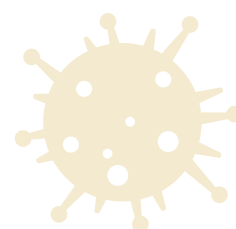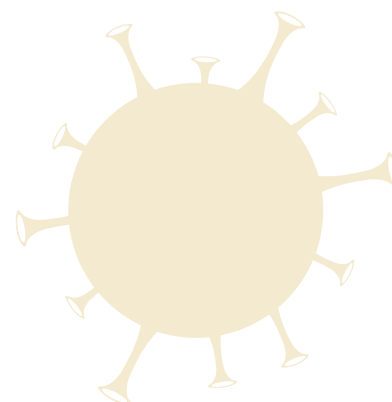
* Reference: New England Journal of Medicine
** Reference: World Health Organisation, July 2020

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Preparation is everything

It is clear that a retailer's decision to go back to work amid the COVID-19 pandemic is not a straightforward one. Every workplace is different, there is a lot to consider and therefore the steps a retailer will need to take and the time it needs to prepare for trading again, will also vary.

You as a **retailer** have an added dimension to consider because your responsibilities extend beyond the workforce to your customers and others that might visit your premises.

Customers visiting your shop introduce new elements of risk; they may be unfamiliar with the 'rules' of COVID-19; they may choose to ignore them; they might not be able to read your instructions on site or to comply with them.

As the employer, you are responsible for making sure that people can work for you safely and that all others can come onto your premises safely[2].

This guide aims to help you prepare for getting your retail operation up and running again and to make the workplace COVID-19 secure.

The decision to return to the workplace should be discussed with your workers, including conversations about a phased return, or new timings or shift patterns (if necessary to achieve social distancing) and of course the new risk mitigation measures which will be in place. Workers should feel safe to return to work; no-one should be forced to work in an unsafe environment.

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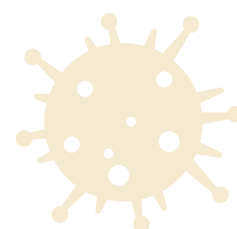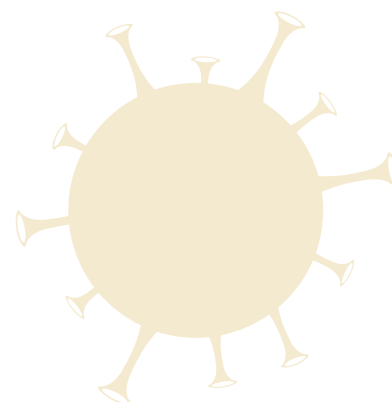
2. The HSE website: Managing risks and risk assessment at work: *https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm*

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Your first step

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER

✓ We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and shared the results with the people who work here

✓ We have cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance

✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to help people work from home

✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to maintain a 2m distance in the workplace

✓ Where people cannot keep 2m apart we have ensured at least a 1m distance and taken all the mitigating actions possible to manage transmission risk

Signed on behalf of employer _____
Employer representative signature

Employer _____ Date _____
Employer name

Who to contact: _____
Your Health and Safety Representative

(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)

Why not download and keep to hand the Government's COVID-19 poster, while you work towards achieving its five goals? It's a good, quick reference to what you will need to do before trading again. You can find it in Section 1, here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches

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A COVID-19 risk assessment

Risk assessment plays a vital role in the return to work process for retailers.

Your risk assessment depends very much on the nature of your retail activity – how many people you employ, what you are selling, how you sell and where you sell it.

As an employer, you already have many different responsibilities towards those you employ. You also have responsibilities to others as a result of your activities – this includes members of the public (your customers) and contractors, visitors, delivery drivers who bring you supplies etc.

The most important of these responsibilities are health and safety responsibilities. The law makes it clear that you are responsible for the health and safety of your employees and 'others' – 'others' is a broad 'catch-all' for everyone else who may be affected by your work. Volunteers are included in this definition too.

You must take the right precautions to reduce the risks of workplace dangers and provide a safe environment for anyone who comes into it.

As a responsible employer before COVID-19, you will already have been doing this.

Therefore you will already be protecting your employees, and others, from harm. As a reminder, you can find some simple tips on what this means in practice, from the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) website

https://www.hse.gov.uk/retail/getting-started.htm

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These tips are written for a retail audience and they will guide you through what you need to do. Health and safety doesn't need to be complicated or difficult. It's logical and usually only consists of a few basic steps in a retail environment.

The minimum is usually:

- Identify what could cause injury or illness in your business (i.e. what are the hazards)

- Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed (this is the 'risk')

- Take steps or action to eliminate that risk, or if you can't eliminate it, then control it

- Write down your findings (if you employ 5 or more people) – the HSE provides a risk assessment template for this. If fewer than 5, share verbally

- Review the controls later on to make sure they're still working, or if you have new staff or processes etc.

- Share the results of your risk assessment with your workers.

"

you must do everything 'reasonably practicable' to manage the risk

COVID-19 as a workplace risk
Think of COVID-19 as another workplace hazard that you need to risk assess and protect others from. This means you must do everything 'reasonably practicable' to manage the risk of COVID-19 in your workplace. The best way to do this is to follow the government's guidance, which is based on guidance from Public Health England (PHE).

Involve your employees when doing this (and any union reps, if you have them), as they are often the best people to understand the hazards and how to work safely.

That's it – risk assessment! ✔

Larger, or more complex businesses which might be higher risk might need to do more.

The government expects that businesses with more than 50 workers will share it's risk assessment online - customers may welcome sight of it.

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How do I do a COVID-19 risk assessment?

Here's how to do a COVID-19 risk assessment in a retail environment, following the principles of health and safety risk assessment already outlined above.

Treat COVID-19 as a workplace hazard and think about how/where it might present itself in your workplace. Think about your employees, contractors, apprentices, customers, visitors, delivery drivers and anyone else who comes onto your premises. Include in this the needs of vulnerable people, such as those who may not understand your instructions or be physically unable to follow them. Vulnerability also includes consideration for those who are more likely to be susceptible to contracting the virus.

The main steps are shown in this image, in the order you should consider them and are explored in more detail in the rest of this chapter.

The findings of your risk assessment will guide you to the things you need to do in your business to minimise the risk presented by COVID-19.

Risk mitigation steps include:
» Increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning
» Keeping the activity time as a short as possible
» Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
» Using back-to-back or side-to-side working, rather than face-to-face
» Using fixed teams or partnering up, to minimise the number of people each person has contact with

Completing the assessment and putting in place sufficient measures - are legal requirements!

Remember that your health and safety obligations to your employees and others mean that no-one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

Note that if the activity requires people to work face-to-face for a sustained period with several partners, then consider carefully in your risk assessment whether the activity can safely go ahead.

Provide a COVID-19 secure workplace and enable working from home too	Increase the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning	Comply with the social distancing guidelines for workers and others (keeping people 2m apart, or 1m + risk mitigation where 2m is not viable.)	If you can't meet the social distancing guidelines then consider if you still need that activity to continue. If the answer is 'no' then STOP the activity.	If you need that activity to continue, then ensure you are following all possible mitigating steps to reduce the risk of transmission.	Can the activity now safely go ahead? If yes, continue the activity. If no: **STOP** the activity

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Let's explore these steps and what they mean in a retail environment...

Working from home and keeping workplaces safe

Which of your staff need to be physically present and who can work at home? What's the minimum number of people who really need to be on site?

For those that work at home, how will you keep in touch and keep them connected to their colleagues? Keeping connected is important for security and welfare (so you'll need to think about technology and equipment and access to work systems), but what about mental health too – not everyone enjoys or can adapt easily to lone working. This guide from Mind contains some tips about how to support the wellbeing of teams and colleagues while working at home:

https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/coronavirus-and-work/tips-for-supporting-yourself-and-your-team/

For clinically extremely vulnerable workers, there is more detailed guidance here: *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19*

Remember that equality in the workplace is important and it's against the law to discriminate against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex or disability.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 or who has received a positive COVID-19 test result, should immediately self-isolate at home at home, according to the latest Goverment guidance::
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

What to do if someone at work might have COVID-19?
https://www.acas.org.uk/working-safely-coronavirus/if-someone-has-coronavirus-at-work

If an employee needs time off:
https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/time-off-work-to-look-after-someone

In relation to apprentices you may have:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response

Make sure your risk assessment contains a plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak; who will contact local Public Health teams, how to contact them, etc.
https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team

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Social distancing – Your employees and other workers

The key point here is about maintaining a 2-metre gap between individuals, when arriving, during work, during breaks and when departing. If 2 metres cannot be achieved, then 1m + risk mitigation is acceptable.

Risk mitigation means as many of the risk mitigation steps listed on page 13, as possible.

Two metres is still the preference for social distancing.

The lengths you will need to go to depend on your unique circumstances, i.e. how many people, what they are doing and where they need to go, etc.

When arriving and departing – would staggering times of arrival and departure help? Having more entry/exit points, one-way walking systems, alternatives to touch-pad entry systems? What about additional handwashing facilities (or hand sanitiser where this isn't possible) at entry and exit points?

If shared vehicles bring staff to work, leaving seats empty might achieve sufficient space. For those that will cycle or walk, is there anything you can introduce to help with this – more bike racks?

Can you restrict movement by using radios or telephones? If there are lifts which must be used, can you restrict occupancy and provide hand sanitiser?

Mark floors to encourage a one-way flow and remind people of social distancing requirements.

Social distancing – a unique challenge for every retailer

The very nature of the retail operation means that the responsibilities of the employer towards people who are employees, customers, contractors, apprentices, vulnerable workers, volunteers, visitors and all others who might be affected by it, are wide-ranging and varied.

The extent of social distancing that you need to put into place to protect all these people will depend on the nature and scale of your intended operation, when you're ready to trade again.

The NHS's Test and Trace team needs your help! Some types of retailers must now collect details of staff, contractors and visitors in the event of being contacted by the Test and Trace team, to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Check this link to see if your retail type is included: *https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace#sectors-that-this-guidance-applies-to*

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Workstations

Consider using floor tape or paint as a reminder of what 2 metres looks like - or 1 metre with risk mitigation where 2 metres is not viable. If shared, then shared by the smallest number of people. Can you make any changes to workstations to give individuals their own space? If workstations need to be shared, then cleaning and sanitising between different occupants will be needed. The typical 'hot desking' swift turnaround will need careful rethinking!

Consider if this particular activity at this workstation must still go on and stop the activity if you can. If it's essential, then what else can you do to separate people?

Further steps will be needed. In addition to the risk mitigation steps on page 13, this could mean other things like minimising contacts around transactions (e.g. contactless payments) and stopping promotional displays nearby.

> "
> The typical 'hot desking' swift turnaround will need careful rethinking!

Meetings
From outside the workplace, using conference calling or video calling platforms for multiple access has been the saviour of many businesses. When inside the workplace, there's no reason not to use it too, if it means avoiding creating crowds in a single room. If getting people in a room together is the only option, then be sure it can accommodate all at 2-metre spacing (or 1-metre plus risk mitigation). Avoid sharing stationery, or providing shared refreshments (e.g. communal water stations), keep the room well ventilated and provide hand sanitiser.

Common areas – for breaks
Much of the above can be applied to common areas too. Are there outside areas which could be used, or non-used areas and larger rooms? Would a reconfiguring of tables and seating achieve the distancing requirement?

Workers will need to bring their own food and drink and ideally stay on site to minimise the risk of spreading contamination. Can you provide any additional locker space to help with this?

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Social distancing – Your customers, contractors, visitors and others

Customers, contractors, visitors and others who might come onto your premises will be more unfamiliar with its layout than your employees. They might be less likely or willing to read and take your instructions on social distancing and the way you are operating. They might have a physical disability which means they are unable to comply with your requests.

Your objective here is to do your very best to communicate your messages so that everyone knows what to do and can play their part.

This means:

- Provide clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene when people arrive. Use signage and visual aids to help with the messaging

- If relevant for your operation, think about having a 'welcome' person out front who can remind people of the rules and manage the flow of those coming into your premises

- Provide hand sanitiser and encourage customers to use it as they enter, to help reduce the risk of transmission via touching products, door handles, etc.

Remember it is your responsiblity to make sure that people in your retail premises are safe. If the behaviour of anyone jeopardises this (because they refuse to follow the COVID-19 rules you've put into place) then you should ask them to comply or leave.

The 'rule of 6'

As of 14th September there are legal limits on how many people someone can spend time with in a social group at any one time; known as the 'rule of 6.' Venues (including retailers) that are COVID-19 secure can host more than 6 people at a time (if space permits), but no-one should mix in a group of more than 6. See here for the latest information:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others- safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19- meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing

For customers, you can limit the number of people at a time within your store – your risk assessment will help you determine how many this might be, taking into account corners, busy areas and any 'pinch points.' Ask that customers avoid handling products unnecessarily. If shopping with children, remind customers that everyone (including children) should follow social distancing guidelines. Queue management and one-way flow signage will also be sensible.

If you would normally offer assistance to customers, such as lifting heavy objects with a customer, allocate fixed pairs of colleagues instead. Those offering verbal assistance to customers should do this from a distance.

Put any reasonable adjustments into place, such as changes to entries, exits and queue management, for those who might need them, including disabled shoppers.

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What about PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and face coverings?

It's important to note that there's a big difference between PPE and face coverings.

PPE means gloves, eye protection, face masks, safety helmets, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses for protecting the user against risks at work. A retail activity would not typically require the use of PPE following a risk assessment of the work activity.

PPE in the context of COVID-19 is what is used in a clinical setting, like a hospital or care home. If your retail risk assessment shows that the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, then it must be provided to workers who need it.

Face coverings have been suggested by the government as marginally beneficial, not for protecting the wearer but more likely to help protect others if the wearer is infected.

COVID-19 is best managed via social distancing, good hand hygiene and cleaning, screens and barriers. Wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial too, but is no replacement.

If workers choose to wear a face covering or if you decide to make it a rule for workers on your premises, then be sure to help them wear one safely. This means reminding them of handwashing before and after wearing a covering, avoiding touching the face, not to remove it to speak to people and change it if it becomes damp…and above all, that a face covering is no replacement for social distancing.

Don't let the wearing of face coverings provide a false sense of security for your workers or others who come onto your premises.

Face covering and the public

From June 2020 it became the law that members of the public must wear face coverings in some settings. There are exemptions for some people and in some situations. Check the latest on this topic here, including how to wear and make a face covering:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to- make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear- one-and-how-to-make-your-own

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Items tried for size, rentals and returned goods

Fitting rooms used for the most essential purposes, such as key workers trying on protective clothing, should remain open but cleaned very frequently, ideally between each use. For more typical fitting rooms, such as those in department stores, these should remain closed because of the challenges in operating them safely.

Having to close fitting rooms will inevitably result in a larger number of returned goods. Items will have been handled by customers prior to return. Introducing a 'no contact' return point will be sensible where possible and practicable - where customers take their goods to a designated area for a refund (which should ideally be contactless).

> Storing returned items for a minimum of 48 hours enables any COVID-19 contamination to reduce, naturally

Storing returned items (or those which have been brought in for repair or donated), for a minimum of 48 hours in a room designated for this purpose enables any COVID-19 contamination to reduce, naturally. If possible, items should also be cleaned appropriately before displaying them for sale again.

Beds, furniture and other items which may be sat on or touched at great length should be provided with a suitable cover that can be cleaned between uses.

Rental equipment and vehicles will inevitably have a large number of touchpoints. Your revised cleaning and disinfection procedures should take account of this.

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Cleaning and hygiene

Proper cleaning and disinfection helps minimise the risk of spreading viruses. This is why cleaning will be a big part of your COVID-19 risk assessment. It is important to think about cleaning prior to opening up again and to revise your cleaning procedures (and share with those involved), so that new arrangements are clear.

Before reopening – check ventilation systems and window openings to make sure this is as effective as possible. Stock up on cleaning equipment – the right cleaning equipment – and how to use it. Provide hand sanitiser too, from a reputable supplier (unfortunately, there are many fakes on the market which do not offer the required protection).

PHE has produced cleaning guidelines for non-healthcare settings – the entire guide can be accessed here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings
Fortunately, normal cleaning methods (if done well), do

kill this virus, so your usual cleaning arrangements are likely to be sufficient.

Using disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads, to clean all hard surfaces, floors, chairs, door handles and sanitary fittings, following one of the options below:

- Use either a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine *OR*
- A household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants *OR*
- if an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses

Remember to check the instructions as use as directed, assessing and managing any risks as part of your COSHH assessment (guidance on this is here: *https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/harmful/coshh.htm*)

Legionnaires' disease

Hot and cold water systems that have been closed down are at an increased risk of hosting pathogens like Legionella bacteria. Health and safety law requires that you manage this risk to keep people safe. This document will help you with the task: *https://www.cieh.org/media/4208/legionella-guidance-covid-19.pdf*

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Focus especially on high-contact areas such as bathrooms, door handles, telephones etc. Avoid splashes and sprays and dispose of cloths and mop heads in waste bags.

Frequent cleaning of workstations, surfaces and equipment as well as tills and self-checkouts and hand-held devices is vital. Assess your site and plan ahead as to what's needed and how often.

Remind everyone on site to handwash or use sanitiser frequently using the right technique. Free posters from the World Health Organisation might help with this:

https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/resources/posters/en/

Don't forget toilets and don't forget personal hygiene - use signs and posters to build awareness of good personal hygiene for everyone. This means three really important behaviours:

> **Good handwashing technique**

+

> **Avoid touching the face**

+

> **Cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned**

Paper towels or electrical dryers should be the norm. Ensure waste facilities and bins are emptied and cleaned to avoid litter.

Ventilation

Good ventilation is one of the most important things you can do to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

Good ventilation should already be present in a work environment, whether by the opening of windows (with screening if necessary) or via air conditioning (fresh, not recirculated air).

Remember to monitor/check filters in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Cleaning after a suspected COVID-19 case?
See here for special arrangements, if needed: *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings#left-area*

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Work-related travel and deliveries to other sites

If your business requires workers to travel between locations, try to minimise this in favour of remote working options. Where shared transport is typical, use fixed travel partners, increased ventilation and avoid face-to-face seating.

Vehicles you provide must be cleaned and sanitised between shifts or before handover.

When delivering to other branches or sites or to customers' premises, social distancing and hygiene practices will apply.

See also the guide within Working Safely on Vehicles. Also, the Vehicles annex of this Retail Guide.

Mishaps

In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay socially distanced if it would be unsafe.

People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

You'll already be familiar with RIDDOR reporting (the reporting of accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences) and for COVID-19 there's clarification from the HSE on when to make a report:

https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm

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Goods – inbound and outbound

Like all other activities described so far, the objective here is to maintain social distancing. In addition, goods will have been handled prior to delivery and therefore surface transmission of the virus via goods is another key consideration for a retailer. This is more of a challenge in high throughput situations. Some of the main things you might consider here are:

» Your drop off and collection points – their location and signage
» Enabling non-contact deliveries as much as possible and fewer deliveries by ordering larger quantities
» Unloading with single workers, not multiple (which will take longer)
» Drivers – their welfare arrangements on site, which might include asking them to stay in their vehicles if at all possible
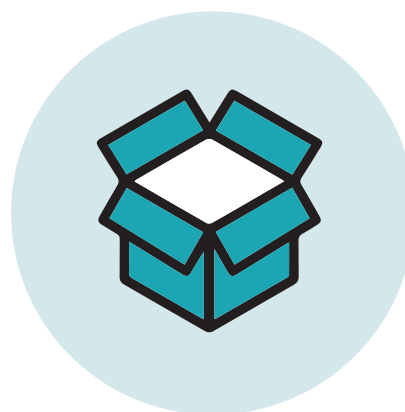
If you've read and implemented the above, then you've complied with the Government's COVID-19 poster and can now proudly display it ✔ You'll also be well on the way to getting back to business. One last thing….

Communicating with your workers

It's sensible to get in touch with those returning to work to make sure they understand the new COVID-19 arrangements that you've put into place and have an opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns. These new arrangements might need some communication or training materials too. If appropriate for your organisation, engaging with existing worker representative groups will be sensible. For smaller set-ups, arranging a collective conference call or video call might work well and also give teams a sense of 'togetherness.' Keep these communications (and any associated procedures) ongoing as arrangements may change in the future.

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Need more help?

If you need extra help on risk assessment over and above what you can find on the HSE's website via the links provided, then your local authority environmental health service is most likely to be able to help you.

The HSE enforces health and safety law too, but in higher risk environments. Between them, the HSE and local authorities regulate a diverse range of work activities and workplaces. You can find your local authority here:

https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council

Local authorities are usually responsible for supporting retail businesses in their areas to comply with health and safety law and will usually be responsible for enforcing it too, if needed. Most local authorities will have additional COVID-19 help and information on their websites that is appropriate for their local communities and businesses. If you have a Primary Authority partnership, either directly or via a trade association, this will be a great source of further help too . See:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-regulation-primary-authority

The HSE has a COVID-19 hotline for enquiries (0300 790 6787) and an online enquiry form:

https://hsegov.microsoftcrmportals.com/workingsafelyenquiries/

HSE COVID-19 Hotline
0300 790 6787

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Annexes
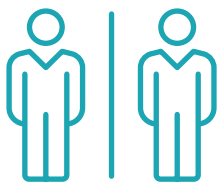
This Retail Guide brings together all the elements of the Government's Working Safely guidance that are most applicable to any retail operation; including things like

» risk assessment

» social distancing

» cleaning and workstations

However, some retail activities present more risk from COVID-19 and so need to be managed even more carefully – for these activities, separate annexes have been produced.

For example, working in or from vehicles (which introduces the challenge of a confined space) or working in other people's homes (where the working environment is unfamiliar and customers' willingness to follow 'the rules' may be unpredictable).

The Shops annex is in an FAQ format to concisely explain some of the key issues most relevant in a shop environment – things like whether to provide customer toilets and changing rooms and how to accept returned goods safely.

Every retail operation is different. This means that every assessment of the risk presented by COVID-19 and how to manage it, will (and should) also be different.

These annexes to the Retail Guide are intended to provide more detailed guidance for some of these trickier aspects.

They contain further prompts for the reader to think about when preparing an appropriate risk assessment, which in turn will drive the steps that need to be taken to protect workers, customers and all others that your business might encounter.

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Business in Focus

Other people's homes

This Annex covers the more specialist or unique issues relevant to working in people's homes. It follows on from the main part of the Retail Guide and should be read in conjunction with it.

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The full chapter from Working Safely on Other People's Homes can be accessed here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes

Many trades and work activities may start to operate again in people's homes when they are allowed to do so, according to the regulations and Government guidance.

Some of these will be retail activities that sell physical things (e.g. double glazing, fitting for blinds). Others might be to deliver services, such as plumbers, cleaners, carers and electricians. Some types will go only as far as the front door – deliveries, window cleaners etc.

These are all businesses which sell something – whether goods or services – and therefore the majority of this Retail Guide will be relevant.

This is not intended for work in homes that involves health or personal care, nor for nannies who live with a household.

Employment types and 'lone workers'

A large proportion of trades which take place in other people's homes will be by people working alone in the home, i.e. 'lone workers.' Some of these workers will be employees and many will be self-employed.

If you are an employer of a 'lone worker', whether they are your employee or perhaps a contractor, freelancer or self-employed person who is working for you, then you will have already considered the risks in your regular risk assessment. See:

https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

When working in other people's homes, for COVID-19 reasons, you will have a few additional things to think about and put into place before work starts. You are also responsible for protecting the health, safety and welfare of 'other people who might be affected by your business' so this includes the occupants of the home that your worker will be working in.

The workers themselves are also responsible for their own health and safety and those who may be harmed by their actions. General guidance for lone workers is here:

https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/worker/index.htm

A lone worker risk assessment for COVID-19 – working in other people's homes

This can form part of your existing risk assessment for the entire workforce and you can follow the principles and approach described in the main part of this Retail Guide. Having done this and if the work still needs to take place in the home, you need to think about the COVID-19 hazard and how the workers might be exposed to it whilst working there and how you can control the risk.

The occupants

Firstly, you will need to consider the health of the person they are visiting. No work should be carried out in a household which is isolating because one or more family members has symptoms or where an individual has been advised to shield. The only exception to this is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household. This is not explicitly defined in Working Safely but is likely to mean things like a potentially dangerous electrical problem or a structural emergency.

In a household with someone who is clinically vulnerable but not shielding (e.g. the home of someone over 70), checking ahead will help assess and manage the risk. It is very likely that steps listed earlier, such as distancing, avoiding touching objects and surfaces plus regular handwashing and avoiding face-to-face contact will be needed.

Calling ahead to ask that social distancing is maintained and that internal doors be left open to minimise contact, is a helpful safety measure for everyone. During the call you may also identify other risks that you can then plan for in your risk assessment, when on site.

The worker

You will need to consider the health of the worker too – those at risk of severe illness (i.e. those with some pre-existing conditions and 'clinically extremely vulnerable') should not work in other people's homes but should stay in their own homes and work there, if possible. Workers who are 'clinically vulnerable' (e.g. over 70) could be offered the safest roles, i.e. those with more space or simpler tasks to perform and with protection measures in place.

There is additional guidance for workers who are clinically extremely vulnerable, here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#work-and-employment

⚠️ **You need to think about the risks that lone workers will face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them – recognising that you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.**
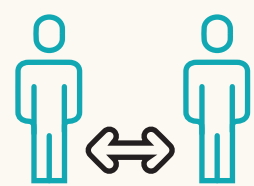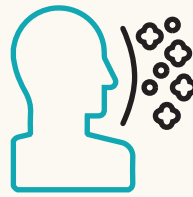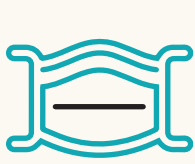
Manage the risk

Your risk assessment will inform any required changes to the work activity. This is likely to include things like:

» Maintain social distancing wherever possible. A 2-metre distance is still the goal. But where this is not viable, then 1-metre plus risk mitigation measures, is acceptable.

» Use handwashing facilities in the home if they can be provided safely. Otherwise, carry hand sanitiser. Wash or sanitise hands on arrival/ departure and frequently throughout the work activity.

» Reducing the spread of germs when coughing or sneezing by covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands). Bin or flush the tissue and wash hands.

» Clean where you've been, using an appropriate cleaning product (more on this in the cleaning section of the Retail Guide)

» Maintain good ventilation in the work environment by keeping windows and doors open, if possible

» Safely dispose of cleaning materials that you generate – bag it and remove from site, disposing of it appropriately

» Maintain social distancing wherever possible

» Face coverings – continue to use all the PPE that you already need for the job (e.g. helmets, high vis clothing etc). See Retail Guide for further info.

When working in someone's home, it might not always be possible to maintain physical distance from them at every moment. Even if you have called ahead and planned appropriately. In this case, pay extra attention to cleaning equipment, hands and surfaces.

Risk mitigation measures

» Add extra handwashing and surface cleaning

» Complete the task as quickly (and safely) as you can

» Use screens to separate people

» Match workers to those closest to them to minimise distances travelled

» If two workers are needed in the same person's home at the same time, used fixed pairings

» Use back-to-back or side-to-side working when possible

» Assign equipment to a particular worker and not shared, if possible

» Workers should take their own food and drink and have breaks outside, if possible

» Avoid sharing pens, paper or similar with the occupant

» Collect payment remotely

Communication and preparing for unforeseen events

Your usual risk assessment for lone workers will already have made arrangements for keeping in touch with them for welfare, mental and physical health and personal security purposes. This should now include how they can raise concerns with someone about COVID-19 if something unexpected should happen which worries them and how to handle the event. For example, when arriving on site, one of the occupants is coughing repeatedly – what to say and how to leave the site, without losing the customer for another time.

This poster has been produced to guide your preparation for home workers and COVID-19:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897765/staying-covid-19-secure-2020.pdf

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER

✓ We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and shared the results with the people who work here

✓ We have cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance

✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to help people work from home

✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to maintain a 2m distance in the workplace

✓ Where people cannot keep 2m apart we have ensured at least a 1m distance and taken all the mitigating actions possible to manage transmission risk

Signed on behalf of employer _____
Employer representative signature

Employer _____ Employer name _____ Date _____

Who to contact: _____ Your Health and Safety Representative _____
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)

Support the NHS Test and Trace programme by keeping a record of staff working arrangments and the homes visited by them. There's more information here: *https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace*

Delivering to other people's homes

This means as far as the doorstep, not going inside. The objective here is to maintain social distancing and minimising contact during deliveries.

Your risk assessment will identify appropriate steps according to what's being delivered.

The key ones are:
» Minimise contact
» Single workers to deliver, or stick to the same pairings if two are needed
» No ringing of the doorbell or physical signing of paperwork or electronic 'touch' devices – use electronic payments and electronically signed documents

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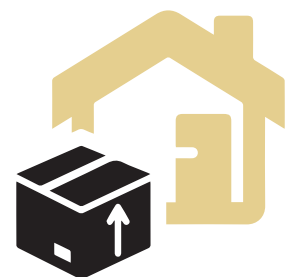
Business in Focus

Outdoor businesses

This Annex covers the more specialist or unique issues relevant to retail activities which operate outside, such as garden centres, caravan sales, some types of construction, farming and agriculture. It follows on from the main part of the Retail Guide and should be read in conjunction with it.

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A COVID-19 Risk assessment for outdoor businesses

Workers in this context are those for whom you are responsible under health and safety law. This means employees (full or part time, temporary or permanent) or a young person on work experience or an apprentice.

Self-employed people are responsible for their work activity if it poses a risk to the health and safety of others.

Agency staff will be the responsibility of the agency that is providing the person to you up to the point at which the worker is introduced to you, after which, the worker is your responsibility in the same way as an employee.

Workers have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work.

1

Working from home

Home or mobile working instead of on site? Aim for the minimum number of people on site, deemed necessary to carry out work safely

For home workers - provide IT to keep connected – especially with colleagues – for welfare, mental health and personal security. Don't forget extremely vulnerable workers – see:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely- vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on- shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable- persons-from-covid-19#work-and-employment

2

Can you stop the activity?

Those activities which require several people to work closely together (face-to-face) for a sustained period of time need careful risk assessment. You may need to postpone these tasks.

Assuming 'working from home' and 'stopping the activity' are not feasible, then…

3

Social distancing

Who?
For all your workers

Two metres between individuals – wherever and whenever you can – entrances and exits – breaks – canteens – corridors. If 2 metres is not viable, then 1 metre + risk mitigation is ok.

How?
Stagger start and finish times – additional bike racks and lockers to encourage walking/running/cycling to work – stop or restrict passenger numbers in work vehicles – clear signage reminders – floor markings to encourage one-way movements – movement between sites – job rotation – individual workstations – change layouts - zoned work areas – bottlenecks and timeclocks – shift changes - meetings outdoors or in areas with sufficient space – touchpoint alternatives

Anyone else?
For customers, visitors, contractors – visible site guidance on social distancing and hygiene explained on arrival and posted throughout site – remote working – limit the numbers – revise timings and schedules – contactless payments and paperwork

Customers and visitors must wear face coverings when required by law. Check here for the rules and the exemptions: *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own*

Vehicles - when receiving goods and during deliveries – electronic pre-booking – locations and procedures – signage - larger orders less often - same pairings – welfare for drivers – stay in vehicles where possible

> " Customers and visitors must wear face coverings when required by law.
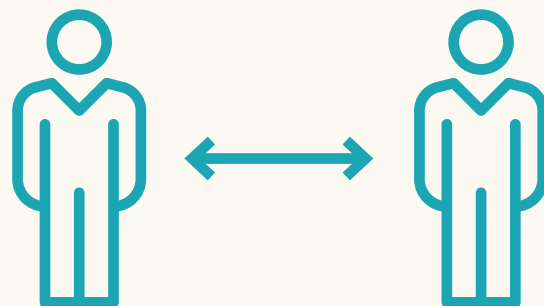
As a responsible employer you will already have carried out a risk assessment for your operation. For outdoor businesses it will probably include things like working at height, slips, trips and falls, lone working considerations, mobile plant, tools and equipment, fire – to name but a few.

The hazard posed by COVID-19 means that you now need to include it in your risk assessment, for all of your work activities and wherever they take place. This Annex will help you identify any further improvements you need to make to reduce the risk from COVID-19 in an outdoor operation.

4

Apply all the risk mitigation that you can

Hand washing and surface cleaning
Do you have sufficient handwashing facilities available (paper towels or electrical driers) or hand sanitiser if not?

» New procedures – think frequency of cleaning - surfaces, equipment, objects, doors, touch pads – sanitise after use
» Workstations
» Portable toilets and equipment
» Vehicles and tools – especially if taken home by workers
» Showers and changing facilities
» Signage – promote and encourage good handwashing technique and frequency
» Suitable cleaning materials
» Waste disposal – frequency of collection and how to dispose of
» Hand sanitiser

Social distancing and handwashing are important – don't forget to promote your new arrangements, especially when returning to work

Other things you can do
» Shorten activity times
» Use screens/barriers to separate people
» Back-to-back or side-to-side working (as opposed to face-to-face)
» Drop-off points instead of handing tools to each other
» Use fixed teams or partnering (so each person works only with a few others)
» Avoid shouting because this increases the risk of aerosol droplets being transmitted

PPE?
Continue to use it only for other (non-COVID-19) risks, such as health and safety requirements when using tools. Additional PPE in a non-healthcare setting is not advised, because social distancing and handwashing (and other mitigation steps) will usually be sufficient to reduce the risk – unless your risk assessment suggests otherwise.

5

Is it safe to work? If not, STOP

Having taken all the above steps, are you confident that the activity can still go ahead, safely? If the answer to this is 'no' then you must stop this activity.

Remember that your health and safety obligations to your workers mean that no-one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

Involve your workers and their representatives when developing new arrangements – keep them involved and share the results

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Business in Focus

Vehicles

*This Annex covers the more specialist or unique issues relevant to retail activities that involve **working in or from vehicles**. This includes (but is not limited to) mobile workers, delivery drivers, removals, refuse crews, taxis and car dealerships, but the principles can be applied to a huge range of vehicle uses. It covers lone workers, co-workers or teams in a vehicle and those who transport other people. **It follows on from the main part of the Retail Guide and should be read in conjunction with it.** There is separate guidance for transport organisations here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators*

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A COVID-19 Risk assessment

Workers in this context are those for whom you are responsible under health and safety law. This means employees (full or part time, temporary or permanent) or a young person on work experience or an apprentice. Self-employed people are responsible for their work activity if it poses a risk to the health and safety of others.

Agency staff will be the responsibility of the agency who is providing the person to you up to the point at which the worker is introduced to you, after which, the worker is your responsibility in the same way as an employee.

Workers have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work.

Risk assessing a vehicle worker in relation to COVID-19 applies to what happens inside the vehicle as well as what happens when the worker gets out of the vehicle, i.e. what they touch and who they interact with.

You may employ vehicle workers each with different arrangements for their work. This is why it is best practice to involve workers in the carrying out of risk assessments whenever possible – it shows that you take their health and safety seriously.

Here's a suggested hierarchy of measures for you to consider, in carrying out your COVID-19 risk assessment for vehicle workers.

1

Working from home and in the workplace

Where possible, working from home should be enabled. Where the work is based in or from a vehicle, this won't be practical therefore working in a COVID-19 safe environment is key.

By its very nature, workers who operate from a vehicle are involved in transporting something (i.e. themselves, goods or other people) from one place to another. These activities should all be considered as part of your COVID-19 risk assessment.

2

Can you stop the activity?

Are there any non-essential aspects that you can simply and legally stop doing, in order to reduce the risk? e.g. agree to deliver goods where only one worker or fixed pairs are needed for unloading, rather than larger teams.

Or avoid tasks that require multi-occupancy vehicles if social distancing will be difficult to achieve.

Assuming 'working from home' and 'stopping the activity' are not feasible, then...

3

Social distancing

↔ **2m**

The objective here is to maintain a 2-metre gap between individuals whenever possible. Where possible, working from home should be enabled. Where the work is based in or from a vehicle, this won't be practical therefore working in a COVID-19 safe environment is key. This is an important control measure but one which is very difficult to achieve, given the inherent space constraints of vehicles. Consider the nature of the job from arrival, during the day, during breaks, interactions with others (including colleagues, customers and anyone else who might be encountered), the handling of goods, the journey home, unforeseen events and think about how the hazard of COVID-19 may present itself at each of these stages.

Above all, make sure all workers understand COVID-19 safety procedures and keep people updated if things change

Remember that the law requires you to:
» *Consult with a recognised trade union, if there is one, or if not, a representative chosen by your workers, not by you.*
» *Share with your workers the results of the risk assessment.*
» *Write down your risk assessment if you have five or more workers.*

4

Apply all the risk mitigation measures that you can

Hand washing and surface cleaning

Along with social distancing, cleanliness is the most important mitigating step and one which will be a part of your COVID-19 risk assessment for vehicle workers.

The steps you are likely to take, having considered the nature of the work and all who may be affected by it, are:

» Handwashing before using a vehicle and afterwards
» Hand sanitiser available for use in vehicles
» Cleaning vehicles in between shift changes/uses
» Special cleaning attention on door handles, fuel pumps, keys etc
» Adequate waste disposal of cleaning materials
» Signage to remind workers of good handwashing technique and avoiding touching the face
» Toilet facilities – available for use and cleaned regularly. Hand sanitiser/washing facilities provided
» Facilities (lockers, showers etc) – clear standards for use to ensure they are kept clean

See also the mitigating measures for inside and outside of the vehicle, later on in this annex.

5

Is it safe to work? If not, STOP

Having taken all the above steps, are you confident that the activity can still go ahead, safely? If the answer to this is 'no' then you must stop this activity.

Remember that your health and safety obligations to your workers mean that no-one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

You must assess the risk presented by COVID-19 in all the scenarios of the job and control that risk, in all the scenarios you are responsible for. This includes planning for what to do in the event of an outbreak, or when mishaps occur.

The NHS's Test and Trace service needs your help! Keep a temporary record of your staff shift patterns for 21 days, in case it's needed to help contain outbreaks. More info is here: *https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace*

Many individuals working in a vehicle will be lone workers (e.g. couriers). In other circumstances there might be two or more workers, required to work together as a team (e.g. refuse collection crews).

Some tasks might involve collecting or transporting other people, such as taxis carrying passengers or car dealerships offering test drives. Think about any extremely vulnerable workers that you may have and how best to protect them:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely- vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding- and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid- 19#work-and-employment

Ensure those who have symptoms of COVID-19 or who live with someone with symptoms or who have been advised to self-isolate, stay home (see: *https://www.gov.uk/ government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance*)

You are responsible for protecting the health, safety and welfare of 'other people who might be affected by your business' so this includes those who your worker might come into contact with, perhaps unexpectedly (passengers, customers, car park operators, members of the public, petrol station operatives, etc.) inside or outside of the vehicle.

Remember that the wearing of face coverings by members of the public when travelling on public transport (including taxis and private hire vehicles) is required in certain circumstances: *https://www.gov.uk/government/ publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how- to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and- how-to-make-your-own*

Face coverings worn by workers in vehicles may offer some benefit in situations where social distancing is difficult. Help with the safe wearing of face coverings by highlighting how to wear them safely. If you already provide PPE for workers to protect them from health and safety risks at work (e.g. helmets, gloves, eye protection etc.), then continue to do so. It is not recommended that you provide additional PPE (or face coverings) solely for COVID-19 reasons. This is because social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams (and other mitigating measures) are more effective.

There's more information here: *https://www.gov.uk/ guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/ vehicles#vehicles-6-1*

Some of the main challenges are:

Lone workers: not having anyone to help if things go wrong

Workers who share a vehicle with other workers: not being able to adequately socially distance

Workers who collect and transport members of the public: the uncertainty - their knowledge of COVID-19 and their willingness (or ability) to behave appropriately

Remember that social distancing applies to all parts of the business, not just inside the vehicle, but break rooms and all areas where workers congregate.

INSIDE THE VEHICLE

Lone workers	Social distancing is not a problem within the vehicle
More than one worker sharing a vehicle at the same time	Insufficient space unless vehicle is very large

Mitigating measures could include:

» Avoid multiple occupancy or shared vehicles where possible
» Ensuring good ventilation
» Avoid shouting between occupants because this could increase the transmission of aerosols
» Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
» Signage about social distancing requirements
» Keeping the activity time as short as possible
» Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
» Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
» Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using fixed teams or partnering (so each person works with only a few others)
» Face coverings may help, though should not be a replacement for any of the above ways of managing risk.

Collecting/ transporting other people	Insufficient space unless vehicle is very large
	Unpredictable behaviour of customers

Mitigating measures could include:

» Ensuring good ventilation
» Signage about social distancing arrangements
» Avoid shouting between occupants because this could increase the transmission of aerosols
» Consider the needs of some customers, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired
» Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
» Keeping the activity time as short as possible
» Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
» Contactless payments
» Customers wearing face coverings, as required by law

OUTSIDE THE VEHICLE AND DURING DELIVERIES

» Stagger working hours to reduce crowding
» Single workers for loading/unloading where possible
» Avoid physical contact with another person when handling goods
» Provide additional parking or bike-racks
» Limit corporate vehicle sharing
» Keep workers to the same transportation routes
» Contactless refuelling and deliveries
» Electronic paperwork
» Look at pick-up and drop-off locations and signage

» Plan deliveries to a previously agreed area, perhaps click and collect
» Plan for emergencies or new security risks that might involve vehicle workers and communicate any changes required. In an emergency social distancing guidelines don't have to be complied with if it's unsafe to do so, but immediate handwashing afterwards and reporting of the incident should be a prority.
» Consider welfare facilities, their cleaning, ventilation and access.

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Business in Focus

Food and drink

England only, unless local lockdown restrictions apply: https://www.gov. uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of- coronavirus-covid-19

*This annex covers the more specialist retail activities involving **indoor and outdoor hospitality**. This includes restaurants, bars, cafes, pubs, takeaways, deliveries and workplace canteens.*

This Annex follows on from the main part of this Retail Guide so should be read in conjunction with it.

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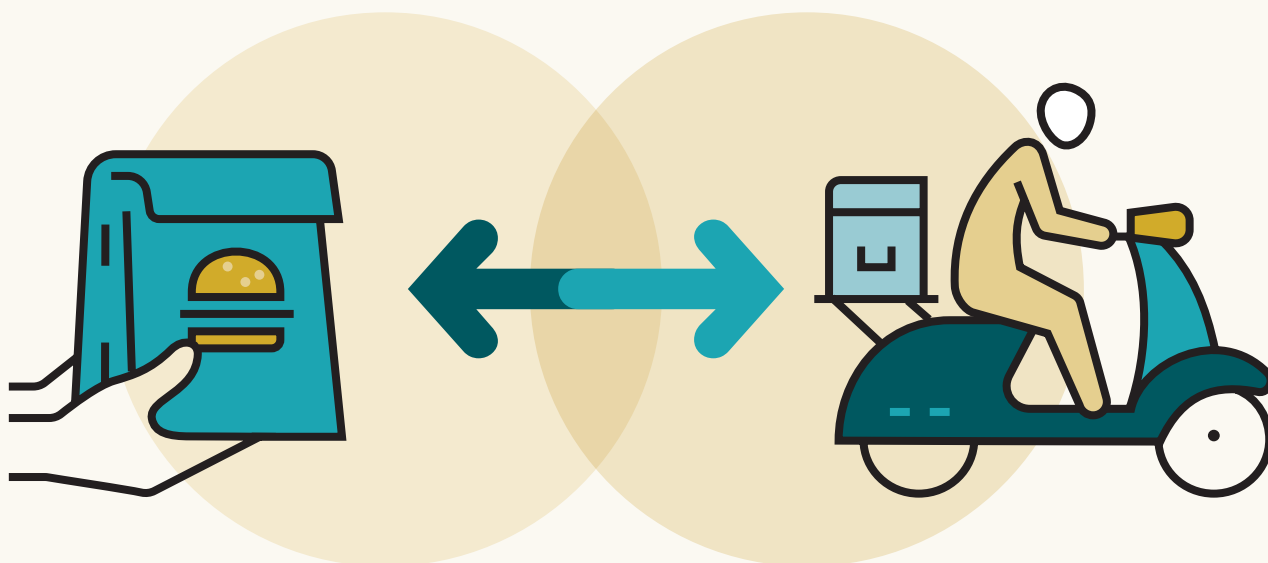
From 4th July 2020 many more businesses can reopen, including food and drink businesses selling food for consumption at venues, both indoors and outdoors.

The Government's Working Safely guidance contains a chapter for restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services. It is guidance and it does not supercede legal obligations. Your risk assessment will help you decide which actions to take.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery

This annex of the Retail Guide will help you by bringing together in one place, all the tasks and topics that you as the Food Business Operator (FBO) need to think about prior to and during reopening as well as beyond. It draws together some of the most important and reputable external sources and provides links for further information and help, so you can select which are the most suitable for your needs.

Which outlets does this apply to?

Restaurants

Pubs

Bars

Beer gardens

Takeaways

Deliveries

Cafes

Social clubs with bars and restaurants

mobile catering

Anything excluded?

Food preparation and service in clinical or healthcare settings

All food businesses operators (FBOs) must consider the risk from COVID-19 as part of their existing Food Safety Management System

First things first – the basics

Whether you are a new food business, or are about to re-open or have been doing it for a while, here are some links to some basic information from reputable sources:

The Business Companion Food & Drink guide:
https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the government department responsible for food safety and food hygiene in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It works in partnership with local authorities to help ensure food stays safe and honest. **The responsibility for complying with the law remains with the food business operator – the FBO**. The FSA's website contains lots of information, written for businesses, which explains what any food business should be doing when starting up or operating a food business.

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance

If you haven't already done so, register your food business with the environmental health (or food safety) team in your local authority. Why? Because it's a legal requirement. It's also a good idea so that your local authority knows you're there and can help you get things right from the start. In time, you will also be inspected by your local authority and receive a hygiene rating. Evidence shows that businesses with a high rating helps them win more customers! For more information see:
https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/register-a-food-business#food-hygiene-rating-scheme

Want to check on the rating given to a business?
Click here:
https://ratings.food.gov.uk/default/en-GB

Don't know who your local authority is?
Search using your postcode, here:
https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council
Many local authority websites provide additional food safety and COVID-19 advice and support for businesses in their areas.

For take-aways and delivery businesses

The nature of take-away and delivery arrangements can mean that managing some of the food safety aspects takes more work and planning than providing food from a venue. Things like food packaging for transport, maintaining safe temperatures during delivery, controlling queues during collection, communicating allergen information at a distance –are all additional things for an FBO to manage in a take-away/delivery environment.

Guidance from the FSA and from the CIEH has been produced to help with this task and is available here:

The CIEH has produced 'Food delivery and takeaway guidance':

https://www.cieh.org/media/4070/covid-19-food-delivery-and-takeaway-guidance.pdf

The FSA has produced 'Food safety for food delivery':

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-safety-for-food-delivery

Need some signage?
The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) represents environmental health professionals and has produced a collection of free resources for businesses and professionals relating to COVID-19. This includes topics like signage, handwashing guidance and Legionnaires' disease *https://www.cieh.org/policy/coronavirus-covid-19/resources/*

Getting ready to reopen?

If you're getting ready to reopen as a…

restaurant, pub, bar, beer garden, takeaway, cafe, social club with bar and restaurant, mobile catering

…the FSA has developed a suite of guidance which will be very helpful to your preparations:

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-and-adapting-your-food-business-during-covid-19

Also available from the FSA is a reopening checklist with supporting guidance for each element.

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-checklist-for-food-businesses-during-covid-19

It includes the following topics with additional links for further reading:

» updating your local authority with any changes
» updating your Food Safety Management System with your COVID-19 risk assessment, its findings and any change to procedures needed as a result
» fitness for work procedures
» PPE and its laundry/replacement
» waste
» cleaning food prep areas and equipment
» stocking up on cleaning materials and re-train staff on their use, if needed
» enhancing cleaning and disinfection as required by your assessment
» checking for pests
» stocking up on handwashing materials (soap, sanitiser, paper towels)
» checking hot and cold water availability
» flushing dishwashers and glasswashers, taps and other equipment
» equipment checks – probe thermometers, fridges, chillers, ovens, freezers all working to required temperatures
» legionalla risks – see guidance from the HSE and CIEH to help you reduce these risks
https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/
https://www.cieh.org/media/4208/legionella-guidance-covid-19.pdf

» ingredients – use-by and best before dates, any damage to packaging, obtaining new supplies from reputable suppliers
» allergen information
» ventilation (and fly screens if required)
» social distancing measures

The Government's 'Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19)' has been updated and will also be useful:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19

It focuses more on staffing issues around COVID-19 and how to manage them. Additional links to other sources, such as 'fitness to work' guidance and PHE guidance on cleaning, are also linked. Key elements are:

» symptoms of COVID-19 – recognising and acting upon
» food and COVID-19
» preventing and managing outbreaks
» risk assessment and the legal requirements of it
» communicating with employees
» accommodation and transport
» managing entry into a food production area
» working arrangements, hygiene, distancing and monitoring compliance with it
» adjusting shifts to reduce density and help with social distancing
» communal areas
» staff canteens and restaurants
» the cohort approach
» workstations and designated working areas
» contact tracing
» supporting those who self-isolate and returning to work
» cleaning and waste disposal

A COVID-19 risk assessment for a food business

Priority actions

There are 7 priority actions in the Government's guidance for operators of a food businesses, these are summarised here:

1 *Complete your COVID-19 risk assessment (more on this later in this annex)*

2 *Keep those who are unwell out of the venue (workers, customers, drivers, visitors, etc.)*

3 *Clean - a lot! Focus on surfaces/handles that are touched the most*

4 *Make sure everyone is socially distancing - this includes providing sufficient space between those in the same dining party who do not live together, so they can remain a safe distance apart (check this at the time of booking).*

5 *Ask customers to wear face coverings if the law requires it (and be mindful of the exemptions): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own*

6 *Ventilate the premises as best you can (open windows, screening them if necessary, or running ventiilation systems that use 'new' air, not recirculated air)*

7 *Participate in the NHS Test and Trace service - a legal requirement from 18th September: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace*

Remember that:
No-one is obliged to work in an unsafe environment; and
Have regard to workers who might be especially vulnerable to COVID-19

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#work-and-employment
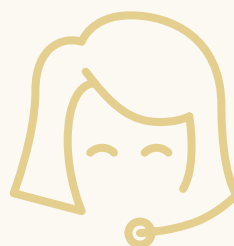
Your risk assessment

The Retail Guide explains how to carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment for any retail business. For a food retail business, it's a little different.

A risk assessment for COVID-19 is the most important part of your reopening preparations as it will help you determine what measures you need to put into place for your particular operation. It is also a legal requirement.

In a food business it should become part and parcel of your existing Food Safety Management System – whether you have a SFFB system (Safer Food Better Business, for more simple food production)

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business

or something else equivalent. Or you might be using a full HACCP system (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, suitable for more complex operations).

As the FBO of a food business, you must ensure that your Food Safety Management System identifies and addresses the risks presented by COVID-19 in a food environment, reducing those risks to the lowest possible level that you reasonably can (recognising that you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19).

This means the risks that COVID-19 presents to food and its preparation, storage, production and sale etc. Also, the risks that COVID-19 presents to your workers, customers, delivery drivers bringing you supplies or taking away your waste, etc. In fact, every activity that your business carries out.

Happily, the links in the 'Getting ready to open?' section above, will walk you through all the things you should include in your risk assessment and in your reopening preparations.

COVID-19 is not known to be transmitted by exposure to exposure to food or food packaging. The World Health Organisation has stated that 'it is highly unlikely that people can contract COVID-19 from food or food packaging because coronaviruses require a living host to multiply.' On surfaces (e.g. packaging or work surfaces), the length of time the virus can survive varies according to the nature of the material.

Providing entertainment?
Socially distanced indoor and outdoor performances may take place subject to social distancing requirements. See the Performing Arts guidance for the latest information: *https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts*

Don't forget to:

» document any changes you make

» keep a note of the start-up checks that you do

» tell your local authority if you are starting up again after a period of closure and of any changes – this includes diversification into take-away/delivery, if you choose to do it

» share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce and consider publishing the results on your website. For businesses with more than 50 workers, the Government expects this

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Local authority enforcement action under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions)(England)(No.3) Regulations 2020.

Running your food service
From 14th September - Groups of 6 people is the legal maximum; check this at the time of booking and when seating groups. If group members are from different households, then additional space will also be needed to achieve social distancing between group members.

Table service only - no standing at the bar. Deliver condiments/cutlery to seated diners to avoid customers moving about and getting too close to others.

Keep tables (groups) apart to achieve social distancing. You will need to calculate how many tables and customers you can have on site and reconfigure seating if need be.

Take orders at tables (socially distanced) or via an app.

Face coverings for workers? Not usually required. See the PPE/Face Coverings section of this Retail Guide.

Encourage contactless payments and move card readers to an acceptable distance. Screens at paypoints will provide risk mitigation.

DIsplay signage to remind all of the need for distancing between customers of different households and to remain at their table where possible.

Consider queues (outdoors is preferable - but what about during adverse weather?) and how people move through your premises - social distancing guidelines must be maintained.

Keep music to a minimum to avoid shouting, which might lead to airborne transmission of COVID-19.

Queuing outdoors will be easier to manage.

Remember - businesses can be closed under the Coronavirus Restrictions Regulations* if they are found to be operating outside of the rules

All done?

If you've completed all the above, you're ready to proudly display this certificate on your premises – and online too, if you want to!

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

• FIVE STEPS TO SAFER • WORKING TOGETHER

✓ We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and shared the results with the people who work here

✓ We have cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance

✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to help people work from home

✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to maintain a 2m distance in the workplace

✓ Where people cannot keep 2m apart we have ensured at least a 1m distance and taken all the mitigating actions possible to manage transmission risk

Signed on behalf of employer _____ Employer representative signature

Employer _____ Employer name   Date _____

Who to contact: _____ Your Health and Safety Representative
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897765/staying-covid-19-secure-2020.pdf

Preventing food waste

Despite best efforts, most food businesses generate food waste to some degree.

There's a risk that food waste may occur more readily as the pattern of supply/demand fluctuates with the changing profile of COVID-19.

If you have a good understanding of labelling and storage requirements relevant to the food you produce or sell, as well as access to tips from relevant industry guides, this might go some way to minimising food waste.
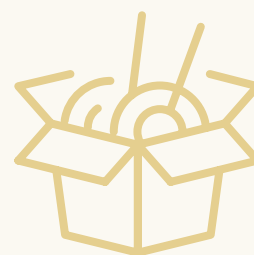
Best Before, Use By and Sell By

Best before	Use By	Sell By
Best Before relates to the quality of the food and is an indication of the period for which a food can reasonably be expected to retain its optimal condition. Retailers can sell food after the best-before date provided the food is safe to eat	For foods that are highly perishable, 'use by' is the required form of date mark. These foods present a microbiological risk to the consumer if sold after the indicated date, and so this mark relates to the safety of the food. It is an offence for shops to sell food after its use-by date.	Products may be labelled with 'sell by' and 'display until' dates, but these are not required by law and are used mainly for stock control purposes within business premises.

This comprehensive guidance from WRAP, FSA and DEFRA written for food businesses (updated November 2019) contains more information on best practice for food date labelling and storage, including redistribution of surplus food. It also contains links to several industry guides (e.g. chilled food, dairy industry etc.) which may be helpful: *http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Food_labelling_guidance.pdf*

Further guidance specifically for redistribution of food was updated in April 2020 *https://wrap.org.uk/content/surplus-food-redistribution-labelling-guidance*
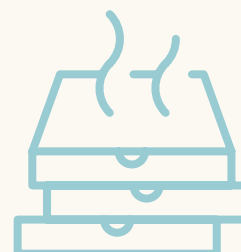
businesscompanion
trading standards law explained

Business in Focus

Shops in England - FAQs

(unless local lockdown restrictions apply: *https://www.gov.uk/government/
collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-
covid-19*)

The full Working Safely guide can be accessed here:
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

ctsi Chartered Trading
Standards Institute

Returning to the workplace

"Employers should ensure workplaces are safe whilst also enabling working from home"
(Government guidance)

1 *My shop is open now that lockdown rules have begun to ease. We are operating shorter hours with a skeleton staff and some of my workers are still working from home. What should I be doing for my home-working employees?*

» make sure they have what they need – equipment that works as intended and is properly set up (see guidance on display screen equipment, here:

https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm

» do they know what they should be doing and can it be done safely?

» are they lone working? This carries additional risk because there's no help if needed. Your responsibilities extend to employees, self-employed people and freelancers who work for you. See

https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/employer/manage-the-risks-of-working-alone.htm

» think about how you will keep in touch with them and how they will maintain contact with other colleagues – this is important not just for getting the work done and keeping up to date with any changes in the pipeline, but also for social reasons and mental health.

2 *We are hoping to open the shop for longer hours and start to bring more people back to work. How can I prepare for this?*

If returning to work sometime soon is likely, perhaps in a staged return, then how you care for and prepare your workers is a key guiding principle. These three tests are worth thinking about:

» is it essential?

» is it safe? (are all the risks at work now managed sufficiently?)

Remember that not everyone suits or enjoys home working, especially given the length of time that COVID-19 home working has been going on. This could be for lots of reasons, such as working longer hours, having additional caring responsibilities, insufficient quiet space to concentrate or finding it difficult to cope with minimal social contact. Look out for signs of stress and provide an emergency point of contact (person) so anyone struggling can get help if needed.

» is it agreed? (concerns about things like using public transport, or anxiety about catching the virus, or managing new working hours and arrangements might all be commonplace).

Workers who are 'clinically extremely vulnerable' may still wish to take extra care. See the latest guidance: *https://www.gov.uk/government/ publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable- persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely- vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#work-and-employment*. Others may be worried because they live with or care for someone who is 'high risk.' In this case, you should allow them to continue working from home. Remember that those who develop symptoms of COVID-19 (or who live with someone who does), will need to self-isolate.

3 *Are there other legal or employment-related things I should be doing?*

» in short, yes. Some of which will depend on whether staff have been furloughed so far and may continue to be, until October 2020.

» Short term working/redundancy – it's a possibility that not all your workforce will be needed or for as much time as they are now. The CIPD website provides some useful tips on these matters:

https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/emp-law/employees/ workplace-guide-returning-after-coronavirus

Assess the risk

1 *My shop is in a building with other shops. Who is responsible for carrying out the COVID-19 risk assessment?*

» The working environment dictates (to some extent) what actions are ultimately needed, but employers and self-employed people are still responsible for assessing the risks and managing them. Pragmatically, this means that you would work with other tenants and the landlord of your building to agree what's needed and to share in publicising this with appropriate signage- especially in the common walkways and toilet areas and for queues at the main entrance to the building.

2 *Am I required to publish my COVID-19 risk assessment online?*

» You're required to share the findings of it with your employees, which could be via an intranet communication. In COVID-19 circumstances, it's a good idea to publish it more widely, via your website, so that customers and suppliers can have confidence in the measures you've put in place. The Government expects that larger businesses, with over 50 workers, will do just this.

3 *Can customers and delivery drivers use our toilets?*

» Toilet use will depend on the findings of your COVID-19 risk assessment, so each business will make its own decision having considered all the elements. If toilets are available for use, they must be managed well (signage, queueing, cleaning etc.)

← 2m →
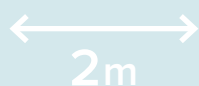
Stay 2m apart

2m remains the goal for social distancing. But where this cannot be achieved, then apply 1m + risk mitigation measures if together this means the activity can carry on safely.

1 *My shop is tiny – I'm going to find it difficult to achieve the 2m distancing requirement between myself and customers – what should I do?*

» The main body of this Retail Guide describe how to approach the task of risk assessment for COVID-19. If 2m distancing cannot be achieved (but the activity still needs to continue for the business to operate), then the other things you can do, are:

» work out how many customers you can reasonably fit in to achieve social distancing

» think about how you will manage this (signage, floor markings, extra cleaning, etc.)

You could also implement:

» back-to-back or side-to-side working (not face-to-face)

» screens or barriers to separate people from each other (workers and/or customers)

» increase the frequency of handwashing (or hand sanitizer) and surface cleaning

If you cannot run your shop safely, then don't trade from it. Can you sell online or in other ways instead?

Remember – if you have two doors, use one as an entrance and the other as an exit. If you only have one door, the customer leaving the shop needs to be at a suitable distance from the queue of waiting customers.

2 *How can I ensure social distancing in a lift or at the till?*

» Signage outside the lift to remind those entering it

» Hand sanitizer station inside the lift, for use before/after pressing lift buttons

» For large lifts, clear and bold floor markings, showing where to stand – see Pic 1 below

» For small lifts, limit their use to one person at a time, unless users are from the same household

3 *What about waiting areas and changing rooms?*

» Tape up furniture to make it clear what's in use and what isn't - see Pic 4 below .

» for changing rooms, Government guidance states that 'fitting rooms should be closed wherever possible given the challenges in operating them safely.' However, some shops have chosen to allow the use of changing rooms by putting strict measures in place to ensure sufficient cleanliness between users. For example, Selfridges is implementing strict sanitation measures by steaming and sanitising fitting rooms between uses. To be able to do this with confidence, the findings of Selfridge's risk assessment must have demonstrated that these measures are sufficient. It is unlikely that a quick spray of disinfectant into the fitting room (and nothing more) would be enough.

Fitting assistance is covered in the Close Contact Services annex of Working Safely (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services#close-contact-5-4)

The close proximity of fitter to customer, potentially in the 'highest risk zone' makes this a particular challenge and one which should be carefully risk assessed.

Stay separate

"Where it's not possible for people to be 2m apart, do everything practical to manage the transmission risk
(Government guidance)

1 *Should I be providing gloves for my workers or to customers coming into the shop?*

» If you are already providing gloves to workers for other work-related reasons (as identified in your health and safety risk assessment), then continue to do so. Gloves are not recommended specifically for COVID-19 in normal circumstances because it's better to wash hands properly and not touch the face. There's a chance that the wearing of gloves instead may provide a false sense of security for the wearers and those they come into contact with.

2 *Do I need to check people's temperatures – employees or visitors or customers?*

» No. Not at the moment. The Government is looking at the evidence for doing this. Anyone showing symptoms of the virus. Anyone showing symptoms of the virus (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss or change to the sense of smell or taste), should follow the NHS advice, here: *https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/#symptoms*

3 *How big do barrier or sneeze screens need to be?*

» this depends on the activity they're protecting. Generally, 'sneeze screens' should be sufficiently wide and tall to be effective. They might have a gap at low level for transactions. A 1m x 1m screen is a popular size. Remember to include regular cleaning of screens in your cleaning schedule.

Keep cleaning

"Keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces
(Government guidance)

1 *Can I accepted returned goods from customers, given that the goods and packaging will have been touched by them?*

» Yes, providing you put new arrangements in place to protect your workers accepting the goods and any future customer who might buy them. This includes things like:

» Storing items that have been returned for 48 hours (this used to be 72 hours) so that the virus naturally dies off

» Depending on the item, cleaning it appropriately before putting it back on display

» For items like beds or furniture, where customers inevitably want to touch them, use coverings which will withstand cleaning afterwards

» Accept returned goods only at designated areas so the process can be managed properly

2 *Can I refund in cash, or only contactless?*

'Where possible' refunds should be contactless. But if this isn't possible, refund in another way, cleaning any devices used with sanitiser between customers.

Remember – contactless payment is now possible up to £45. You could put a sign up at the till to remind customers of this and encourage payment in this way.

The science bit:

Detergents: soap – these clean the surface and remove grease and help to break down the virus structure

Sanitisers: alcohol based (above 60%) – break down the virus structure and reduce the amount of microbes present which can help to reduce the risk of infection

Disinfectants: e.g. Dettol, household bleach (at the right dilution) – they destroy bacteria and viruses if used on a visibly clean surface and left for the required contact time before wiping

What about antibacterial sprays? Many of these marketed as antibacterial may not work against a virus like COVID-19, unless they contain at least 60% alcohol or a comparable agent which will do the same and this is stated on the label.

3 *Cleaning is clearly a big part of our 'new normal' way of operating. How do I know that my cleaning equipment is up to the job?*

» A professional who can take a swab of your services will tell you for sure. But this isn't necessary providing you use cleaning and disinfection products that are suitable for the job and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

This will usually mean cleaning hard surfaces with warm, soapy water followed by disinfectant. Check that your disinfectant combats viruses, including human coronaviruses and if there's a required 'contact time' (i.e. how long to leave it on the surface before wiping off).

Always buy a reputable brand from a reputable supplier – there are some which are not up to the job, despite claiming that they are!

» More specialist cleaning in a non-healthcare setting after someone with suspected COVID-19 has left, is described in this Government guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

» Remember to focus on what you clean as well as how to clean it and how often. Frequent touch areas are door handles, light switches, payment devices as well as sneeze screens etc.

» Ventilation - A really important mitigation step, whether via open windows or air conditioning (set to fresh air, not recirculated). Monitor performance and check filters

Signage

Please email us and let us know:
Did you find these FAQs helpful?
Would you like to read more?
Any topics in particular?

covidadvice@tsi.org.uk

Some useful signage for a shop environment, kindly provided by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, is here:

Limiting the number of customers entering the shop:
https://www.cieh.org/media/4183/covid-19-poster_1.pdf

Maintaining 2m distance when queuing outside and in the shop:
https://www.cieh.org/media/4181/covid-19-poster_2.pdf

Keeping a 2m distance at all times:
https://www.cieh.org/media/4182/covid-19-poster_3.pdf