

## Checklist for 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'

Compiled by **EIQA (Excellence Ireland Quality Association)**

***Developed on the COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers prepared by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health, published on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2020***

Introduction to the protocol by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

"[The Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace when the economy begins to slowly open up, following the temporary closure of most businesses during the worst phase of the current pandemic".

"The Protocol should be used by all workplaces to adapt their workplace procedures and practices to comply fully with the COVID-19 related public health protection measures identified as necessary by the HSE".

"The Return to Work Safely Protocol, is the result of a collaborative effort by the [Health and Safety Authority](#) (HSA), the [Health Services Executive](#) (HSE) and the [Department of Health](#) and the [Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation](#)".

"This non-exhaustive document describes the steps that employers and workers shall take in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It also provides advice on the measures recommended by Government to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Employers and workers should however keep up to date with the latest measures introduced by Government and any advice issued as a result. For more general matters related to occupational health and safety (OSH) requirements, please refer to the relevant legislation, guidance and advice available on the Health and Safety Authority: [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie). "

The checklist is based on the protocol published on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2020. As explained in the guidance, keep up to date with the latest measures introduced by the Government.

## Index

1	Covid-19 response plan	Page 3
2	Communicating change	Page 4
3	Induction training	Page 5
4	Plan for workers with symptoms	Page 5
5	Suspected case procedure	Page 6
6	Return to work questionnaire	Page 8
7	Return to work employee checklist	Page 9
8	Risk assessment	Page 10
9	Hand hygiene	Page 10
10	Respiratory hygiene	Page 11
11	Cleaning	Page 12
12	PPE	Page 13
13	Physical distancing	Page 14

### Self-assessment

Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of self-assessment \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Covid-19 Response plan

1	What? In advance of returning to work, <b>employers will:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Develop and/or update a business COVID-19 Response Plan.								
b	Update their occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement.								
c	Appoint a person or team to manage compliance to COVID-19 requirements?								
d	Address the level(s) of risk associated with various workplaces and work activities in the COVID-19 business plans and OSH risk assessments. For example, where, how and to what sources of COVID-19 might workers be exposed, including the general public, customers, co-workers etc.								
e	Take into account worker's individual risk factors (e.g. older workers, presence of underlying medical conditions, etc.)								
f	Include in the plan a response plan to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19.								
g	Include the controls necessary to address the risks identified.								
h	Include contingency measures to address increased rates of worker absenteeism, implementation of the measures necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, changing work patterns, etc.								
i	Develop plans in consultation with workers and communicate once finalised.								

## 2. Communicating change

2	Employers should develop, consult, communicate and implement workplace changes or policies. <b>Employers should:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Review and revise existing sick leave policies and amend as appropriate and in line with normal procedures. In so doing, employers will consult with and communicate to workers, in line with normal procedures, any changes that are introduced to reduce the spread of COVID-19.								
b	Ensure the occupational health service, if provided, is available to address any worker concerns and communicate the messages about good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing. A business's occupational health service should also provide training and advice on the measures recommended to reduce the spread as well as dealing with any anxieties or concerns workers may have about COVID-19.								
c	Make available the necessary public health advice from the HSE and other sources as appropriate to their workers where there is no occupational health service available in a workplace. The lead worker representative(s) appointed (see above) should be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.								
d	Agree through negotiation with workers/Trade Unions any temporary restructuring of work patterns that may be required to implement the COVID-19 prevention measures in the workplace. In so doing, any existing sectoral agreements must be taken into account.								

### 3. Induction training

3	Provide Covid-19 induction training for all workers. <b>Employers should:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	This training should at a minimum include the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health.								
b	What a worker should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.								
c	Details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19.								
d	An outline of the COVID-19 response plan.								
e	Identification of points of contact from the employer and the workers.								
f	Any other sector specific advice that is relevant.								

### 4. Plan for workers with symptoms

4	Develop or amend policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19, as appropriate.	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	<b>Employers should</b> keep a log of contact/group work to facilitate contact tracing.								
b	Inform workers and others of the purpose of the log.								
c	Display information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19.								
d	Provide up to date information on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.								
e	Provide instruction for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work.								
f	<b>Workers will</b> make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.								
g	Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any signs or symptoms.								
h	Report to managers immediately if any symptoms develop during the shift.								

### 5. Suspected case procedure

5	Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace. <b>Employers must:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case in the COVID-19 response plan.								
b	Appoint an appropriate manager(s) for dealing with suspected cases.								
c	Identify a designated isolation area in advance. The designated area and the route to the designated area should be easily accessible and as far as is reasonable and practicable should be accessible by people with disabilities.								
d	Take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID19 and have additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.								
e	Ensure the designated area has the ability to isolate the person behind a closed door. Where a closed door area is not possible, the employer must provide for an area away from other workers.								
f	Provide as is reasonably practicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ventilation, i.e. via a window</li> <li>• Tissues,</li> <li>• Hand sanitiser,</li> <li>• Disinfectant and/or wipes,</li> <li>• PPE</li> <li>• Gloves,</li> <li>• Masks,</li> <li>• Clinical waste bags.</li> </ul>								

5. Suspected case procedure continued

	If a worker displays symptoms of COVID-19 during work, <b>the manager and the response team must</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
g	Isolate the worker and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.								
h	Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. The worker should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.								
i	Assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.								
j	Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The worker should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.								
k	Arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind should not be used.								
l	Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.								
m	Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.								
n	Provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.								

## 6. Return to work questionnaire

6	Before returning to work, the following pre-return to work steps should be put in place and completed by both <b>employers and workers.</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Employers must establish and issue a pre-return to work form for workers to complete at least 3 days in advance of the return to work. This form should seek confirmation that the worker, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirm that the worker is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test.								
b	Include the following questions on the form. If a worker answers Yes to any of them, they are strongly advised to follow the medical advice they receive or seek medical advice before returning to work:								
		Yes	No			Action required			
i	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?								
ii	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?								
iii	Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)?								
iv	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?								
v	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?								

### 7. Return to work- employee checklist

7	Workers must:	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Complete and return the pre-return to work form before they return to work.								
b	Inform their employer if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work.								
c	Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.								
d	Stay out of work until all symptoms have cleared following self-isolation.								
e	Participate in any induction training provided by the employer on their return to the workplace.								
f	Complete any temperature testing as implemented by the employer and in line with Public Health advice.								
g	Complete and return the pre-return to work form before they return to work.								
h	Inform their employer if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work.								

## 8. Risk assessment

8	The employer must:	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Update the occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement.								
b	Address the level(s) of risk associated with various workplaces and work activities in the COVID-19 business plans and OSH risk assessments. For example, where, how and to what sources of COVID-19 might workers be exposed, including the general public, customers, co-workers etc.								
c	Arrange for the putting in place of the necessary controls identified in the risk assessment to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.								
d	Implement temperature testing in line with Public Health advice.								

## 9. Hand hygiene

9a	Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. <b>Employers must:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Ensure that appropriate hygiene facilities are in place to accommodate workers adhering to hand hygiene measures.								
b	Make available advice and training on how to perform hand hygiene effectively ( <a href="https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html">https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html</a> ).								
c	Display posters on how to wash hands in appropriate locations: ( <a href="https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partnerresources/hand-hygiene-poster-english.pdf">https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partnerresources/hand-hygiene-poster-english.pdf</a> ).								
d	Implement temperature testing in line with Public Health advice.								

### 9. Hand hygiene continued

9b	Workers must ensure they are familiar with hand washing guidance. <b>Employees must:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Wash their hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub regularly and in particular:								
b	After coughing and sneezing.								
c	Before and after eating or preparing food.								
d	If in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms.								
e	Before and after being on public transport (if using it),								
f	Before and after being in a crowd								
g	When arriving and leaving the workplace/other sites,								
h	Before having a cigarette or vaping								
i	When hands are dirty								
	<b>Workers must also:</b>								
j	Avoid touching their eyes, mouth, or nose.								
k	Have access to facilities to support hand hygiene (for example hand sanitiser/hand wipes/hand washing facilities).								
l	Not share objects that touch their mouth, e.g. bottles or cups.								
m	Use own pens for signing in.								

### 10. Respiratory hygiene

10	Good respiratory hygiene and etiquette is necessary. <b>Employers must:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	provide tissues as well as bins/bags for their disposal.								
b	empty bins at regular intervals.								
c	provide advice on good respiratory practice.								
d	<b>Workers must</b> adopt good respiratory/ cough etiquette.								
e	Ensure they are familiar with and follow respiratory hygiene guidance.								

## 11. Cleaning

11	Cleaning: Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals. <b>Employers must:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. If disinfection of an area is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.								
b	Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as table-tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned at least twice daily.								
c	Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.								
d	Provide workers with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).								
e	Increase number of waste collection points and ensure these are emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.								
f	Modify use of hot desks to ensure that these are made available to identified staff and have appropriate cleaning materials in place for workers to clean the area before using.								

## 12. PPE

12	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a								
b								
c								
d								
e								
f								
g								

### 13. Physical distancing

13(i)	<b>Employers</b> must provide for physical distancing across all work activities and this may be achieved in a number of ways:	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Implement a no hand shaking policy.								
b	Where office work is essential, free office capacity must be used as much as is reasonably practicable and work organised in such a way that multiple occupancy of office premises is avoided and/or physical distances maintained.								
c	Organise workers into teams who consistently work and take breaks together. The teams should be as small as is reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done.								
d	Organise breaks in such a way as to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing during breaks.								
e	Reorganise and rearrange working and break areas. For example, placing tables and chairs far enough apart in canteens.								
g	Consider closing canteen facilities if public health measures including social distancing cannot be facilitated. If closing, provide information on delivery options.								
h	Stagger canteen use and extend serving times.								
i	Implement a queue management system with correct distance markings to avoid queues at food counters, tray return points and checkouts.								
j	Put in place use of card payment methods where practicable,								
k	Allocate specific times for collections, appointments and deliverables.								
l	conduct meetings as much as possible using online remote means. Where face to face meetings are absolutely necessary, the length of the meeting and the numbers attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times.								

### 13 Physical distancing continued

		Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
m	Provide one-way systems for access/egress routes in the workplace where practicable.								
n	Adapt existing sign-in/sign-out measures and systems, for example, biometrics/turnstiles, to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained.								
o	Prevent gatherings of workers in the workplace at the beginning and end of working hours (such as at time recording terminals and in changing rooms, washrooms and showers).								
p	Implement physical distancing during any outdoor work activity. For outdoor work activities, facilities for frequent hand hygiene should be provided and should be located close to where workers are working.								
13(ii)	<b>In settings where 2 metre worker separation cannot be ensured by organisational means, alternative protective measures should be put in place, for example:</b>								
a	Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards between workers.								
b	Maintain at least a distance of 1 metre or as much distance as is reasonably practicable.								
c	Minimise any direct worker contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids, such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc. that are readily accessible so workers can perform hand hygiene as soon as the work task is complete.								
d	Make face masks available to the worker in line with Public Health advice.								

### 13. Physical distancing continued

13(iii)	<b>At Risk/Vulnerable Workers</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	If an at risk or vulnerable worker cannot work from home and must be in the workplace, employers must make sure that they are preferentially supported to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. However, employers should enable vulnerable workers to work from home where possible.								
13(iv)	<b>Working from home:</b>								
a	Office work should continue to be carried out at home, where practicable and non-essential work. The employer should develop and consult on any working from home policy in conjunction with workers and/or Trade Unions. Advice on working from home on a temporary basis is available from the <a href="#">Health and Safety Authority</a> .								
13(v)	<b>Business Travel and Contractors/Visitors:</b>								
a	Business trips and face-to-face interactions should be reduced to the absolute minimum and, as far as is reasonably practicable, technological alternatives should be made available (e.g., telephone or video conferencing).								
b	For necessary work-related trips, the use of the same vehicles by multiple workers is not encouraged. The number of workers who share a vehicle – simultaneously or consecutively – should be kept to a minimum as far as is reasonably practicable, for example by assigning a vehicle to a fixed team.								
c	Workers should be encouraged to travel alone if using their personal cars for work or at a maximum be accompanied by one passenger who shall be seated in adherence with physical distancing guidance.								
d	Workers should be provided with hand sanitisers and cleaning equipment for their work vehicle.								

### 13 Physical distancing continued

	<b>Business Travel and Contractors/Visitors continued</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
e	Workers, contractors or visitors visiting workplaces where there are restrictions arising from the risk of COVID-19 should follow the site infection prevention and control measures and take into account public health advice around preventing the spread of COVID-19. A system for recording visits to the site(s) by workers/others as well as visits by workers to other workplaces should be put in place by employers and completed by workers as required.								
f	Provide induction training for contractors and visitors to the workplace.								
<b>13(vi)</b>	<b>Customer Facing Roles</b>								
a	Employers must eliminate physical interaction between workers and customers as much as is reasonably practicable through revised working arrangements. For example through provision of online or phone orders, contactless delivery or managed entry.								
b	provide hand sanitisers at entry/exit points.								
c	Install physical barriers and clear markings to ensure that contact between workers and customers is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues do not form between customers as they wait to be served.								
d	Implement a cleaning regime to ensure that contact points for workers and customers are kept visibly cleaned at all times.								
e	Display the advice on the COVID-19 measures in visible locations to ensure that customers are also adhering to what is required.								

### 13 Physical distancing continued

13(vii)	Collective accommodation	Yes	No	N/A	Partially met	Action required	By whom:	By when	Completed
a	Ensure that workers sharing <b>collective accommodation</b> at a place of work are grouped in fixed teams that are as small as is reasonably practicable and consist of individuals who also work together. As far as is reasonably practicable,								
b	Each team should where reasonably practicable be provided with their own communal facilities (washrooms, kitchens and communal rooms) in order to avoid the additional burden of shift-wise use and the necessity to clean between occupancy by different teams. If this is not possible, employers should implement phased use and an enhanced cleaning regime.								
c	Accommodation must be regularly cleaned and ventilated either manually (by opening windows and doors) or mechanically.								
d	Sleeping accommodation should normally be occupied singly.								
e	Additional rooms must be provided for early isolation of infected persons.								