

**BUSINESS RESILIENCE HOW TO GUIDE**

## **COVID-19:**

Safety at work guidelines  
for industrial premises



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## **COVID-19**

# Safety at work guidelines for industrial premises

In May 2020, Government released guidelines for working safely during Covid 19. This applies to factories, warehouses and industrial environments such as manufacturing, food production, distribution centres and port operations.

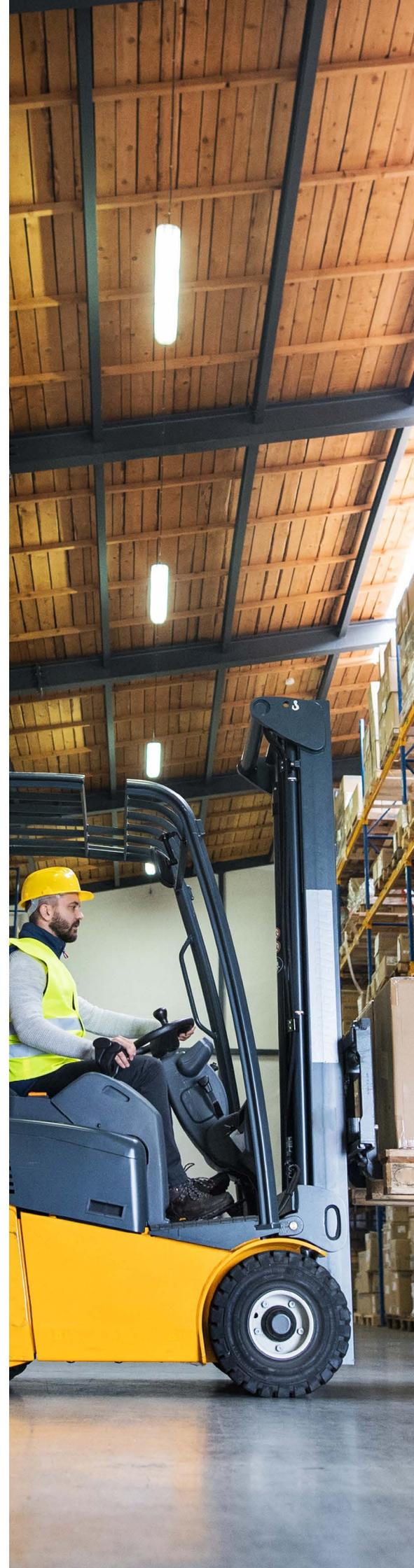
Every business impacted will now need to translate this into the specific actions it needs to take. These will depend on the nature of the business, how it is organised, operated and managed.

### **Start with a risk assessment**

Businesses need to carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, just as they would for other Health and Safety related hazards. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with operational staff. The new guidance states that the results should be shared with the workforce. This is a great way to give all employees the confidence that their employer has created a safe environment for them in which to work.

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“As is normal practice, workers should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.”



## Safe workplace objectives

Businesses must consider both the objectives laid out in government guidance, alongside their own company risk assessments, to comply with the COVID-19 safe working requirements.

### These are the stated objectives within the government guidance:

#### Risk assessments

- ✓ All employers should carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment.
- ✓ Reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

#### Who should come to the workplace

- ✓ Everyone should work from home, unless they cannot carry out their work from home.
- ✓ Protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.
- ✓ Make sure individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not physically come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms.
- ✓ Treat everyone in your workplace equally.

#### Social distancing

- ✓ Maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work, and when travelling between sites.
- ✓ Maintain social distancing wherever possible, while people move through the workplace.
- ✓ Maintain social distancing between individuals when they are at their workstations.
- ✓ Reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings.
- ✓ Maintain social distancing while using common areas.

#### Maintaining safety standards

- ✓ Prioritise safety during incidents.
- ✓ Minimise the number of unnecessary visitors to factories, plants, and warehouses.
- ✓ Make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety.
- ✓ Make sure that any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart.
- ✓ Keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces
- ✓ Help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day.
- ✓ Minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers.
- ✓ Reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace and vehicles at the worksite.
- ✓ Change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each worker has.
- ✓ Help workers delivering to other sites, such as factories, logistics sites or customers' premises, to maintain social distancing and hygiene practices.
- ✓ Make sure all workers are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated.
- ✓ Maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site, especially in high volume situations. For example, distribution centres or despatch areas.



## **PPE and face coverings**

The messaging around face masks has been mixed and quite confusing as the scientific evidence has been inconclusive. Some clarity has now been provided in this new guidance - the need for face masks must be driven by the outcome of the risk assessment which each company undertakes.

Here is an exact extract from *Working Safely During Coronavirus*, the government's official guidance, issued on 11th May 2020.

“There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others.”

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“If your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly.”

**Top tips:**

- ✓ Involve your staff and seek their input. Form a cross functional COVID-19 team responsible for implementing changes, reviewing, updating and applying procedures.
- ✓ Carry out a risk assessment for each operation and adapt working practices, as necessary.
- ✓ Create a dedicated COVID-19 notice board with a nominated employee responsible for updating and disseminating information.
- ✓ Request each employee to consider opportunities to limit social interaction whilst travelling to work.
- ✓ Install signs across the site reiterating the hand washing and social distancing protocols.
- ✓ Reduce touch points, keep internal doors open where possible (excluding fire doors).
- ✓ Update cleaning routines, supply antibacterial wipes for start/stop buttons, forklifts or similar, clean steering wheels, keyboards, and phones, ensuring soap dispensers are topped up.
- ✓ Establish maximum safe capacity of each room and post this outside each room.
- ✓ Create one-way walking routes and tape on floors to designate two metre gaps in appropriate areas.
- ✓ Introduce split shifts where possible to allow fewer people in the workspace and enable easier social distancing. Also look at staggered tea breaks.

**Contact us**

If you would like further information or guidance around this subject, please email: [enquiries@locateinkent.com](mailto:enquiries@locateinkent.com)

**Further reading****Full government guidance:**

[www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

**Government guidance for industrial premises:**

[www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/factories-plants-and-warehouses](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/factories-plants-and-warehouses)

**Health and Safety Executive:**

[www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm)