

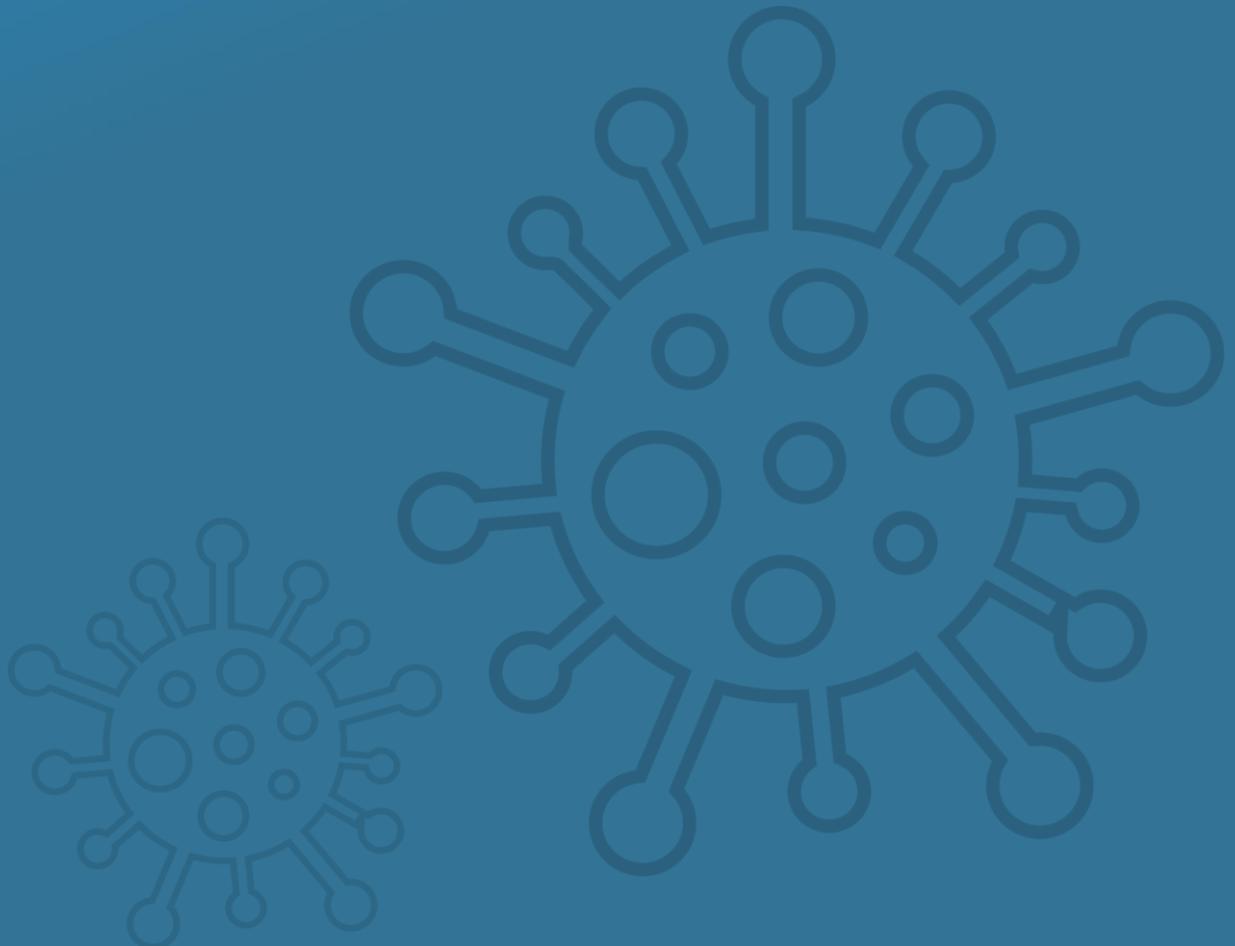


Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

CHECKLIST:

National Return to Work Safely Protocol





The Return to Work Safely Protocol was introduced on 9 May 2020 as a result of the collaborative effort by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health Services Executive (HSE), the Department of Health and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

The aim of the protocol is 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 back up, following the temporary closure of most businesses during the worst phase of the current pandemic. It sets out in very clear terms for employers and workers the steps that they must take before a workplace reopens, and as it continues to operate. Below is a summary of the document.

This breakdown is not intended as a substitute to the full protocol document and you should ensure that you revert to the full document when implementing the subscribed measures in your organisation where they are detailed in full.

Note

- The **"By whom?"** is to indicate who is responsible from among the management team for overseeing completion of tasks
- The **"By when?"** column allows the business establish its timeframe for completion, to ensure all elements are in place to facilitate a safe return to work.

Requirements	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Each workplace will appoint at least one lead worker representative charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their place of work.			
The person(s) undertaking the role must receive the necessary training and have a structured framework to follow within the Organisation to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus.			
Employers will have regular and meaningful engagement with their worker representative, workers and/or their recognised Trade Union or other representatives (including their Health and Safety Committee where this exists) about the measures being put in place to address the occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.			



Requirements (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers and worker representatives will work together to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.			
Employers will also communicate with their own safety representatives selected or appointed under the Occupational Health and Safety legislation and consult with employees on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace.			
The employer should use the appointed occupational safety and health officer or an external competent person to ensure the effective implementation of changes to work activities and the implementation of infection prevention and control measures in the workplace at the place of work.			
Develop and/or Update the COVID-19 Response Plan	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
In advance of returning to work, employers will develop and/or update a business COVID-19 Response Plan.			
In advance of returning to work, employers will update their occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement.			
In advance of returning to work, employers will address the level(s) of risk associated with various workplaces and work activities in their 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.			
In advance of returning to work, employers will take into account worker's individual risk factors (e.g. older workers, presence of underlying medical conditions, etc.).			



Develop and/or Update the COVID-19 Response Plan (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
In advance of returning to work, employers will include a response plan to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 as part of their COVID-19 Policy update and Response Plan.			
In advance of returning to work, employers will include the controls necessary to address the risks identified.			
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.			
Develop plans in consultation with workers and communicate once finalised.			
Develop or amend policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19, as appropriate	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers will maintain an up to date a contact log of all workers and worker groups (including supplier deliveries) to facilitate HSE led contact tracing, in accordance with GDPR.			
Employers will inform workers and others of the purpose of the log.			
Employers will display information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 .			
Employers will provide up to date information on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.			
Employers will provide instruction for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work.			



Develop, Consult, Communicate and Implement Workplace Changes or Policies (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>Employers should review and revise existing sick leave policies and amend as appropriate and in line with normal procedures.</p> <p>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.</p>			
<p>Employers will ensure their 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.</p>			
<p>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.</p>			
<p>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.</p> <p>The lead worker representative(s) appointed (see above) should be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.</p>			
<p>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 considered.</p>			



Implementing the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures to Minimise Risk to Workers	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers must establish and issue a pre-return to work form for employees to complete at least 3 days in advance of the return to work. This form should seek confirmation that each employee, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirm that the employee is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test.			
Employers must provide an induction training for all employees. This training should at a minimum include the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health: what an employee should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19; details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19; an outline of the COVID-19 response plan; identification of points of contact from the employer and the employees; and any other sector specific advice that is relevant.			
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.			
Implement temperature testing in line with Public Health advice.			
Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers must include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case in the COVID-19 response plan.			
Employers must appoint an appropriate manager(s) for dealing with suspected cases .			



Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers must identify a designated isolation area for suspected cases 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.			
Employers must take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID-19 and have additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.			
Employers must 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 employees and cutomers			
Employers must provide, as is reasonably practicable, ventilation, i.e. via a window in the isolation area.			
Employers must provide, as is reasonably practicable, tissues, hand sanitizer, disinfectant and/or wipes.			
Employers must provide, as is reasonably practicable, PPE; gloves, masks.			
Employers must provide, as is reasonably practicable, clinical waste bags.			



Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>If a worker displays symptoms of COVID-19 during work, the manager and the response team must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolate the employee 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 them.• Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. The employee should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.• Assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.• Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The employee 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 a waste bag to be provided.• Arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind should not be used.• Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.• Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.• Provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.			



Hand Hygiene	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers must ensure that appropriate hygiene facilities are in place to accommodate employees adhering to hand hygiene measures.			
Employers must make available advice and training on how to perform hand hygiene effectively.			
Employers must make display posters on how to wash hands in all appropriate locations.			
Respiratory Hygiene	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers must provide tissues as well as bins/bags for their disposal.			
Employers must empty bins at regular intervals , preferably using bin liners with tie handles to safeguard against contamination with contents when emptying.			
Employers must provide advice on good respiratory practice.			
Physical Distancing	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers must provide for physical distancing across all work activities and this may be achieved in a number of ways, including implementing a no hand shaking policy.			
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 distance maintained.			
Businesses should organise employees into teams who consistently work and take breaks together. The teams should be as small as reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done.			
Employers must organise breaks in such a way as to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing during breaks.			



Physical Distancing (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Reorganise and rearrange working and break areas. For example, placing tables and chairs far enough apart in canteens.			
Consider closing canteen facilities if public health measures including social distancing cannot be facilitated. If closing, provide information on delivery options.			
Stagger canteen use and extend serving times.			
Implement a queue management system with correct physical distance markings to avoid queues at food counters, tray return points and checkouts.			
Put in place use of card payment methods where practicable.			
Allocate specific times for collections, appointments and deliverables.			
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.			
Provide one-way systems for access/egress routes in the workplace where practicable.			
Adapt existing sign-in/sign-out measures and systems, for example, biometrics/turnstiles, to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained.			
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).			



Physical Distancing (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>Ensure that employees sharing collective accommodation 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.</p> <p>As far as is reasonably practicable,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Accommodation must be regularly cleaned and ventilated either manually (by opening windows and doors) or mechanically. • Sleeping accommodation should normally be occupied singly. • Additional rooms must be provided for early isolation of infected persons. 			
<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 employees are working.</p>			
<p>Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards between workers.</p>			
<p>Maintain at least a distance of 1 metre or as much distance as is reasonably practicable.</p>			
<p>In settings where 2 metre worker separation cannot be ensured by Organisational means, alternative protective measures should be put in place, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise any direct employee contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids, such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc. that are readily accessible so employee can perform hand hygiene as soon as the work task is complete, • Make face masks available to the employee in line with Public Health advice. 			



At Risk/Vulnerable Workers	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>If an at risk or vulnerable employee 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 meters.</p> <p>However, employers should enable vulnerable workers to work from home where possible.</p>			
Working from Home	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>The employer should develop and consult on any working from home policy in conjunction with workers and/or Trade Unions.</p>			
Business Travel and Contractors/Visitors	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>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).</p>			
<p>For necessary work-related trips, the use of the same vehicles by multiple employees is not encouraged. The number of employees who share a vehicle – simultaneously or consecutively – should be kept to a minimum as far as is as reasonably practicable, for example by assigning a vehicle to a fixed team.</p>			
<p>Employees 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 where possible.</p>			
<p>Employees should be provided with hand sanitisers and cleaning equipment for their work vehicle.</p>			



Business Travel and Contractors/Visitors (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>Employees, 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.</p> <p>A system for recording visits to the site(s) by employees/others as well as visits by employees to other workplaces should be put in place by employers and completed by workers as required.</p>			
<p>Employers must provide induction training for contractors to the workplace.</p>			
Cleaning	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>Employers must implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.</p>			
<p>If disinfection of an area is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.</p>			
<p>Employers must 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.</p>			
<p>Employers must implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces.</p>			
<p>Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.</p>			
<p>Employers must provide employees with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).</p>			
<p>Employees must increase number of waste collection points and ensure these are emptied regularly throughout & at the end of each day.</p>			



Cleaning (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers must 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 and after using.			
Use of PPE – Personal Protective Equipment	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
PPE must be selected and provided based on the hazard to the employee.			
Employers must provide PPE and protective clothing to workers in accordance with identified COVID-19 exposure risks and in line with Public Health Advice.			
Employees should be trained in the proper use, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE.			
For particular PPE, such as respirators, these must be properly fitted and periodically refitted, as appropriate.			
PPE needs to be consistently and properly worn when required. In addition, it must be regularly inspected, cleaned, maintained and replaced as necessary.			
Customer Facing Roles	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Eliminate physical interaction between employees 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.			
Provide hand sanitisers at entry/exit points.			
Install physical barriers and clear markings to ensure that contact between employee and customers is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues do not form between customers as they wait to be served.			



Customer Facing Roles (cont.)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Implement a cleaning regime to ensure that contact points for employees and customers are kept visibly cleaned at all times.			
Display the advice on the COVID-19 measures in visible locations to ensure that customers are also adhering to what is required.			
Occupational Health and Safety Measures and Recommendations	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
<p>The employer is required to review and update their occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement in order to take account of any work changes which may arise following implementation.</p>			
As employers implement the above measures in the workplace to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for employees, specific occupational health and safety measures may also need to be considered and implemented.			
Where a risk of exposure to COVID-19 is identified in the COVID-19 Response plan (see section above), an occupational health and safety risk assessment should also be completed.			
All of the public health and occupational health and safety measures should be developed in consultation with employees and/or Trade Union and ultimately communicated to employees and others at the workplace.			
<p>Employers should also communicate with safety representatives selected or appointed under the Occupational Health and Safety legislation and consult with employees on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace.</p> <p>The employer should use the appointed occupational safety and health officer or an external competent person to ensure the effective implementation of changes to work activities and the implementation of infection prevention and control measures in the workplace at the place of work.</p>			



First Aid	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
In the event that first aid is required in the workplace it may not be possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres. Employees with a specific role in acting as first responders should be provided with updated training on infection prevention and control principles.			
Mental Health and Wellbeing	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
Employers should provide employee with information on publicly available sources of support, advice and information about the prevention and control measures taken in the workplace to reduce the risk of infection.			
Employers should ensure employees are made aware of and have access to any business provided Employee Assistance Programmes or Occupational Health service.			
Heating, Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC)	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
For organisations without air conditioning adequate ventilation is encouraged, for example, by opening windows where feasible etc.			
Legionella	By whom?	By when?	Completed (✓/X)
The employer needs to put in place control measures to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease before they reopen.			