



GUIDANCE SHEET:

Facilities Managers

Campaign TO DELAY & CONTAIN Coronavirus:

Hygiene in the Workplace:

The World Health Organisation in its document “**Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19**” (version 1.4) states:

Make sure your workplaces are clean and hygienic

Surfaces (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly

Why? *Because contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads*

- As Facilities Managers we should make an assessment as to what constitutes “surfaces” and “objects” in terms of our own business. For example, in an office block this might mean:
- **Surfaces:** Desks, Chairs, Meeting Room Tables, Canteen Tables & Tables, Hot Desks, etc
- **Objects:** Telephones, Keyboards, Photocopiers, Printers, Door Finger Plates,
- In an alternative environment these lists may be more extensive. Define the list for your business based on areas of “high activity/usage”
- Meet with your Cleaner / Cleaning Contractor (if you haven't already done so and agree any modifications to your cleaning scheduled of common areas e.g. Toilets Facilities, Lifts, Canteen, Reception areas etc.

Promotion of Respiratory Hygiene:

- Display posters prominently, promoting respiratory hygiene. Posters are available from WHO website: www.WHO.INT
- Combine this with other communication measures e.g. offering guidance from occupational health and safety officers, briefings at meetings, up to date information on the intranet etc.
- Ensure paper tissues are available at our workplace, for those who develop a runny nose or cough at work, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of them.

Promotion of Hand Hygiene for employees/visitors/guests/customer and contractors

- Display posters prominently, promoting regular hand washing. Posters are available from WHO website: www.WHO.int and www.HSE.ie.
- Combine this with other communication measures e.g. offering guidance from occupational health and safety officers, briefings at meetings, up to date information on the intranet etc.
- Put sanitizing hand rub dispensers in prominent places around the workplace, make sure these dispensers are regularly filled.

- Make sure employees, visitors / guests / customers and contractors have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water
 - Ensure that soap dispensers / hand dryers are working properly at all times and provide alternative solutions if any issues arise.
 - Ensure there are sufficient supplies of soap and towelling at all times and provide alternative solutions if any issues arise.
- *Respiratory Hygiene*
 - *Maintaining Social Distancing (1 meter from persons who are coughing and sneezing)*
 - Ensure employees remain in contact and know what to do and who to contact if they feel ill when travelling
 - Advise employees that they must comply with instructions from local authorities on matters of travel, movement and larger gatherings when travelling.

Matters of consideration, before, during and returning from travel to locations reporting COVID-19

Before Travel:

- Keep up to date with the latest information on areas where COVID-19 is spreading. Information is available from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>
- Assessment should be carried out on the benefits and risks of travel in relation to the latest information
- Where possible, employees are higher risk of serious illness should not travel to areas where COVID-19 is spreading (e.g. older employees or employees with an ongoing medical condition such as heart disease, diabetes, etc.
- Make sure all persons travelling to locations reporting COVID-19 have been briefed by a qualified professional such as a health care provider.
- Consider issuing employees who are about to travel on business with small bottles (under 100 CL) of alcohol – based hand rub. This can facilitate regular hand – washing.
- Provide employees with contact details and instructions from your travel insurance provider.

While Travelling:

- Employees should be advised to continue the practices of:
 - *Effective Hand Hygiene*

Returning from Travel:

The World Health Organisation makes the following recommendations to those returning from their travels:

- Employees who have returned from an area where COVID-19 is spreading should monitor themselves for symptoms (*cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, fever*) and take their temperature twice daily.
- If they develop even a mild cough or low-grade fever (*see note below*) they should stay at home and self – isolate. (*see SCSI Coronavirus Guidance Sheet for further details*)
- The HSE Guidance states; **do not go to your GP or ED. Phone them first. If you do not have a GP, phone 112 or 999.** Tell them about your symptoms. Give them the details about your situation. Avoid contact with other people by [self-isolating](#).

Self-Isolating:

The HSE defines Self-Isolation as follows:

Self-isolation means staying indoors and avoiding contact with other people.

You should self-isolate if you think you may have coronavirus while you are waiting to talk to a doctor. This will help to prevent the spread of Coronavirus to others:

The NHS website provides further details on Self-isolating as follows:

To Self – isolate:**DO's:**

- ✓ Notify your employer
- ✓ Stay at home
- ✓ Separate yourself from others – eg try not to be in the same room as others at the same time
- ✓ Only allow people who live with you to stay
- ✓ Stay in a well-ventilated room with a window that can be opened
- ✓ Ask friends, family members or delivery services to carry out errands for you e.g. shopping, school runs
- ✓ Clean toilets and bathrooms regularly – use separate bathroom if available
- ✓ Use separate towels and wash thoroughly
- ✓ Wash crockery and cutlery with soap and water or in the dishwasher if available
- ✓ Avoid contact with pets if possible.
- ✓ Continue Hand Hygiene, Respiratory Hygiene practices

DON'T's:

- ✗ Do not invite visitors to your home or allow visitors to enter
- ✗ Do not go to work, school or public areas
- ✗ Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other times with other people in your home
- ✗ Do not use public transport or taxis

In an effort to contain the spread of the virus it is also important to keep away from older people, those with long-term medical conditions or pregnant women.

Source: WWW.NHS.UK

Self – Isolation in shared accommodation

(e.g. apartment, student accommodation)

Follow the “Do’s” and “Don’t” above as far as possible. Where space is more limited:

- *Stay in your room with the door close, only using communal kitchens, bathrooms and living areas when necessary*
- *Avoid using a shared kitchen while others are using it*
- *Take your meals back to your room to eat*
- *Use a dishwasher (if possible) to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery; if this is not possible, wash them by hand using detergent and warm water and dry them thoroughly, using a separate paper towel*

Staff Concerns regarding Self-isolation:

It is important to note that staff may have concerns regarding self-isolation and it is

important to provide clear communication at that time. Questions that might arise include:

- Will I get paid during self-isolation
- Does self-isolation require a sick cert?
- Does self-isolation effect my annual leave or sick leave status?

Staff may also suffer some from stress/loneliness during self-isolation so it is important to be able to support your staff and to be in position to provide guidance. The WHO has provided a leaflet on this issue:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_2

Getting your business ready in case Coronavirus arrives in your community.

The WHO recommends the development of a **Plan of Action** in the event that someone becomes ill with suspected COVID-19 at one of your workplaces. This plan should include:

- Putting the ill person in a room or area where they are isolated from others in the workplace
- Limit the number of people who have contact with the sick person
- Contact the local health authorities:
- Consider how to identify persons at risk and support them in a discreet and effective manner.
- Contact your local Public Health Authority (HSE) for guidance and support in developing your plan.
- Promote regular communication across your organisation.
- If there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community, follow the guidance from your local health authority (HSE).

The WHO also recommends the development of a contingency and **Business Continuity Plan** in the case of an outbreak or the loss of key personnel due to illness as follows:

- The plan will help prepare your organization for the possibility of an outbreak of COVID19 in its workplaces or community. It may also be valid for other health emergencies 27 February 2020, Version 1.4
- The plan should address how to keep your business running even if a significant number of employees, contractors and suppliers cannot come to your place of business - either due to local restrictions on travel or because they are ill.
- Communicate to your employees and contractors about the plan and make sure they are aware of what they need to do – or not do – under the plan.

- Emphasize key points such as the importance of staying away from work even if they have only mild symptoms or have had to take simple medications (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen) which may mask the symptoms
- Be sure your plan addresses the mental health and social consequences of a case of COVID-19 in the workplace or in the community and offer information and support.
- For small and medium-sized businesses without in-house staff health and welfare support, develop partnerships and plans with your local health and social service providers in advance of any emergency.
- Your local or national public health authority may be able to offer support and guidance in developing your plan.

Remember: Now is the time to prepare for COVID-19. Simple precautions and planning can make a big difference. Action now will help protect your employees and your business. How to stay informed: Find the latest information from WHO on where COVID-19 is spreading: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

Insurance: another key element in your preparation work is to understand what your Business Interruption Insurance Policy covers. This information is document in the PID (Product Information Document) a copy of which should be available from your insurance broker. It would also be useful to check the PID of your Travel Insurance Policy.

Finally, keep abreast of information through the HSE Website (www.hse.ie) and WHO Website (www.who.int). Always follow Public Health guidance as provided through the Chief Medical Officer and HSE. Do not rely on social media as a source of trustworthy information.

Material Available from WHO to help Communicate Awareness:

www.who.int



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 **World Health Organization**

Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak

 It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis. Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.

If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends. 

 Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency. 

 Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.

Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak. 

 **World Health Organization**

Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak

 Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc. Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention. Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them. 

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.

 Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing. 

 Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age. This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

The Business Continuity Institute (www.bci.org) provides the following information that may also be useful:

Pandemic Resilience – A Continuity Perspective

Amid escalating headlines about the Coronavirus Outbreak, business continuity and resilience professionals are focused on pandemic impacts and response, while fielding many questions by colleagues about their organisation's preparedness to deal with uncertain events.

Pandemics by their nature have the capacity for society-wide disruption, therefore the response to these events is necessarily led by Governments and their agencies. Countries working with the World Health Organization

(WHO) can implement internationally co-ordinated pandemic policies and response strategies. These are usually focused on the first line of defence at the borders.

Given the Coronavirus Outbreak has a significant head start, the priority is to delay the progress of pandemic infection through individual case identification, treatment and isolation. If the pandemic escalates, governmental plans allow for more direct action often involving travel restrictions and forms of social distancing focused on places of mass gathering - such

as education providers, cinemas, markets and sports events. For example, February is the start of the new year at Australian Schools and Universities and the NSW Department of Education has asked families who have been in China in the last two weeks to keep their children at home.

Governments can also ask organizations to play their part in the pandemic response, especially when it comes to communicating and implementing good practice advice around hygiene protocols, use of personal protective equipment and behavioural changes (e.g. not shaking hands in meetings).

Within organizations, the Leadership Team supported by their Business Continuity Manager and other resilience professionals, can use a range of proactive strategies to support an effective pandemic response and limit the impact of an outbreak.

Actions requiring attention include:

1. Ensure management and team leaders are clear about the organization's priority activities, people, skills and minimum staffing arrangements (information which should be available in the BIA or BCP).
2. Prepare for expected employee absences e.g. knowing which employees are trained and can provide back-up for others who become ill (especially those with prioritised roles).
3. Modify policies to give greater flexibility to normal working arrangements, such as:
 - *provide (or expand) opportunities to work from home (taking into account network connectivity, security and bandwidth/performance requirements)*
 - *greater use of telephone or video conferences rather than face-to-face meetings reduce the number of people in the workplace at any one time through flexible working hours or rosters*
 - *provision for employees with children or unwell adults at home, or for employees who are reluctant to use public transport to get to work*
 - *reduce activities involving large groups of people (e.g. all-staff meetings, employee birthdays or other social events).*

Such policies should consider administrative, legislative

(OH&S) and workplace relations requirements and procedures as well as psychological safety and morale.

4. Establish welfare policies for employees seem to display relevant symptoms, have been caring for someone with the virus, or who have returned from travel in or through a known infection zone. Such policies might include:
 - *protocols for those whose health is 'in-question' who want to come to work.*
 - ***return to work protocols for those who have had the virus and have recovered.***
 - ***presenteeism – how to deal with employees who should be at home but insist on coming to work***
 - ***protocols for visitors and suppliers (e.g. the contractor who refills the water cooler, or cleaners who are present out of hours).***
 - ***the means of monitoring / enforcing these practices within the workplace.***
5. Reinforce internal peer support or other welfare mechanisms (counselling) to assist employees with health concerns.
6. Implement a clear, continuing communications strategy across the organization so that all relevant stakeholders (not just employees) are aware of pandemic policies and action plans. Use FAQs to streamline the feedback process.
7. Ensure the workplace has adequate supplies of cleaning and hygiene products in accessible and visible locations (keeping the workplace hygienic is a collective responsibility).
8. Confirm employees, customers and suppliers are aware of the organization's pandemic continuity strategy, and alternate working arrangements, and they understand how they may be affected and involved.
9. Assign someone in, or close to, the Leadership Team to monitor official information sources, advice and assistance from government, health and other relevant agencies.
10. Avoid the use of social media as a source of trustworthy information (unless from official or trusted parties) and reinforce this advice with employees.