

COVID-19 | Health & Safety FAQ

England and Wales

Contents

General Questions	Page 2
Social Distancing Questions	Page 5
Vulnerable and Extremely Vulnerable Persons Questions	Page 6
Building and Contractors Questions	Page 7
PPE/Facemasks, Hygiene and Handwashing Questions	Page 9
Homeworking and Display Screen Equipment Questions	Page 13

Questions	Advice
General	
What is the difference between COVID-19 and coronavirus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A virus is an infectious agent that can only replicate within a host organism. ● Coronaviruses exist in animals and have recently made the jump to humans. ● COVID-19 (<u>c</u>orona<u>v</u>irus <u>d</u>isease <u>2019</u>) is a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus.
What is COVID-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● COVID-19 is a disease believed to spread largely through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing, and it seems to spread easily. It may also be possible to become infected by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching one's nose or mouth. It is recommended that employees should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stay home if they have respiratory symptoms (coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath) and/or a temperature above 100.4 F. ○ Leave work if they develop these symptoms while at the workplace. ○ Shield coughs and sneezes with a tissue, elbow, or shoulder (not bare hands). ○ Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
Can my business stay open?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please refer to the 'Can my business stay open?' guidance on our Coronavirus Advice Hub to check whether you can remain open. If in doubt, contact your Health & Safety Consultant for advice or, if you are not yet an Ellis Whittam client, call 0345 226 8393 to enquire about our support.
What provisions should I make available to my employees to reduce the risk of infection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As handwashing is one of the most effective defences, employers must make sure that employees have ready access to washing facilities and that these facilities are kept well stocked with soap and (ideally) paper towels. There is some evidence that paper towel drying reduces the risk of spreading viruses compared to jet dryers. ● Alcohol-based hand sanitisers and sanitising wipes should be distributed throughout the workplace. ● All frequently-touched surfaces, such as workstations, countertops and doorknobs, should be routinely disinfected.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased cleaning of common areas using standard cleaning agents can also reduce the risk of spreading this respiratory disease. ● Adhere to social distancing of two metres around employees and other people. ● Review the latest guidance on the government’s Public Health England website.
<p>What are my duties under health and safety law for COVID-19?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, employers have a duty to do everything that is “reasonably practicable” to safeguard their employees and those affected by their operations. A failure to do so may result in criminal liability. ● Furthermore, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require you to compile a suitable and sufficient risk assessment covering risks to employees who are at work, as well as risks to non-employees arising from your operations, and to make and give effect to appropriate arrangements for planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review. ● If you employ five or more staff, these arrangements must be recorded in writing. ● COVID-19 is a hazard that employees may be exposed to during their work activities, hence it is something that must be assessed, and reasonably practicable control measures must be introduced. The starting point is to conduct a risk assessment. ● Our Coronavirus Advice Hub contains a number of template risk assessments, which can be adapted to your own environment and practices.
<p>What should I do if a member of staff tests positive for COVID-19?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please refer to the Emergency Action Plan available on our Coronavirus Advice Hub, which can be downloaded and adopted. This can also be amended in line with your specific business activities.
<p>If someone contracts COVID-19 in the workplace, do I need to report this under RIDDOR?</p>	<p>You are only required to make a report under RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) in relation to COVID-19 when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An unintended incident at work has led to someone’s possible or actual exposure to COVID-19. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence. ● A worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as a case of disease. ● A worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to COVID-19.

	<p>If this occurs, we strongly recommend contacting us to discuss. Further information can be found on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website.</p>
When should we exclude workers from the workspace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees should stay home, or go home, if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and should self-isolate for seven days.
Are our employees adequately trained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees should have ready access to appropriate information (such as on infection control and company policies and risk assessments) and should know who to contact within the organisation to report exposures. Managers have a key role to play in implementing and maintaining your arrangements.
Should we revise our policies around international and domestic business travel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to GOV.UK for up-to-date travel advice.
How should we be communicating with employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is imperative for organisations to be able to reach all workers, including those not at the worksite, with regular, internally-coordinated, factual updates about infection control and symptoms, as well as company policy regarding remote working and circumstances in which employees might be excluded from or allowed to return to the workplace. • These communications should be carefully coordinated to avoid inconsistent policies being communicated by different managers or functions. Clearly this requires organisations to maintain current phone/text and email contact information for all employees and test organisation-wide communication periodically.
Do we need to update our current Health & Safety Policy to include COVID-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recommend at this stage adopting our Coronavirus Policy, which is available on our Coronavirus Advice Hub. • Your policy will be reviewed in the coming year and further changes will be made depending on the current circumstances.

Do I need to complete a risk assessment if my business is still open?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, you should assess your workplace using the templates available on our Coronavirus Advice Hub.
Is there any other health and safety documentation I need to complete while my business remains open?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recommend having the following documentation in place as a minimum (these can all be downloaded from our Coronavirus Advice Hub and made company specific): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emergency Action Plan – to outline what to do in the event of someone showing symptoms. ○ Daily Monitoring Checklist – to detail what checks you are completing on a daily basis to ensure employees and others within the business are kept safe. ○ Daily Cleaning Checklist – to ensure that all hand-contact points and surfaces are disinfected on a regular basis to stop the spread of infection. ○ Contractor Checklists – to check contractors prior to their arrival and ensure control measures are in place for any activity they need to complete.
Social Distancing	
Why is social distancing so important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping a distance of two metres is important to ensure you do not come into contact with an air droplet containing COVID-19.
We are a pharmacy and are not able to implement a two-metre distancing rule. What should we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacies must follow their own specific guidance on social distancing and PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic, which can be found on the Public Health England website.
We have members of staff car sharing who cannot maintain a two-metre distance. What should they do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific guidance can be found on the Public Health England website.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves.

<p>A member of staff has worked with others who have recently been confirmed as having COVID-19. Should they be sent home?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. • You should clean and disinfect any surfaces that the unwell person has had significant contact with, such as worktops that they may have sneezed on or areas of floor where they have vomited. • Closing the premises to do a “deep clean” should not be necessary if your employees are following the recommended handwashing and hygiene precautions.
<p>Can we deliver leaflets to households within the town on how to get information/support during COVID-19?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing you have adapted the COVID-19 Risk Assessment template on our Coronavirus Advice Hub and ensure good hygiene and social distancing then yes, you can.
<p>Is social distancing required for outdoor work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, social distancing methods should always be in place in any setting.
<p>Should we continue to cut grass due to public areas being accessed for exercising?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you can demonstrate that you have sufficient social distancing measures in place and you are confident that you are not at risk, then you can continue to maintain open spaces.
<p>How does a hair salon maintain social distancing measures but re-open for business?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 23 March, the government stepped up measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Hair salons were on the list of specific businesses that had to close until further notice.
<p>Vulnerable and Extremely Vulnerable Persons</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable persons are those who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. These individuals must be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. Guidance on vulnerable groups can be found on the GOV.UK website.

<p>What is a vulnerable person and how does this differ from an extremely vulnerable person?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extremely vulnerable persons are those, including children, who are at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to an underlying health condition. ● This term is intended for use in situations where the extremely vulnerable person is living in their own home, with or without additional support. This includes the extremely clinically vulnerable people living in long-term care facilities, either for the elderly or persons with special needs. ● Shielding is a measure to protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable by minimising all interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others. Further guidance is available on the GOV.UK website. ● If in doubt, a medical professional should be contacted to provide clarification.
<p>Can we allow/require pregnant staff to come in to work? How do we risk assess them if we do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pregnant staff are classed as Vulnerable workers and more likely to be at risk of contracting COVID-19 ● They can still work however are strongly recommended to work from home wherever possible ● If they need to enter the workplace then strict social distancing methods need to be followed and hygiene precautions as well as other control measures ● A Vulnerable Person risk assessment can be found on the COVID-19 hub which can be used to assess the situation and ensure adequate control measures
<p>Can/should we block staff from vulnerable categories (over-70, pregnant, post-chemotherapy, etc.) or staff who have been instructed to self-isolate from coming in to work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vulnerable persons should work from home; however, they can enter the workplace if there is control measures implemented to reduce their likelihood of contracting the virus. ● Extremely vulnerable persons should be shielded, i.e. stay at home and not enter a workplace. ● Extremely vulnerable persons can and should only work from home. They must not enter the workplace until further notice.
<p>Buildings and Contractors</p>	
<p>Should statutory inspections (e.g. LOLER, machinery, LEV, etc.) continue during the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes, these should continue. The legislation regulating these has not been suspended.

<p>Can we prevent insurance inspectors from inspecting equipment using COVID-19 social distancing as a reason for non-inspection?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. You will need to ensure social distancing is maintained and that good hygiene practices are adhered to by insurance inspectors and staff; however, you should not use COVID-19 as a reason to stop engineers from visiting.
<p>How can I easily keep track of what is due and when so that I know what equipment is in date for maintenance and thorough examination?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would recommend that you use our Health & Safety Software and in particular the Audit, Registry and Monitoring apps to allow for forward planning and ensure items are in date.
<p>If I am struggling to get my usual maintenance/insurance inspection companies to visit site, can I keep using my equipment as I am unable to obtain these services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, you must make reasonable attempts to source engineers from other providers. You should document what steps you have taken in order to demonstrate to enforcement authorities that you have made reasonable attempts.
<p>What constitutes reasonable attempts? Can I try one other service provider?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, you must make as many reasonable attempts as is reasonably practicable. If you have exhausted all of your avenues, then you are more likely to be in a favourable position than trying one other alternative provider.
<p>What should I do if I cannot arrange a thorough examination?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should take advice from your competent person/inspection body and take a risk-based approach in order to decide whether you can safely use the equipment. If you cannot, you must take it out of operation. If you have decided that you can safely use the equipment – based on a suitable and sufficient risk assessment (with any additional measures required to reduce the risk) and advice obtained – then you must ensure that you document the steps that have been taken as evidence for enforcing authorities.

<p>If I have equipment that is directly used or in use in a domestic setting where vulnerable groups are shielding, do I still need to access for thorough examinations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The HSE has recognised that there may be cases in domestic settings where you cannot undertake a thorough examination and you should schedule these visits once any isolation measures have been lifted.
<p>All fire doors are being propped open with fire extinguishers and door wedges to avoid hand contact with doors and handles. Should insurers be made aware of this / could the insurance be deemed invalid?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fire doors and other doors should not be propped open. Regular disinfection and handwashing will be enough in most circumstances to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in these areas.
<p>Subcontractors have always supplied their own tools/PPE/RPE and van. During these unusual times, would this still be the case if we sent them to a contract? Would we have to supply wipes/gel, etc. or not? These items are so hard to get hold of immediately and this may cause issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subcontractors should provide their own equipment.
<p>Will we be vulnerable to prosecution if a statutory check is not completed due to contractors who are no longer doing site visits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You should do everything that is practicable to ensure a contractor visits. ● Equipment that is not safe should not be used.

PPE/Facemasks, Hygiene and Handwashing	
Do employees need to wear a face mask to work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current advice from the government is that facemasks do not need to be worn in non-clinical settings. • Ensure staff adhere to social distancing guidelines and follow good hygiene practices, i.e. washing your hands and sneezing into a tissue.
Why do I see medical professionals wearing face visors and face masks on the news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mask is there to stop them breathing in the virus. • In medical settings, the virus is known to enter via the nose and eyes, therefore face visors are worn. • Disposable clothing is worn to stop the virus being spread via their clothes.
What is the difference between an FFP3, FFP2 and fluid-resistant (type IIR) surgical mask?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFP stands for Filtering Face Piece. • The 2 and 3 are short for class 2 and 3. • FFP3 respirators filter at least 99% of airborne particles. • FFP2 respirators filter at least 94% of airborne particles and offer protection against COVID-19. • Fluid-resistant (type IIR) surgical masks (FRSM) provide barrier protection against respiratory droplets reaching the mucosa of the mouth and nose.
When are FFP3 and FFP2 masks to be worn?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFP3 and FFP2 masks are to be used when completing Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP). Guidance on this can be found on the GOV.UK website.
Do FFP2 and FFP3 masks need to be face fitted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, FFP2 and FFP3 will need to be fitted in line with the manufacturer's instructions to ensure they have a tight fitting around the user's nose and mouth.
Do fluid-resistant (type IIR) surgical masks (FRSM) need to be face fitted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, these masks do not need to be face fitted.

<p>Why recommend fluid-resistant (type IIR) surgical masks (FRSM) when FFP2 and FFP3 masks are safer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence that respirators add value over FRSMs for droplet protection when both are used with recommended wider PPE measures in clinical care, except in the context of AGPs.
<p>How do I know what PPE to use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabulated guidance can be found on the GOV.UK website.
<p>Could I potentially give COVID-19 to farm animals / dogs or should I just keep washing hands regularly and maintain good hygiene?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good personal hygiene should always be followed when handling any animal. • Do not touch your face without washing your hands first in any scenario, including touching animals.
<p>Should I be using hand-held thermal scanners to test employees?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations can check temperatures using hand-held thermal scanners and consider excluding staff or visitors with temperatures over 100.4 F. However, temperature is not an exceptionally accurate way to assess risk as it is possible that some will be contagious but have no fever. Others will have higher temperatures not related to this virus. Thus, an elevated temperature in combination with respiratory symptoms is the best indicator of possible infection.
<p>Do staff in customer-facing roles need to wear a face mask or just ensure two-metre distancing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will depend on the workplace. • Currently, the advice for non-healthcare settings is that facemasks are not needed. • A distance of two metres should be in place, and a signing or log in book should be managed to ensure this is in place at all times. Floor markings could help visitors and others to follow this.
<p>Do we have to provide masks for our employees?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will depend on the workplace. • Currently, the advice for non-healthcare settings is that facemasks are not needed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, handwashing should occur after opening a package from outside the workplace.

<p>I have received a parcel in the post. Do I need to wash my hands after opening the package in case it is contaminated?</p>	
<p>When buying food from the shop, do I need to wash wrappers/clean fruit, etc. before putting it away, then clean the work surface?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific guidance on shopping can be found on the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health website.
<p>What about keyboards for shared computers? Should we be buying covers for each person to use/take with them or just have antibacterial wipes at each station?</p> <p>What about toilets? Do we need to use disposable plastic covers on the locks, etc.?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are quite a few options you can use. You could ensure persons clean their hands with hand sanitiser before using shared computers, or persons can use their own plastic covers or antibacterial wipes for each station after use – either would suffice. • For toilets, just ensure people wash their hands after using the toilet and that toilets are regularly cleaned.
<p>Should all people wash their hands on arrival? If so, should we have a basin full of soapy water and get them to immerse for 30 seconds, or is the antibacterial rinse/hand sanitiser sufficient?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% alcohol or more based hand sanitisers are sufficient but please encourage regular handwashing where possible.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current guidance does not state that this is required, but parents should ensure their child is fit and healthy for school before they attend.

Should all pupils have their temperatures checked?	
Should our cleaners wear overalls which are washed on site, or is that unnecessary because the care/teaching staff be wearing their normal clothes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is unnecessary; however, it is to be ensured that when they are cleaning, staff do not touch their face.
Should staff bring in their own mugs, or anything else? Or should we just get the mugs put through the dishwasher each evening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can bring in their own mugs as long as they are not carriers of COVID- 19. If there is a suspected case within their household, they are to stay home and not to come into the premises. • If you choose to use mugs provided by yourselves, then yes, these would need to go through the dishwasher each evening. Clean hands after handling mugs.
Should all staff wash their hands on arrival, or is the antibacterial rinse/hand sanitiser sufficient? If okay to use an antibacterial rinse/hand sanitiser? Is there a specific one that is best, or ones to avoid?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff can use the antibacterial rinse / hand sanitiser – this is to be alcohol-based and must contain at least 60% alcohol. But please encourage frequent handwashing within the premises for a minimum of 20 seconds.
Can we use wipes instead of spray disinfectant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with the manufacturer of the wipes to ensure they remove COVID-19 from a surface.
Homeworking and Display Screen Equipment	

Do temporary homeworkers need to complete a display screen equipment (DSE) assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Officially no, they don't have to complete a full DSE assessment as you would for those working from home on a permanent basis or those working in the office. We would, however, recommend undertaking our Homeworking Risk Assessment found on our Coronavirus Advice Hub, which includes a short section on DSE, to ensure homeworkers are safe and comfortable.
How do we ensure the safety of those working from home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Our advice is that you undertake a general risk assessment for homeworkers as this will help to identify and address any hazards and provide cover for your organisation. Again, a template can be found on our Coronavirus Advice Hub.