



	<h1>Guideline Document</h1>		
Ref: GD:015:01	Guidance on Staff travel during COVID 19 Outbreak - Things to consider when you and your employees are to engage in travel		
Issue date:	May 2020	Revised Date:	September 2020
Author(s):	National Health and Safety Function		
Consultation With:			
Responsibility for Implementation:	All HSE Managers and Employees		
Note:	<p>The Government has announced a number of measures to protect citizens by delaying the spread of COVID 19. One of this measures is to stay at home with some exceptions which are outlined see: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cf9b0d-new-public-health-measures-effective-now-to-prevent-further-spread-o/</p> <p>There are exceptions for workers in key/ essential businesses. The HSE is regarded as an essential service and in order to comply with this the HSE has issued the following circular to all its employees "HR Circular 019/2020 Essential Service Under New Public Health Guidelines" https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-019-2020-essential-service-under-new-public-health-guidelines-covid-191.pdf</p> <p>Travelling for work may present certain challenges, however there are steps which can be taken to minimise risk of exposure to COVID 19.</p> <p><i>The information provided is for general guidance only, should you require more specific advice please contact the Health & Safety Help Desk. The management of any occupational safety and health issue(s) remains the responsibility of local management</i></p>		

¹<https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Vehicles at Work/Driving for Work/>

²<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

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1.0 Introduction

It is the policy of the HSE to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with exposure to COVID-19 and acknowledges that some employees may potentially be exposed through their work activities i.e. travel for work to COVID-19 and is committed to eliminating or reducing the risk of exposure. HSE employees for the purposes of this guidance can also be referred to as Health care workers.

As outlined by the Health and Safety Authority driving for work¹ includes any person who drives on a road as part of their work either in:

- A vehicle provided by their employer or
- Their own vehicle and receives an allowance or payment from their employer for distances driven.

Commuting to work is not generally classified as driving for work, except where the person's journey starts from their home and they are travelling to a work location that is not their normal place of work.

2.0 Purpose

This guideline has been developed to help guide managers and employees in relation to travel for work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.0 Scope

This guidance applies to managers and employees in the HSE who may be required by their job to travel within Ireland (domestic travel) by:

- Public Transport
- HSE Vehicles - shared
- Private/ Own staff vehicle

4.0 Before travelling – General Recommendations

- If you develop a cough, shortness of breath or a fever (as outlined on HSE.ie website) you should stay at home and follow the guidelines for self-isolation. You should contact your Line Manager, local Occupational Health Department/ GP or the COVID-19 Staff help line on 1850 420 420 for assessment for testing and contact tracing.
- Be aware of the need to update yourself with the latest information regarding COVID-19 before travelling which can be found at:
<https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/news/coronavirus-news/>

¹https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Vehicles_at_Work/Driving_for_Work/

²<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

- Based on the latest information, assess the benefits and risks related to travelling, and establish if the meeting /task can be undertaken remotely using technology.
- Employees within the ‘at risk groups’ should they contract the virus should not travel when COVID-19 is spreading (e.g. employees 60 years of age, those who have a long term medical condition – for e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer or high blood pressure or who have a weak immune system).
- In line with HPSC guidance, wearing a surgical mask is required in travel situations for work purposes where it is difficult to practice social distancing (for journeys of any duration where service users are transported and trips in excess of 15-minutes duration where vehicle occupants are all staff¹ – see HPSC guidance for latest recommendations around PPE). This will help prevent people who do not know they have the virus, from spreading it to others. Wearing a face mask does not negate the need to adhere to other important and required measures such as :
 - washing your hands properly and often,
 - covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze,
 - not touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean and
 - physical/ social distancing (keeping at least 2m/ 6.5 ft away from other people)²
- Hand hygiene practices should be observed before travelling (by washing your hands with soap and water or by using an alcohol based sanitiser), and also upon donning and doffing masks. Issuing employees who will be travelling with alcohol-based hand sanitizer is advisable.
- Engage in journey pre-planning. Avoid unnecessary social contact and practice social distancing. Consider factors such as the route taken, the transport required, parking etc.
- It will be necessary to take your HSE staff identification badge / work identification, another form of identification and also a letter identifying you as a HSE essential Healthcare worker in line with HR Circular 019/2020. In the case of student passengers on clinical placement equivalent identification must be carried.
- Guidance provided within this document may be impacted by the Government’s: “Plan for Living With COVID-19” and the level at which a given area has been categorised. If an area is categorised as Level 3 or higher, this may impact more significantly on travel within (and to and from) that area. Check the Government’s website at: www.gov.ie for the latest position/information.

¹ Or, a student on clinical placement

¹https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Vehicles_at_Work/Driving_for_Work/

²<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

5.0 Travelling

5.1 Public transport

- If using public transport, engage in regular hand hygiene practice i.e. use of alcohol based-hand sanitiser and maintain the recommended social distance (2m/ 6.5 ft) away from passengers.
- A surgical face mask is mandatory. Carry unused masks in a sealable clean and waterproof bag (e.g. ziplock bag) and carry a second similar bag to facilitate the storage until disposal of used masks.

Note: Masks should not be disposed of in public places. Where you have access to healthcare risk waste stream discard mask in this stream. Where this is not the case, retain used masks for a period of 72-hours in a secured plastic bag from the time of use, place this bag inside another plastic bag (double bag) and dispose of as household waste. For more information on disposal and when to change masks see <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/useofsurgicalmasksinhealthcaresetting/>

- Be conscious of body positioning on public transport. Where possible use seats facing the same direction. If standing, position yourself if possible such that you can maintain the recommended distance away for a passenger(s) and such that you are not directly facing a passenger in the event that they sneeze or cough.
- Where possible avoid using your hands to open/close doors, e.g. use elbows, shoulders. Where surfaces, handles, buttons have to be used ensure that you carry out hand hygiene afterwards (by using an alcohol based sanitiser or hand washing with soap).
- Carry out hand hygiene upon reaching your destination.

5.2 HSE Vehicles

Travel separately where possible (second staff member to follow in another HSE or private vehicle).

The following measures should be taken given the confined nature of vehicles:

- Ensure there is a risk assessment for each journey type. Risk assess all potential opportunities for contact with staff/ passengers (e.g. assisting service users in and out of the vehicle)/ other person(s).
- Advise those requiring collection and/or any of their house-hold members that should they display potential symptoms of COVID-19 they must self-isolate, contact their GP and advise their service contact accordingly such that collection is postponed (if the person is a Health Care Worker – refer to the first Bullet point under ‘Before Travelling’ section above).

- There may be instances where it may be necessary to implement a method of verifying that the person(s) requiring collection from private residence and their household members are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19 by remote checking e.g. by telephoning or using other similar device, prior to collection.
- Minimise the number of passengers so far as is practicable, and
- Passengers should be seated as far apart as possible to maintain social distancing (2m / 6.5ft at least).
- Where a vehicle travel requires to be shared, ensure as much ventilation is created as possible within the vehicle – open windows to allow fresh air to enter the vehicle. The recirculation setting within the vehicle for ventilation should not be used.
- Follow HPSC guidelines on PPE and infection prevent and control guidelines where there is HCW contact with person is possible either within or outside of the vehicle. Ensure that you:
 - Conform with hand hygiene practices (in line with my 5 moments for hand hygiene or alcohol based sanitiser as appropriate) and respiratory etiquette
 - Driver and passenger(s) (i.e. all occupants) to wear a surgical face mask
 - An assessment of other PPE requirements for the driver and HCW is also required in line with:
 - https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/Interim%20Guidance%20for%20use%20of%20PPE%20%20COVID%2019%20v1.0%2017_03_20.pdf

Note: Treat this situation as if one or more of the vehicle occupants is a suspected case

- If there is a passenger bulkhead/physical separation of driver compartment within the vehicle, the driver may not need a surgical mask unless he/ she comes within 2m of a colleague (for 15 minutes or more) or patient/service user (regardless of his/ her COVID 19 status) inside or outside the vehicle.
- Driver to consider keeping a private and confidential passenger manifest for use if contact tracing subsequently becomes necessary. All passengers (and/ or family member) to be made aware that such a list is being kept and the purpose for which the data will be used if required.
- Keep journeys as short as possible (i.e. minimise contact time).
- Information cards indicating good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and any other necessary precautions can be displayed within vehicles.
- Carry out hand hygiene before and after operating vehicles. It is recommended that disinfectant/detergent impregnated wipes/ cleaning products and tissues should be kept available within your vehicle to clean the surfaces which are most frequently contacted at the start and end of the journey e.g. external door handles, internal door handles, key(s)/fob(s) , steering wheel, dashboard (including driver switches), inside door buttons/key

pads/latches (to include window switches/ latches), indicator, light switches, seat belt and buckles, gear stick, hand brake, fuel filler cap and release button, touchscreens/ buttons (including radio and ventilation controls), mobile phone and handset, internal mirror, handrails, chairs and arm rests, controls for lift etc. The type of cleaning method chosen must take into consideration the type of surface being cleaned. Soap and water can be used on materials whose integrity may be affected by disinfectant.

NOTE: The vehicle will require to be cleaned between uses where it is used to transport people from different service area.

- Recording of the scheduled cleaning for transport vehicles is advisable.
- Keep any waste in a suitable lidded receptacle and remove from vehicle at the end of each journey.

5.3 Private transport

- If using your own transport employees should travel separately where possible.
- Where it is necessary for a staff member and a student (on clinical or other placement requiring to shadow a staff member as part of his/ her training) to travel together:
 - A risk assessment should be carried out to assess all potential opportunities for contact
 - The staff member should check that the passenger (student) is symptom free prior to each occasion of travel
 - Those intending on travelling together (as above) must ensure that should they display potential symptoms of COVID-19 they must self-isolate, contact their GP and advise their line manager/ course supervisor, or tutor and the person who they had intended to travel with
 - The staff member (i.e. driver) and student (i.e. passenger) should be seated as far apart as possible to maintain a maximum separation distance, i.e. Student (passenger) taking a seat at the furthest point in the car from the staff member (driver) (i.e. in the rear of the car at the opposite side to the driver)
 - The driver must ensure as much ventilation is created as possible within the vehicle – open windows to allow fresh air to enter the vehicle. The recirculation setting within the vehicle for ventilation should not be used.
 - Those travelling together must conform with hand hygiene practices (in line with “my 5 moments for hand hygiene” with alcohol based hand sanitiser as appropriate) and respiratory etiquette
 - Driver and passenger (i.e. all occupants) to wear a surgical face mask whilst travelling together.
- The Staff member (i.e. driver) to keep a contact log for all student (i.e. passengers) transported (for use if contact tracing). Students will require to be made aware that such a list is being kept and the purpose for which the data will be used if required.

- It would also be recommended that the person responsible for clinical placements advise the academic institution/supervisor that the student (i.e. passenger) will require to have written approval to travel from the relevant academic institution/supervisor and to carry the appropriate forms of ID (as they would if they were a direct HSE employee).
- Persons responsible for student clinical placements should also ensure that risk assessments and details of suggested control measures are exchanged with the relevant academic institutions/supervisors.
- Ensure that your vehicle is road worthy and that you have sufficient fuel to bring you to and from your destination to avoid unnecessary stops.
- Carry out hand hygiene before and after operating your vehicle.
- It is recommended that disinfectant/detergent impregnated wipes/ products and tissues are kept available within your vehicle to clean the surfaces which are most frequently contacted at the start and end of your journey e.g. external door handles, internal door handles key(s)/fob(s), steering wheel, dashboard (including driver switches), inside door buttons/ key pads/latches (to include window switches/ latches), indicators, seat belt and buckles, gear stick, hand brake, fuel filler cap and release button and touchscreens/ buttons (including radio and ventilation controls), mobile phone and handset, internal mirror etc. The type of cleaning method chosen must take into consideration the type of surface being cleaned. Soap and water can be used on materials whose integrity may be affected by disinfectant.
- Keep any waste in a suitable lidded receptacle and remove from vehicle at the end of each journey.
- If the driver requires to refuel their vehicle, contactless service stations should be used where possible. Gloves should be used when handling the fuel pump and hand hygiene should also be performed when finished/ after disposal of the used gloves.
- If driver or a passenger (as above) requires to use public facilities e.g. toilets at a service station, ensure hand hygiene is performed after the use of such facilities and following any site specific instructions.

6.0 Supporting Information

For further health and safety advice or support during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact the HSE health and safety helpdesk by visiting www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing or alternatively phone 1850 420420.

7.0 References

World Health Organisation (2020) Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19 World Health Organisation

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Vehicles_at_Work/Driving_for_Work/

¹https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Vehicles_at_Work/Driving_for_Work/

²<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

[rte.ie/news/politics/20](https://www.rte.ie/news/politics/20)

<https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/campaigns/clean-hands/5moments/en/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/news/title-19806-en.html>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-019-2020-essential-service-under-new-public-health-guidelines-covid-191.html>

https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/Interim%20Guidance%20for%20use%20of%20PPE%20%20COVID%2019%20v1.0%2017_03_20.pdf

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/useofsurgicalmasksinhealthcaresetting/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/healthandsocialcareworkers/Guidance-HealthSocialCareWorkersWhoVisitHomes.pdf>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/useofsurgicalmasksinhealthcaresetting/>

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