



# Occupational Safety & Health Newsletter



NHSF, Workplace Health & Wellbeing Unit, HR, Issue 19

## Dedicated Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Helpline

A dedicated Healthcare worker COVID-19 helpline is operational to help assist staff and managers with information and advice relating to occupational health and safety issues during COVID-19. A healthcare worker is any staff member working in a healthcare setting and can comprise of staff of the HSE, Section 38's, Private Healthcare facilities/Nursing Home, Section 39's, Dental, Pharmacies, and GP's.

This helpdesk covers Occupational Health, Health & Safety and Employee Assistant Programme queries.



Call save 1850 420 420

Opening Hours: Mon-Friday:

9am - 6pm, Sat/Sun: 10am - 4pm

## The NHSF — are still available to provide help and support

The NHSF have highly committed and dedicated health and safety advisors available to support managers and employees in managing health and safety to include:

- Guidance on Safety Statements and Risk Assessments e.g. Safety Statements for test centres/clinical hubs, Biological Agents Risk Assessment
- Developing guidance/policies and supporting documentation regarding their implementation
- Information and advice regarding OSH training

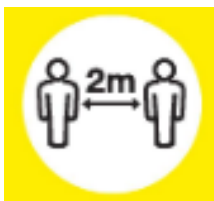
To log your health & safety request at: <http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing> or go to: [H&S Self Service Helpdesk](#)

All H&S queries can still be directed to **1850 420 420** which is also currently the dedicated COVID-19 Healthcare worker helpline.

## COVID-19 Guidelines and Resources

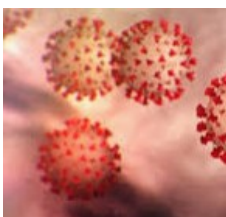
The outbreak of COVID-19 has evolved rapidly. Exposure to COVID-19 may present a health risk particularly to healthcare workers and others within healthcare settings. Employers are advised to follow the latest advice and identify and implement suitable control measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace. A number of guidance documents have been developed to assist managers and employees comply with national guidance.

### Social Distancing at work



Social distancing aims, through a variety of means, to decrease or interrupt the spread of COVID-19, by minimising contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals. Social distancing means maintaining a 2 metre (6 feet) space between you and other people. A list of prompts to be considered as part of the risk assessment process for all workplaces has been developed to assist managers to ensure compliance - [COVID-19 Social Distancing Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet](#)

### Biological Agents



#### Review your existing Biological Agents Risk Assessment.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus responsible for the disease COVID-19 belongs to the Coronaviridae family. SARS-CoV-2 is being classified as a risk group 3 biological agent in alignment with other EU member states.

Guidance documents to assist you with risk assessment has been developed to include prompts for both;

- HSE Acute [Healthcare Settings \(excluding Laboratories\)](#) and
- Guidance for the review of [Laboratory biological agents risk assessments](#).

### OSH TRAINING PROVISION DURING COVID -19



The provision of OSH Training is based on risk assessment however the following guidance has been developed for some training

#### Manual Handling and People Handling Training:

Manual Handling and People Handling training is a statutory requirement. The Health and Safety Authority has confirmed that there are no exemptions with respect to this training. The NHSF have developed extensive guidance on the safe provision of this training which you can download [here](#).

#### First Aid Certification:

The Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) has confirmed that first aiders can continue to administer first aid in the workplace even if their certification has lapsed for the period of the COVID –19 pandemic only.

#### Medical Gas Training:

The updated integral valve cylinder guide is now available on HSELand.

### Working from Home During COVID-19



During this phase of COVID-19 many employees have been asked to work from home on a temporary basis. Guidance documents have been developed to support managers and employees to work safely from home and comply with their legal obligations in relation to working from home.

These documents include:

- [Working from home during COVID-19 – Workstation Setup Guideline](#)
- [Health and Safety Guideline to home working during COVID-19](#)
- [Home Working Risk Assessment Form](#)

Working from home tips to protect your health and wellbeing can also be accessed from <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/news/coronavirus/working-from-home/working-from-home-tips-to-protect-your-health-and-wellbeing.html>

### Workstation Hygiene



Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. COVID-19 can be transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Therefore cleaning of surfaces such as desks, tables or telephones is essential in the prevention of COVID-19.

The following guidance have been developed to support hygiene techniques at workstations.

- [Health and Safety COVID-19 instructions on how to clean PC and desks](#)
- [Health and Safety COVID-19 Workstation Hygiene/Ergonomics](#)

## HBS PPE Procurement COVID-19

A single point of contact for supply and replenishment of critical PPE stocks to support the HSE through COVID-19 is available and all stock related queries should be channelled through this Customer Service Team

- Once you contact HBS Procurement COVID-19 Customer Service you will be required to complete a standard [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) request form](#)

HBS Procurement COVID-19 Customer Service are there to:

- Provide guidance to support prioritisation of the use of PPE available here
- Ensure your enquiry will then be routed through the appropriate channels
- A team member will respond directly to you



**Contact Number: 021 465 9770**

**Email Address: [covid19.procurement@hse.ie](mailto:covid19.procurement@hse.ie)**

For further information on PPE, please see the [Current recommendations for the use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) in the management of suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)

### Staff Travel during COVID-19

Guidance is available for staff who need to travel using public transport shared HSE vehicles or your own vehicle. This guidance outlines steps to be followed:

- before travelling
- using public transport
- using HSE vehicles
- using private vehicles
- keeping vehicle virus free.



For further information please click [here](#).

### Managing fatigue during COVID-19

If you're feeling fatigued at work, you should raise any concerns you have with your line manager. Information on how to manage and deal with fatigue is available [here](#).

This webpage covers causes and symptoms of fatigue, driving when fatigued and also information on how line managers can support staff.

### Reporting of COVID-19

#### Reporting COVID-19 on NIMS

Data on positive or suspected Covid-19 cases is collected nationally by the relevant public

health authorities. In order to improve the level of reporting and the quality of the data gathered on the NIMS system, it is currently being updated and we will inform you of this update as appropriate.



#### Reporting COVID-19 to the HSA

There is no requirement on employers to notify the Health and Safety Authority if an employee contracts COVID-19. Diseases are

not reportable under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 2016.

