



# Occupational Safety & Health Newsletter



NHSF, Workplace Health & Wellbeing Unit, HR, Issue 20

## Managing Employees Return to Work Safely

In line with the release of the Government’s Return to Work Safely Protocol, the National Health and Safety Function have developed a process to assist managers and employees in implementing these requirements to services provided by the HSE. Managers are required to undertake a comprehensive review of current arrangements and systems to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

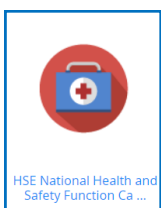
**Elements of this protocol will be applicable to all HSE workplaces and services and not just those returning to work.**

There are a number of steps in preparing for employees returning to work. Consultation and communication with staff essential at every stage. These include:

- Appoint and train a COVID-19 Lead Worker Representative and COVID-19 Response Manager
- Update existing safety statements
- Review existing risk assessments and identify new risks
- Develop a COVID -19 site Response Plan
- Employees complete a pre-return to work questionnaire
- Organise COVID-19 induction training for staff

To support managers a **webinar**, titled **COVID-19 Returning to Work Safely Webinar—Module 2** is available on [hseland](https://hseland.hse.ie). This webinar is mandatory for managers and will take approximately 40 mins and reviews the following:

- Key roles and responsibilities
- Necessary steps in planning and implementing a return to the workplace including an overview of the response plan and
- Features of the work environment and work activities which may be affected including building safety and contract management.



To access the webinar go to [hseland](https://hseland.hse.ie), click on Course Catalogue section and select the National Health and Safety Function catalogue, as per image.

A dedicated **webpage** has also been created that steps out this process for you so that you can implement it in your workplace and for the safety of your colleagues.

You will find all the associated **guidelines, templates and forms** to assist at <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/coronavirus/safety-in-the-workplace/managing-employees-return-to-work-safely1.html>

 Health Service Executive  
[HSE.ie](https://hseland.hse.ie) > [Staff](#)

## Managing employees return to work safely - working arrangements for COVID-19

[Feedback](#)



### COVID-19 Lead Worker Representative

The Lead Worker Representative (LWR) will help put in place measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The LWR can either be a member of staff or management. They must have clear governance structures to escalate issues to local senior management.

#### Role of the Lead Worker Representative

- Undertake the required training which will be available on [hseland](#)
- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- To assist in monitoring adherence, carry out inspections at a frequency and type agreed with the COVID-19 Response Manager
- Assist in keeping fellow employees up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice and promote good hygiene practices, good respiratory etiquette and social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- Escalate areas of non-conformity to the COVID-19 Response Manager
- Consult with fellow employees, raise their concerns and provide timely feedback
- Share relevant information with the Safety Representative (s)

### COVID-19 Response Manager

The COVID-19 Response Manager role is a key support to the Lead Worker Representative. They will provide governance around implementing COVID-19 requirements and provide an escalation pathway where non-compliance is identified.

#### Role of the COVID-19 Response Manager

- Undertake the required training which will be available on [hseland](#)
- Oversee compliance with the requirements of the Return to Work Safely Protocol
- Ensure areas of non-compliance are escalated to an agreed Senior Manager
- Ensure an employee contact log is maintained
- Ensure emergency plans and first aid procedures are reviewed and updated for COVID-19
- Appoint a Lead Worker Representative(s) (LWR) for each site (*number(s) to be proportionate to the workplace*)
- Provide the LWR(s) with information and training in relation to their role
- Ensure LWR(s) receives induction prior to their return to the workplace
- Consult with the LWR(s) and Safety Representative(s) on the implementation of control measures
- Agree a means of regular communication with the LWR(s)
- Agree with the LWR(s) the type and frequency of COVID-19 inspections.

**Training:** The NHSF are currently developing a training programme for Lead Worker Representative and COVID-19 Response Managers. Notification will be issued via Broadcast.

### COVID – 19 Response Plan

To reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, each site/service is required to develop a COVID-19 Response Plan. Your response plan will provide specific details of the necessary arrangements to prevent/reduce COVID-19 for your service/site that can be applied to every day operations. e.g. service delivery changes, physical changes to the working environment, changes to work practices etc.

The COVID-19 Response Plan can be cross-referenced with your Section 4 Hazard Control Service Arrangements of your Site /Service Safety Statement. The COVID-19 Response Plan template is available [online](#) to support HSE Site/Service Managers to developing the COVID-19 Response Plan.

Should you require any additional information or support, your health and safety queries can still be directed to **1850 420 420** which is currently the dedicated Healthcare Worker COVID-19 helpline.

## Update Safety Statements

Every work place and service must have a safety statement. Managers are responsible for ensuring it is completed and communicated. Your safety statement sets out the arrangements in place to safeguard the safety, health and welfare of staff, service users and visitors and must be updated to include safety requirements for COVID-19.

Review your existing hazard control service arrangements for COVID-19 and plan for any new hazard controls service arrangements. For further guidance, click on <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/coronavirus/safety-in-the-workplace/>

## Update Risk Assessments

Review your risk assessments to ensure that the risks associated with COVID-19 are reduced. You can use your risk assessment to help you keep a record of:

- who might be harmed and how
- what you're already doing to control the risks
- what further action you need to take to control the risks
- who needs to carry out the action
- when the action is needed by.

More guidance and Risk Assessment Templates are available at [www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing](http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing). Below is an example for an office area.

HSE Risk Assessment Form					
Division: HSE HR			Source of Risk: RA		
HG/CHO/NAS/Function: NHSF			Primary Impact Category: Harm to Person		
Hospital Site/Service: I&A Team			Risk Type: Operational		
Dept/Service Site: Admin Office			Name of Risk Owner (BLOCKS): Manager		
Date of Assessment: 30/06/2020			Signature of Risk Owner:		
Unique ID No: 003			Risk Co-Ordinator: N/A		
			*Risk Assessor (s): Employee		
**HAZARD & RISK DESCRIPTION	EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES		ADDITIONAL CONTROLS REQUIRED	ACTION OWNER (i.e. the Person responsible for the action)	DUE DATE
COVID-19 - Risk of contracting the infection if 2M social distancing is not maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff maintaining daily contact log</li> <li>All staff adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette</li> <li>Access to office, restricted to rostered staff only.</li> <li>Staff to continue working from home, where feasible</li> <li>Appropriate distancing between desks</li> <li>Appropriate hand washing facilities available including adequate supplies of hand washing materials e.g. liquid soap, alcohol hand sanitizer</li> <li>COVID-19 signage prominently displayed throughout facility including floor markings to demonstrate minimum distancing between staff</li> <li>Meetings facilitated via teleconference or online platforms</li> <li>Access to communal areas (meeting rooms) are restricted</li> <li>Extra cleaning schedule in place for contact points (door handles, handrails etc.)</li> <li>Staff clean their desk area and equipment at beginning and end of each shift</li> <li>Staff aware of procedure should someone feel unwell with COVID symptoms while at work</li> <li>Staggered breaks to allow for social distancing in canteen</li> <li>All unnecessary items have been removed from the work area to include: spare /extra chairs, storage boxes or any items which could contribute to the risk of contamination</li> <li>Staff advised to bring minimal personal belongings into workplace</li> <li>Staff advised not to share work equipment e.g. headsets, pens etc.</li> <li>Adequate supply of natural / mechanical ventilation in office</li> <li>Adequate supply of waste bins, which are emptied, cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all staff have completed the Return to Work Induction Webinar on hseland</li> <li>Ensure all staff have been made aware of local arrangements</li> <li>Staff to complete Pre-return to work questionnaire (where required)</li> </ul>	Manager/Employees	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2020
INITIAL RISK			Risk Status		
Likelihood	Impact	Initial Risk Rating	Open	Monitor	Closed
3	3	9	X		

## COVID-19 Contact Log

A Contact log is required for recording any instances of close contacts. The COVID-19 contact log provides a template to support managers and can be included in the COVID-19 Response Plan.

Managers and employees should keep a contact log to record any instances of close contacts. The log should be completed daily by staff. This information will assist with contact tracing. This information should be stored securely and be readily available, as appropriate.

You can record information for the contact log using:

- sign-in sheets
- clocking-in systems
- visitor log books
- delivery personnel details
- third party service provider visitor information

National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, National IIR Division

**Checklist/Form**

Ref: CF-05600 COVID-19 Contact Log

Issue date: June 2020 Revised Date:

Author(s): National Health & Safety Function (NHSF)

Note: In the HSE, managers and employees should keep a contact log to record any instances of direct contact, which should be completed daily. This information will assist with contact tracing. This information should be stored securely and readily available, as appropriate.

Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Normal Work Area/ Department	Any Visited Area/ Department/ Service User or Contact	Time Visited

A [COVID-19 Contact Log](https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/coronavirus/safety-in-the-workplace/managing-employees-return-to-work-safely1.html) template can be downloaded from <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/coronavirus/safety-in-the-workplace/managing-employees-return-to-work-safely1.html>

## COVID-19 Return to Work Induction Webinar

**ALL** employees must receive COVID-19 induction training identifying the measures which must be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This course is mandatory for all employees.

A training programme has been developed by the National Health and Safety Function, titled **COVID-19 Return to Work Induction Webinar** is available on [hseland](#).

This **30 minute programme** provides information on

- roles and responsibilities set out in the protocol and adopted in the HSE
- public health advice on preventing the spread of COVID-19 including signs and symptoms and routes of transmission
- aspects of the workplace and our work activities which may be affected
- the requirement for a plan to manage suspected cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and
- additional resources available to support your safe return and mental health and wellbeing.



After completion of this programme, employees must be informed of the arrangements locally to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## MEDICAL GAS MODULES ON HSELAND

Three BOC e-learning courses have been recently added to [hseland](#):

[Medical Gas Safety Core Training](#)

[Medical Gas Safety for Clinical Staff \(e.g. Nurses\)](#)

[Medical Gas Safety for Non-Clinical Staff \(e.g. Porters, Maintenance, Pharmacy\)](#)

**Medical Gas Safety**  
  
 A Member of The Linde Group