

# COVID-19 Workplace Checklist

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# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The following has been compiled by the Greater London Authority (GLA) as a guide for employers operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is based on safe guidelines published by government and as well as legal obligations for employers. The Checklist uses government guidelines for the following sectors:

- Close contact services
- Construction and other outdoor work
- Factories, plants and warehouses
- Heritage locations
- Hotels and other guest accommodation
- Labs and research facilities
- Offices and contact centres
- Other people's homes
- Performing arts
- Providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities
- Restaurants, pubs, bars, and takeaway services
- Shops and branches
- Vehicles
- The visitor economy

This document is designed as a self-assessment questionnaire; with the questions written as conditions which need to be met to fulfil government guidance. The checklist also contains recommendations for supporting employee wellbeing according to best practice.

# COVID-19 WORKPLACE CHECKLIST

## Key

- Mandatory requirement (i.e. a condition which must be met to fulfil Checklist)
- A measure that should be considered and implemented where appropriate

## 1. Risk management

### 1.1. Risk assessment and mitigation

- A full COVID-19 risk assessment has been conducted across all areas of the workplace<sup>1</sup> in consultation with employees, for example health and safety representatives and trade unions
- The COVID-19 risk assessment includes consideration of higher risk groups, such as older males and those with a high body mass index, which are listed in the Public Health England (PHE) report '[Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19](#)' (Public Health England, 2020)
- The organisation follows government guidance on who should self-isolate laid-out in: '[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' (HM Government, 2020)
- Regular feedback is gathered from workers about the risks of infection in the workplace and actions are taken to mitigate high risk procedures when and where these are identified

### 1.2. Taking part in NHS Test and Trace

- The organisation takes part in NHS Test and Trace and encourages all employees to download and use the NHS COVID-19 app.
- Where necessary, visitors are asked to check-in using the NHS COVID-19 app, otherwise contact details are recorded according to government requirements laid out in '[NHS Test and Trace in the workplace](#)' (HM Government, Dec 2020)
- A temporary record is kept of all staff shift patterns for 21 days and the organisation has plans to assist NHS Test and Trace if they request the data

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<sup>1</sup> Your risk assessment should include non-production areas where communal gatherings more likely, such as canteens, staff rooms, corridors, exit/entry area, etc.

### 1.3. Managing outbreaks

- The organisation's risk assessment includes an up-to-date plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak, which includes nominating a single point of contact (SPOC), where possible, who leads on contacting local Public Health teams
- The organisation adheres to guidance on managing COVID-19 outbreaks as laid out in: '[Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres](#)' (HM Government, 2020; page 35)

## 2. Communication and support

### 2.1. Talking to staff

- The results of the organisation's risk assessments are communicated to the entire workforce, including the display of a notification in a prominent place in your business (see an example in Appendix 3)
- For organisations with greater than 50 workers, the results of your COVID risk assessment are published on your website
- Employees are consulted about all COVID-19 health and safety matters, including through trade unions and/or employee representative groups, using surveys and/or direct consultation
- Ongoing engagement with workers takes place (including with trade unions or employee representative groups), to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working practices and the physical environment
- The organisation provides employees with general health information about COVID-19 as well as guidance on changes to working practices using physical signage, digital systems and regular communication from managers and senior leaders (in-person and/or remotely)

### 2.2. Supporting mental wellbeing

- Programmes have been initiated to support mental wellbeing, especially for remote/home workers which includes one or more of the following:
  - Regular reminders for people to take appropriate breaks from screens, for example to access daylight and green space where possible
  - On-line or telephone coaching or counselling
  - Web-based programmes to help people manage mental health issues such as anxiety and low mood

- Allocation of work time specifically for wellbeing initiatives such as remote mindfulness, yoga and other practices

### 2.3. Communicating with external groups

- Customers, suppliers, and trade bodies are informed about business opening hours; access to premises; and the steps the organisation is taking to protect everyone, via:
  - Physical signage
  - Social media posts
  - Direct communication from leaders

## 3. Workforce management

### 3.1. Deciding where people work

- Everyone who can work from home has been identified, and those who can work from home are doing so
- For those working at home, the following procedures have been implemented so they can work safely and effectively:
  - The right physical equipment and digital systems are provided
  - Regular contact is made, so home workers feel connected to their colleagues and have access to wellbeing initiatives to help minimise risks of homeworking such as isolation and loneliness
- Where relevant, the organisation adheres to the following government guidance on who should go to work:
  - Public sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work where necessary
  - Anyone else who cannot work from home should go to their place of work
  - Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals can return to their workplace providing COVID-secure guidelines are in place but should work from home wherever possible

- The organisation follows additional guidance on who should go to work, as laid out in '[Working safety during COVID-19](#)' and specific sector guidance such as '[Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres](#)' (HM Government, 2020; pages 13 – 16)

### 3.2. Adjusting work practices

- As far as possible, where staff are split into teams or shift groups, these teams or shift groups are fixed so that where contact is unavoidable, it happens between the same people
- Where employees are working on-site, the organisation has reviewed and adjusted working procedures (for example activities where equipment must be passed from one person to another) to minimise the risk of cross infection via equipment or close contact between workers

### 3.3. Maintaining equality in the workplace

- The organisation has taken into consideration the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.
- The organisation has consulted with workers whose protected characteristics might expose them to a different degree of risk or make proposed changes to work inappropriate or challenging for them.
- The organisation has made reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at a disadvantage and it has assessed the health and safety risks of new or expectant mothers.
- The organisation has not imposed changes to working practices that may have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.

### 3.4. Providing training and support

- Communication and training materials have been produced and are available for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work

### 3.5. Minimising work-related travel

- Steps have been taken to avoid unnecessary work travel
- Where employees are required to commute to work or travel between work premises, the organisations' travel policy has been updated to reflect

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COVID-19 restrictions and the following guidance is communicated to workers where relevant:

- Walking or cycling is encouraged where possible
- Face coverings must be worn when using public transport
- Minimise the number of people outside of your household or support bubble when travelling together in any one vehicle; use fixed travel partners, increase ventilation, and avoid sitting face-to-face where possible
- Where workers are required to stay away from their home, information about the stay is logged and any overnight accommodation is checked to ensure it meets social distancing guidelines

## 4. Social distancing

- Workers are instructed to make every reasonable effort to comply with government social distancing guidelines, which is maintaining a distance of 2m from work colleagues, or 1m with risk mitigation, where 2m is not viable.
- Where social distancing guidelines could not be followed for certain activities, the organisation has assessed whether that activity can be redesigned to maintain a 2m distance or 1m with risk mitigations. In the latter case, one or more of the following risk mitigation measures have been implemented:
  - More regular handwashing
  - Installation of screens or barriers to separate people from each other
  - Reduction in the number of people each person has contact with by using ‘fixed teams or partnering’ (so that each person works with only a few others)
- Social distancing rules have been added to working policies and procedures and applied to different aspects of work as laid out below

### 4.1. Coming to work and leaving work

- Steps have been taken to maintain social distancing wherever possible, on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival. The following options have been evaluated and implemented where appropriate:

- Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics
- Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points
- Maintaining use of security access devices, such as keypads or passes, and adjusting processes at entry/ exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes next to pass readers rather than touching them

#### 4.2. Moving around buildings and worksites

- Steps have been taken to maintain social distancing wherever possible while people travel through the workplace. One or more of the following changes have been made:
  - Movement has been reduced by discouraging non-essential trips within buildings and sites, for example, restricting access to some areas, encouraging use of radios, telephones, or other electronic devices, where permitted, and cleaning them between use
  - Restricting access between different areas of a building or site
  - Introducing more one-way flow through buildings
  - Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, providing hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible

#### 4.3. Adjusting workplaces and workstations

- The workspace has been reviewed and adjusted to allow workers to socially distance. Only where it is not possible to move workstations further apart, one or more of the following changes have been made:
  - Workstations have been re-arranged so that people work side-by-side rather than face-to-face
  - Screens have been installed to separate people from each other
- The workspace has been marked using floor paint or tape to help people social distance; and signage has been installed to remind people to keep social distance

- The use of hot desks is avoided and where not possible, for example, call centres or training facilities, workstations, including shared equipment, are cleaned between use by different occupants
- Steps have been taken to maintain social distancing while using common areas. This might include the following actions:
  - Agreements have been made with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant sites/buildings to ensure consistency across common areas, for example, receptions and staircases
  - Break times have been staggered to reduce pressure on the staff break rooms or places to eat and ensuring social distancing is maintained in staff break rooms
  - Installing screens to protect staff in receptions or similar areas
  - Providing packaged meals or similar to avoid fully opening staff canteens and/or encouraging workers to bring their own food

#### 4.4. Conducting meetings

- Steps have been taken to reduce the number of face-to-face meetings and all staff are made aware that they must follow social distancing (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) when meeting colleagues in person
- Remote working tools have been installed to avoid in-person meetings
- During face-to-face meetings, objects such as pens and documents are not shared to reduce the risk of contamination
- Hand sanitisers are provided in meeting rooms
- Meetings are held outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible
- In areas where regular meetings take place, floor signage is used to help people maintain social distancing

#### 4.5. Customers, visitors, and contractors

- Visits via remote connection/working are always encouraged where this is an option
- The number of visitors at any one time is limited
- Visitor times are limited to a specific time slots and access is restricted to required visitors only

- An assessment is made as to whether schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, by carrying out services at night
- The organisation maintains a record of all visitors, where this is practical
- Visitors are encouraged to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises
- Arrangements for visitors have been revised to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in receptions

#### 4.6. Managing accidents, security, and other incidents

- Incident and emergency procedures have been updated to ensure they reflect the social distancing principles as far as possible
- The security implications of any changes made to operations and practices in response to COVID-19 have been reviewed on the basis that certain changes may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigations
- Organisations who conduct physical searches of people have considered how to ensure safety of those conducting searches, while maintaining security standards
- Government guidance on managing security risks is followed.

### 5. Cleaning the workplace

#### 5.1. Keeping the workplace clean

- An assessment of cleaning needs is undertaken of all sites, or parts of sites, that have been closed, before restarting work.
- Extensive cleaning takes place and hand sanitiser is provided in multiple locations before any work is re-started.
- Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment (using the organisation's usual cleaning products) takes place between uses
- Objects and surfaces that are touched regularly are cleaned regularly; this includes door handles and keyboards
- Use of high-touch items and equipment, for example printers or whiteboards, is limited or restricted

- Cleaning procedures include a requirement to follow specific guidance on cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19
- Enhanced cleaning is carried out in busy areas
- Ventilation into the building has been optimised to ensure the maximum fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the workplace wherever possible.

### 5.2. Promoting and facilitating good hygiene

- Signs and posters are used to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Regular reminders are provided, and signage has been put up to promote good personal hygiene standards.
- Hand sanitiser is provided in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.
- Clear guidance on use and cleaning of toilets has been set to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.

### 5.3. Changing rooms and showers

- Where shower and changing facilities are required, the organisation has developed clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items and that social-distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Enhanced cleaning of all changing facilities and showers regularly during the day and at the end of the day.

### 5.4. Enhanced waste management

- More waste facilities are available and more frequent rubbish collections are made.
- Extra non-recycling bins for workers and visitors are provided to dispose of single use face coverings and PPE. You should refer to guidance for information on how to dispose of personal or business waste, including face coverings and PPE
- There are adequate disposal arrangements for cleaning products
- Waste and belongings are cleared from the work area at the end of a shift

## 6. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings

### 6.1. Providing PPE only where necessary

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

Government guidance on PPE is as follows:

“.. the steps you need to take to manage COVID-19 risk in the workplace ... include maintaining social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable). When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE. The exception is clinical settings, like a hospital, or a small handful of other roles for which Public Health England advises use of PPE. For example, first responders and immigration enforcement officers. If you are in one of these groups, you should refer to the advice at:

- [COVID-19: guidance for first responders](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): first responder guidance for Border Force, Immigration Enforcement and the National Asylum Intake Unit](#)

Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly.”

### 6.2. Face coverings

Face coverings are mandatory on public transport and in a number of indoor premises. Face coverings are not mandatory in offices, though are required for customers and staff in some businesses that are customer facing such as banks, building societies, post offices, premises providing professional, legal or financial services, estate agents and auction houses. Staff in these settings must wear face coverings when in areas that are open to the public and where they are likely to come within close contact of a member of the public, unless they have an exemption.

People are also encouraged to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where there are people they do not normally meet. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face

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coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and before and after taking them off.

The following condition must be met in order to fulfil the requirements of this checklist:

- The organisation adheres to all legal obligations related to use of face coverings in their sector and undertakes to support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers to:
  - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on and before and after removing it
  - When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
  - Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
  - Continue to wash your hands regularly
  - Change and wash your face covering daily
  - If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste
  - Practise social distancing wherever possible. Please be mindful that the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound

## 7. Inbound and outbound goods

### 7.1. Maintaining social distancing

- Steps have been taken to maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site. This could include one or more of the following:
  - Revising pick-up and drop-off collection points, procedures, signage and markings
  - Minimising unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse. For example, non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows for use of electronic prebooking.
  - Considering methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often

- Where possible and safe, having single workers load or unload vehicles
- Where possible, using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed
- Enabling drivers to access welfare facilities when required, consistent with other guidance
- Encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways

## 7.2. Reduce frequency of deliveries

- Where possible steps have been taken to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often.

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# APPENDIX 1: LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

## 1. Overview

Employers have several health and safety obligations relevant to COVID-19 including those under the following legislation:

- [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#)
- [The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992](#); and
- [The Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002](#)

In summary, the main duties of an employer are to take as much care for employees and others affected by the business as is reasonably practicable.

## 2. [Government guidance on COVID-19 secure working](#)

Where workplaces are open, government guidance states that employers should follow the "COVID-19 Secure" guidelines as soon as practicable. The guidelines are laid out in the form of 14 workplace-specific guidance documents for the following industries:

1. Close contact services
2. Construction and other outdoor work
3. Factories, plants and warehouses
4. Heritage locations
5. Hotels and other guest accommodation
6. Labs and research facilities
7. Offices and contact centres
8. Other people's homes
9. Performing arts
10. Providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities
11. Restaurants, pubs, bars, and takeaway services

12. Shops and branches?

13. Vehicles and?

14. The visitor economy

### **3. Risk Assessments**

The following passage is taken from: ‘Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres’ (HM Government, 2020; page 9).

“Where an enforcing authority, such as the HSE or your local authority, identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they are empowered to take a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. For example, this would cover employers not taking appropriate action to ensure social distancing, where possible.

Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law. The actions the enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice to employers to support them to achieve the required standard, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements. Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to two years.”

### **4. Face coverings**

Face coverings must be worn by customers in private hire vehicles and taxis; face coverings and visors must be worn in close contact services; and face coverings must be worn by staff working in indoor public areas where they come or are likely to come into contact with the public, for example in theatres, bars and pubs.<sup>2</sup>

The following rules apply<sup>3</sup>:

- Leisure and entertainment venues, services provided in community centres and close contact services will be subject to the COVID-19 Secure requirements<sup>1</sup> in law and fines of up to £10,000 for repeated breaches

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<sup>2</sup> People who are already exempt from the existing face covering obligations, such as because of an underlying health condition, will continue to be exempt from these new obligations.

<sup>3</sup> Coronavirus (COVID-19): What has changed – 22 September. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-what-has-changed-22-september>

- Businesses must remind people to wear face coverings where mandated.

## 5. Self-Isolation

The government introduced a new legal duty to self-isolate, which specifies that people in England are required by law to self-isolate if they test positive or are contacted by NHS Test and Trace, or they could be liable for a fine. Employers who force or allow staff to come to work when they should be self-isolating will also be liable for fines of up to £10,000.

## 6. NHS Test and Trace

Collecting contact details and maintaining records for NHS Test and Trace is a legal requirement and failure to comply is punishable by a fine:

- first fixed penalty: £1,000
- second fixed penalty: £2,000
- third fixed penalty: £4,000
- any further penalty notice: £10,000

The person responsible for the organisation is liable. This could be the owner, proprietor, or manager with overall responsibility of the organisation, business or service.

## APPENDIX 2: RISK ASSESSMENT NOTIFICATION

Below is a notice that should be signed and displayed in your workplace to show you have followed this guidance.

**Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020**

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

• FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER •

- ✓ We have carried out a **COVID-19 risk assessment** and shared the results with the people who work here
- ✓ We have **cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures** in line with guidance
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to help people work safely from a **COVID-19 Secure workplace** or work from home
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **maintain a 2m distance** in the workplace
- ✓ Where people cannot keep 2m apart we have ensured at least a 1m distance and taken all the mitigating actions possible to **manage transmission risk**

Signed on behalf of employer \_\_\_\_\_ Employer representative signature \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Employer name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Who to contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Health and Safety Representative  
(or the Health and Safety Executive at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) or 0300 005 1047)

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