

Covid-19 Risk Assessment Guide

Covid-19: Completing your Risk Assessment

UK Health & Safety law is risk based. If you run a business, it is *your* responsibility to manage any hazards created based on legal requirements. Industry guidance codes of practice are free to download from the [HSE website](#) and these describe the type of issues to consider.

Only use trusted sources of information at this time. This is hugely important. To assist you with this, included in this guide are links to the [HSE](#), [Public Health England](#), [IOSH](#), [WHO](#) and the [CIEH](#).

Under Regulation 3 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the employer has a duty to undertake "suitable and sufficient" risk assessments of hazards their employees, or anyone else, could be affected by due to their undertaking. Under the Health & Safety at Work Act you must introduce controls "[So far as is reasonably practicable](#)." If there is the potential for death, serious, or multiple injury, what is expected will be greater.

Determining reasonable practicality is not about whether an organisation has available funds and/or what it can afford. The biggest risk of Covid-19 is death which means businesses must make resources available to manage this risk. It is therefore essential to plan fully what 'back to work' looks like. As we are expecting to live with the virus for some time to come, longer term plans will be required to adapt to a "new normal".

The risk assessment you complete should be based on current guidance which means it may change so must be updated regularly. Hosking Associates has worked with a range of organisations that have kept operating during lock down to develop a risk assessment process. We can support you by providing this as a service backed up with appropriate tools and training if you feel you need it.

The government has published a range of guides which contain information for different sectors which you can use to guide you through completing your risk assessment. [Click here](#) for access to these. Remember risk assessment is about taking information from trusted sources and adapting to your situation. You will need to think about new ways of working, especially to reduce shared touch points, to maintain physical distance, and to manage high standards of cleanliness.

If you employ more than 50 people, the Government guidance advises your risk assessment should be publicly available on your website. We are advising organisations to publish their approach to the crisis, their risk assessments, and findings. It is a legal requirement for all staff to be provided with a copy of your actual risk assessment. How leaders communicate right now has never been more important, so use the risk assessment findings to guide you as to what you do and how to lead.

Only use trusted sources of support and ensure anyone you ask to guide you in this process has the right skills, knowledge, experience, and capability for the work. Use guidance on the HSE and Public Health England websites. There is a register of consultants who have achieved Chartered status or equivalent which can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Risk Assessment Principals



1. Identify Hazards – determine what has the potential to cause harm and then prioritise these. It is a good idea to use mind mapping to consider all the activities and hazards in the workplace. Appendix 1 contains a list of general hazards.

These could be:

- Physical e.g. trip hazards
- Chemical e.g. fumes, substances, dusts
- Biological e.g. Covid-19, legionella
- Ergonomic e.g. DSE use or factory processes
- Psychological e.g. stress
- Environmental e.g. hot, cold, light

Break your hazards down into a logical plan. Use trusted guidance. Be sensible about your approach and work with your teams to determine what the hazards are.

2. Consider who could be harmed. Different people can have different reactions to the same hazards. This is especially important for young workers or those who are already vulnerable. There may also be members of the public to consider. If you have to go into someone's home to work this will require careful consideration. Your controls may need to change depending on this.

3. Determine your controls and evaluate risk.

<div><div></div><div>HOSKING ASSOCIATES</div></div>										
LIKELIHOOD the hazard will occur - L		Risk Methodology Chart								
Certain	5	Increasing Likelihood → → →	5	10	15	20	25	20-25	(High) STOP	Intolerable: Do not undertake the task and look for another way to complete the work safely
Very Likely	4		4	8	12	16	20	10-16	(Medium) URGENT ACTION	Review the activity straight away, maintain existing controls rigorously. Introduce additional controls swiftly where possible. Add additional measures to an Action Plan and reduce the risk to low within a managed period of time.
Likely	3		3	6	9	12	15	8-9	(Low) ACTION	Improve within specified timescale, investigate if any additional controls are possible.
Unlikely	2		2	4	6	8	10	3-6	(Tolerable) MONITOR	Monitor for any changes, look for ways to improve at next review.
Highly Unlikely	1		1	2	3	4	5	1-2	(Negligible) NO ACTION	No further action, but ensure current controls are maintained.
			Increasing Consequence → → →					Risk Evaluation (L x C)		
			1	2	3	4	5	Notes:		
			Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic	Decisions have been made within the report and risk assessments based on the hierarchy of risk control		
			Minor: Limited or no injury or bruising	Minor injury requiring first aid, cuts, grazes	Up to 3 days absence, reportable under RIDDOR, broken bones, laceration requiring stitches	Over 7 days absence, chronic long-lasting injury, or possibility of multiple injuries - back/vibration injury, occupational asthma, long term skin conditions	Fatal Injury or potential for terminal illness			
			CONSEQUENCE if it were to occur - C					<div><div></div><div>Hierarchy of Controls</div></div>		


Controls must be determined based on the hierarchy of risk control. This is very important when managing risks from the virus.

- **Hazard Elimination** – Make a list of activities, tasks, issues, touch points. Are they all absolutely necessary? Prioritise what is left for risk assessment.
- **Substitution** – This is about looking for clever alternatives to the way work is undertaken and thinking of new ways to reduce risk if it cannot be avoided. For example, using auto sensors rather than keypads.
- **Use of Barriers** – Can a guard or a physical barrier be provided? For example, sneeze guards in Reception. This must be considered before the measures described below.
- **Procedures** – Can a Safe System of Work be introduced? This could include a method for working safely.
- **Warning Systems** – Is it possible to let people know there is a hazard? For example, use of signage or labelling.
- **Personal Protective Clothing** – Is it possible to protect the individual with special clothing? This must be considered as a last resort and not as an alternative to the arrangements above.

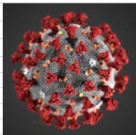
4. Record your findings and determine controls via the hierarchy of risk control.

Below is a simple structure for a risk assessment which we can provide as a template if you feel this would be useful.

You can access a template from the HSE [by clicking here](#).

RISK ASSESSMENT										
										
Activity:	Use of hand held Angle Grinder					Location:	Work Area			
What is the hazard?	Who might be harmed?	How might people be harmed?	Existing Risk Control Measures	Existing			Additional Controls	Residual		
				Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating		Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating
Ejection of materials during task	Operator, others in the work area	Injury from flying debris	Material being cut is secured with clamp or vice, Operator wears eye protection	3	3	9	Use of temporary barrier around the area of work, to prevent others approaching	2	3	6
Inappropriate use due to lack of training	Operator, others in the work area	Fire caused by spark, injury from flying debris/part of equipment	Authorised use by trained operators only, pre-use check as per training	3	3	9	Tools stored in secure location, authorised users only have access	2	3	6
Exposure to noise	Operator	Loss of hearing/tinnitus	Hearing protection worn, activity for short periods & not on regular basis	3	4	12	Questionnaire completed annually to monitor health & identify issues	2	4	8
Exposure to vibration	Operator	White finger/nerve damage	Operators trained so aware of risk, activity for short periods & not on regular basis	3	4	12	Questionnaire completed annually to monitor health & identify issues	2	4	8
Exposure to dust	Operator	Inhalation of dust causing respiratory issues	Face mask worn if activity creates dust, vacuum used to clear dust not a brush	2	4	8	Dust extraction unit over work area	1	4	4

The risk assessments we complete for our customers are undertaken by Health and Safety professionals. These are robust and detailed, cross-referencing a range of hazards. We work closely with businesses to develop these for them. See below an outline of a template we use for Covid-19 Risk Assessment.

		Overall Risk	10	MEDIUM	Covid-19 Risk Assessment: Returning to Business	
Risk Assessment Date: May-20	People Who Could be at Risk: Staff, Visitors, Contractors		Notes:			
Review Date: Jul-21	Work Activity		This risk assessment covers the challenges of maintaining physical distancing and hygiene controls as plans are developed to bring people back to work. The risk assessment covers work which can not be undertaken from home.			
Completed By: Louise Hosking CMIOASH	All work activities					
Reviewed By: Name						
Principal Legislation Health & Safety at Work Act 1974		The situation in relation to the virus and Government advice is rapidly changing so the risk assessment will be reviewed regularly by a member of the senior leadership team.				
Hazards	Existing Controls	Additional Observations	Observed Risk		Residual Risk Rating	Additional Controls Required
			Severity 1-5	Likelihood 1-5		
Potential exposure to the virus because re-introduction to the work place has been too soon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work which is required to be undertaken has been reviewed to determine which tasks can be undertaken at home and which need a presence If work can not be undertaken from home there is a plan in place to re-introduce people back to work in teams who work together to reduce mixing as much as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently these controls are in place because there are very few working in the office The office is shared by another duty holder where there are visitors so arrangements for common part use of the building to be agreed 	5	1	5	
Potential exposure due to too many people returning to work which means physical distancing is challenging to maintain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to work has been staggered to re-introduce workers in a planned approach Start / finish times staggered to place less impact on entrances and exits 		5	2	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree a staggered return to work is discussed with other duty holders in offices and agree how touch points in common parts will be cleaned and managed
Potential Infection Spread to/from vulnerable people (people over 70, those with other conditions and BAME)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone in a vulnerable capacity due to an underlying health condition or over 70 does not return to work - they should work from home Anyone with a physical impairment has had their PEEP reviewed in line with changes to any emergency arrangements Workers in the BAME community are more likely to suffer complications from the infection so close contact work avoided unless a personal risk assessment has been completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no one currently at work in a high risk group but action raised to issue health questionnaire to reflect on those with underlying health conditions as they return to work BAME employee risk managed by maintaining personal distancing and hygiene standards 	5	1	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue health questionnaire before return to work and agree any reasonable adjustments for those with any underlying health issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work which is required to be undertaken has been reviewed to determine which tasks can be undertaken at home and which need a presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no requirement to use public transport for any employees 				

- Check standards are in place and review these periodically. The guidance around Covid-19 are changing on a frequent basis. Generally speaking, risk assessments need less review and only when there is a significant change.

Your Covid-19 Risk Assessment will need constant review especially as you will likely need to work on your controls in a prioritised manner which is why we recommend using an action plan so you can check issues off as you progress them.

It is important to involve the people affected by the risk assessment and to share findings with employees. Adopt a team approach.

Implementation of standards and findings should feed into your overall safety management system, policies, and procedures.

Work to the Plan, Do, Check, Act standard.

This means having a plan in place or a leadership strategy which covers general management.

Once this plan has been developed you must follow it through and make it happen – “Do it”.

If you create a process, there must be checking arrangements in place to ensure the standards are in place and that they remain effective.

If anything is not working, not practical or needs to be amended this will be picked up via a review process upon which you should “Act” which means adapting your plan and continuing within the cycle. Adapting and planning is critical right now so strengthen your business resilience to enable your teams to become more comfortable with the changes and measures introduced. Take the time you need to plan your approach once you have completed your risk assessment. The assessment will give you the direction you need if you are not sure where to start or how to prioritise.

It will also help you to plan ahead to strengthen arrangements or adapt ways of working as we learn to live with the threat of the virus into the future.

Make sure your risk assessment is dated. The review date should also be included along with the name of the person who completed the assessment.



For more info on the Plan, Do, Check, Act Approach – [Click Here](#)

For more info on managing risk – [Click here](#)

Summary

- Identify Hazards – consider work tasks and activities
- Consider which are the highest priority and examine these first
- Evaluate risks
- Determine controls via the hierarchy of risk control
- Record findings
- Implement controls and **share findings**
- Review the risk assessment

Issues to Consider in your Covid-19 Risk Assessment

At the time of writing:

- If work can be undertaken from home, this should continue
- Workers can go back to work if their workplace has reopened
- Physical distancing must be maintained and/or back-to-back work
- Hygiene standards must be maintained
- Isolation remains in place for vulnerable groups
- The rules around self-isolation if you, or others, you have come into contact with, are sick.

Our risk assessments have shown highest risk activities are from travelling on public transport to/from work and for this reason we are advising the use of face coverings on public transport. There are some activities which must be undertaken within the physical distancing rules and these need a more in-depth risk assessment. PPE issue will depend on risk assessment findings and anyone using it must be trained to fully understand limitations and correct use. All these issues should be in your risk assessment.

PPE remains a last resort control. Surgical masks and/or face coverings will not protect from the virus although they may reduce the risk of someone who is infected from infecting others. Anyone administering close personal care should complete their risk assessment with a clinician to determine work methods and PPE use.

The headings below will assist you in completing your own risk assessment. We would recommend "Mind Mapping" the issues for your organisation and listing touch points. Review the common touch points and look for ways to reduce these. Be creative and consider how work can be undertaken differently. Each hazard will have numerous issues for you to explore.

Government guidance and HSE guides will help. Work with your teams who undertake the work as they may be able to create solutions to issues the risk assessment highlights which you would not consider in isolation. You may have to consider risk assessments for individuals in a vulnerable category returning to work .

Provide regular, consistent messaging and communications so teams know how to work safely and are reassured. Use wellness questionnaires to check on the mental health of your team as well as their physical health.

Dynamic risk assessments are undertaken at the time of the work where a situation is unpredictable and requires further assessment in respect of that situation. These are often used for work in someone's home.

We are available to complete risk assessments as a service should this be required in your organisation. Remember - small workplaces will not require a complex approach.

Leadership and Safety Management System: Strategy, Policy, Planning

We advise you have a higher-level plan to your approach. As you complete your risk assessment it will be clear there are “Quick Wins” such as signage or changes to working practices that you can adopt. We do not know how long we will have to live with the threat of the virus so think longer term too. There may be additional measures you can budget for in the future as your business comes back into operation such as automatic sensors on taps and auto soap dispensers. The risk assessment can guide you in the risk-based choices you make as a leader.

Hazards to consider

Spread of Infection due to:

- A lack of preparation and planning
- Return to work is too rapid
- People travelling widely, including abroad, for work
- Non-essential workers returning
- Communication unclear, inconsistent
- Lack of information, instruction, and training
- Lack of supervision and checks leading to people not following the rules
- Lack of reporting systems
- Workers returning to work due to a loss of income when they should be isolating
- A lack of resources to implement measures necessary – there should be a resource plan in place to cover time/ cost/effort which also considers loss of income and work.

Return to Work

Consider touch points, including work equipment, as hazards in different parts of your business. Look for ways to reduce shared touch points where you can in each area of work. We recommend listing these and reducing them where possible.

Hazards to consider

Spread of Infection due to:

- Return to work is too soon or too rapid
- Multiple duty holders using the same spaces
- Travel to and from work (because this has the potential to bring infection in from outside)
- Access/Egress points e.g. entrances, exits, toilet doors
- Signing in and out arrangements for staff and/or visitors
- Use of passenger lifts
- Use of toilets
- Use of shared kitchens or canteens
- Common waiting/sitting areas
- Visitors coming into the building
- Emergency Evacuation Arrangements

- Deliveries – receiving parcels/post and vehicle deliveries
- Work in domestic premises which are occupied
- Use of shared ride on/in vehicles
- Lack of adequate ventilation
- General absence of separation in respect of workstations.

Management of Hygiene and Physical Distancing

Hazards to consider

Spread of Infection due to:

- Absence of clear information, instruction, training, supervision
- Spread due to travel from abroad
- Not following quarantine guidance if ill or in contact with someone who has been ill
- Not following advice on limiting contact outside of work
- Not following hygiene standards
- Poor access to the right cleaning materials
- Absence of clear cleaning regimes.

Mental Health and Wellness

The [HSE's talking tool kit](#) is a good place to start with this.

Hazards to consider

Increased risk of harm due to:

- Lone working
- Lack of contact with others and loneliness
- Stress
- Excess demands
- Uncertainty and change
- Lack of control
- Absence of support
- Poor relationships
- Uncertainty around role and expectations.



Work from Home

Home working is going to become more common so businesses should plan to ensure their workers have the right equipment to enable them to do this.

Hazards to consider

Increased risk of harm due to:

- Absence of clear information, instruction, training, supervision
- Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)
- Electrical Hazards
- Lone Working/Loneliness
- Poor Working Environment
- Stress
- Slips, Trips, Falls

Work which cannot be undertaken whilst physically separating / distancing

List these work activities. Examine them and see if you can avoid them or do the work in a different way. For example, if two people are needed to lift something can this instead be mechanised? Always limit the amount of time workers are within 2m of each other and avoid face to face working if possible. Government guidance says close working should be for no more than 15 minutes.

Hazards to consider

Increased risk of infection due to:

- Work to provide personal care
- Maintenance/repair activities which require two or more people to work in close proximity
- Project work within an area under maintenance/repair or construction with a number of different trades
- Administering first aid
- Lack of the right PPE
- Absence of clear information, instruction, training, supervision

Increased risk of injury due to other aspects of Health and Safety not being considered in the same manner during the crisis

There is a list of general Health and Safety Hazards in Appendix 1. As you review your general risk assessments, consider also where risk has changed due to the virus. It is important to keep all your risk plates spinning at this time to avoid an incident in another place due to the focus we all have right now to manage risks from the virus and get businesses up and running.

Hazards to consider

Increased risk of harm due to:

- Essential maintenance/repair not being prioritised
- Training not being undertaken
- Lack of contractor management
- Fire
- Legionella
- Use of lifting equipment and passenger lifts
- Absence of personal risk assessment for vulnerable people and also new and expectant mothers
- Absence, or restriction, of use of welfare facilities
- Conflicts in use of PPE
- Regular controls in respect of work equipment and safe systems not followed.

Appendix 1 – Potential Hazards in the Workplace

- Slips, Trips
- Height
- Chemicals
- Other Harmful Substances, Dusts, Fumes, Medicines
- Infectious Diseases e.g. Covid-19
- Legionella
- Workstations
- Asbestos
- Bullying
- Aggression/Violence/Assault
- Stress
- Plant and Machinery
- Confined Spaces
- Poor Lighting
- Sharp Objects
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Fire
- Electricity
- Gas/Explosive Substances
- Access/Egress
- Moving Vehicles
- Vibration
- Noise
- Housekeeping
- Temperature – hot and cold
- Radiation
- Moving and Handling
- Drowning
- Falling Objects
- Doors and Gates
- Fatigue
- Head Bumping Hazards
- Work Equipment



Appendix 2 – Public Health England Poster



Employers and businesses guidance

Common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)



new and continuous cough

or



high temperature

If **you have symptoms** of coronavirus, you need to **self-isolate for 7 days**

If **you live with someone who has symptoms**, you need to **self-isolate for 14 days** from the day their symptoms started

Only use **NHS 111** if your symptoms get worse or are no better after home isolation

Stop the spread of coronavirus




Wash your hands more often and for 20 seconds

Use soap and water or a hand sanitiser when you:

- Get home or into work
- Blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- Eat or handle food




Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue away straight away



Businesses and workplaces should encourage their employees to work at home, wherever possible



Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products



Employees will need your support to adhere to the recommendation to stay at home to reduce the spread of coronavirus to others

Those who follow advice to stay at home will be eligible for **statutory sick pay (SSP) from the first day** of their absence from work

Employers should use their discretion concerning the need for medical evidence for certification for employees who are unwell. This will allow GPs to focus on their patients

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, **they should be sent home**

Employees from **defined vulnerable** groups should be strongly advised and supported to stay at home and work from there if possible

Appendix 3 - Public Health England Guidance Notice

Public Health England advise organisations to display this sign. We advise adapting this (adding branding and contact details for the person to contact in respect of any concerns).

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. If possible, you should consider publishing the results on your website (and we would expect all employers with over 50 workers to do so). Below you will find a notice you should display 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 from home**
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **maintain a 2m distance** in the workplace
- ✓ Where people cannot be 2m apart, we have done everything practical to **manage transmission risk**

Employer _____ Date _____

Who to contact: _____ Your Health and Safety Representative
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)