COVID-19 Response Plan

HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY

Introduction

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for the employer to meet the Government's **'Return to Work Safely Protocol'** and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

The plan will give an overview of key areas that employers must assess to ensure compliance with the protocol and to minimise the risk to workers and others.

All workplaces, including those with customer-facing interaction or areas where workers share a workplace, are required to develop a plan and the use of this guidance and associated checklists will help in this.

The plan needs strong commitment from management and workers and should be developed and put in place in consultation with workers. Consultation with workers[1], supervision, clear direction and information for customers and clients is key in ensuring the success of your COVID-19 Response Plan.

Note: The plan is a live working document and it should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and amended to take into account new guidance from
www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie and www.hsa.ie
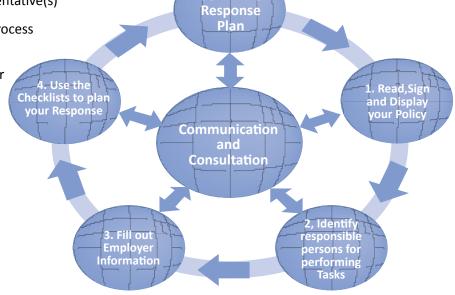
How to use this plan

Your COVID-19 Response Plan must detail how your business will put in place control measures to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19. The following sections will cover key information and guidance, which will be backed up by the checklists below.
They are as follows:

- A COVID-19 Policy, which will outline management commitment to implementing the plan and checklists. The policy must be signed and dated by the managing director / owner.
- Checklist No. 1 - Planning and Preparing
- Checklist No. 2 - Control Measures
- Checklist No. 3 - COVID-19 Induction
- Checklist No. 4 - Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19
- Checklist No. 5 - Cleaning and Disinfection
- Checklist No. 6 - Workers
- Checklist No. 7 - Worker Representative(s)

The response plan is set out as a 4 step process (Fig.1) below.

N.B. It is important to keep the plan under review to ensure it is kept up to date with public advice and to follow up on all actions identified on each checklist to make sure that they are completed as soon as possible.

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[1] and Trades Unions where applicable

Figure 1 – COVID-19 Response Plan 4 Step Process

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Communication and Consultation

1. Read, Sign and Display your Policy

2, Identify responsible persons for performing Tasks

3. Fill out Employer Information

4. Use the Checklists to plan your Response

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Step 1 - Employer COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as an employer to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the managing director / owner and brought to the attention of our managers, supervisors, clients and workers.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

_____ is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our workers and customers. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. All managers, supervisors and workers are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our workers
- provide up to date information to our workers on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- provide an adequate number of trained Worker Representative(s) who are easily identifiable and put in place a reporting system
- inform all workers of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the workplace to facilitate physical distancing
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- have all workers undergo an induction / familiarisation briefing
- develop a procedure to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at work or in the workplace
- provide instructions for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work
- intensify cleaning in line with government advice

All managers, supervisors and workers will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Worker Representative(s) _____

_____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

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Step 2 - Responsible Persons for Performing Tasks

We have identified suitably trained person(s) to help with ensuring that the plan is implemented and checklists are completed.

Persons have been identified who have agreed to take responsibility for carrying out tasks such as:

- role of worker representative(s)
- use of checklists to identify any areas for improvement
- regular checks to ensure the plan is being implemented
- review of risk assessments and the safety statement
- renewal of statutory certification where needed
- training
- reviewing emergency procedures and first aid

We have consulted with the persons responsible for these tasks and have:

- briefed them on the tasks and their responsibilities
- entered their name against the relevant task(s) in the Responsible Persons table (see below) and asked each responsible person to sign to indicate their agreement with carrying out the task.

No.	Responsible Persons Task Register (Non-Exhaustive)		
	Tasks (non-exhaustive list)	**Responsible Person(s)**	**Signature**
1	Person responsible for overall implementation of the plan		
2	Identification and training of worker representative		
3	Planning and Preparing to Return to Work (Checklist No.1)		
4	Control Measures (Checklist No.2)		
5	COVID-19 Induction (Checklist No.3)		
6	Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 (Checklist No.4)		
7	Cleaning and Disinfection (Checklist No.5)		
8	Employee Information (Checklist No.6)		
9	Worker Representative(s) (Checklist No.7)		
10	Return-to-work forms		
11	Other:		

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Step 3 - Employer Information

Employer Name:	
Workplace Address:	
Director / Senior Manager in the Workplace:	
Worker Representative:	
Type of Business:	
Number of Workers:	
Worker Representative:	
Number of Workers who Deal Directly with the Public:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Step 4 - Checklists

a) Return to Work – Planning and Preparing

The planning and preparing phase is critical to ensure a safe return to work and covers such items as information and guidance, return-to-work forms, identifying worker representatives, revising our induction briefing, identifying and putting in place control measures and updating our safety statements, risk assessments and emergency plans.

Workers have been told to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which have been explained to them, and the return-to-work form will be used to assess workers' health before they enter the workplace.

Further Information
- Checklist No. 1 - Planning and Preparing
- Return to Work Form

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b) Control Measures

This section deals with the measures we are implementing to prevent or minimise the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and in our communities.

Measures which must be complied with include:

- Hand hygiene / Hand sanitising
- Respiratory hygiene
- Physical distancing
- Minimising contact
- Considering at-risk workers
- Visiting Contractors / Others

Further Information
- Checklist No.2 - Control Measures

c) COVID-19 Induction / Familiarisation

Workers need to be told about changes in the workplace and updated on new ways of working. Our usual induction, or workplace familiarisation, for new employees has been revised to include measures to help prevent the spread of the virus. All workers will be brought through this induction before starting back to work. The induction will be carried out in a safe manner with physical distancing measures in place.

The following range of items will be discussed and brought to the attention of workers:

- Communication system
- Return-to work form
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (at home and in the workplace)
- Information on how the virus is spread
- Control measures to help prevent infection
- COVID-19 contact log
- Worker Representative
- Changes to risk assessments and safety statement
- Changes to emergency plans and first aid procedures
- Minimising contact
- Reporting procedures

Attendance at a COVID-19 induction will be recorded and records kept.

Further Information
- Checklist No.3 – COVID-19 Induction

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d) Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

This details our procedure to be followed in the event of someone developing the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while at work or while in the workplace.

We have assigned a manager and put in place an isolation team to manage this situation, and provided them with information on how to do this safely. We have also identified and marked an isolation area(s) to be used to isolate the affected person from the rest of the workforce and procedures to be followed to enable them to safely leave the premises.

Further Information
- Checklist No.4 - Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

e) Cleaning and Disinfection in the Workplace

We have put in place an effective cleaning and disinfection system as regular cleaning and disinfection will help reduce the spread of the virus. We have arranged for frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, kitchen appliances etc. to be cleaned twice daily.

Welfare facilities and communal areas will also be cleaned twice daily.

If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is needed, this will be done in addition to cleaning.

Workers will be provided with cleaning materials to keep their own workspace hygienically clean and advised to regularly clean any personal items brought in from home.

Cleaning staff will be given information and instruction in relation to the new procedures.

Further Information
- Checklist No.5 – Cleaning and Disinfecting

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f) Workers Responsibilities in the Workplace

Aside from the usual day to day responsibilities that workers must comply with, the introduction of COVID-19 into society brings new challenges that workers need to be aware of so that the Return to Work Safely Protocol can be implemented effectively.

Workers must keep themselves updated on the latest advice from Government and the HSE. They must also co-operate in maintaining the control measures put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and report any issues or concerns they may have.

Further Information
- Checklist No.6 – Workers

g) Workers Representatives

We will appoint a worker representative(s) for each workplace or each work area to ensure that COVID-19 measures are followed. Worker representative(s) will receive training and information on the role and the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus. We will tell workers who their worker representative is.

Good communications channels in the workplace are essential for all stakeholders. Managers, supervisors and workers, should engage with the worker representative(s), to highlight concerns, report defects, submit ideas and identify improvements in the workplace.

Further Information
- Checklist No.7 – Workplace Representatives