

**May 2020**

**Safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic – General guidelines  
for organizations**



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## 40 **Foreword**

41 The current pandemic has fundamentally shifted the way people live and work. The 'lockdown' that  
42 many countries and their populations have been facing has meant a rethink of what was previously  
43 considered normal. Capturing the lessons learned as we progress through the phases of the pandemic  
44 is crucial. Whilst economic considerations are important, the fundamental principle of protecting  
45 human life underpins all economic recovery.

46 All organizations face questions from their customers, stakeholders, suppliers, investors and the  
47 general public. The most important stakeholders for the success of an organization however, are the  
48 workers. In order to provide reassurance to all interested parties, protect an organization's  
49 reputation and build confidence, planning is crucial.

50 Building on formal guidance issued by UK Government, BSI has developed this set of guidelines to  
51 assist organizations as they adjust the way they work, to protect workers and other people in their  
52 workplace from the ongoing risks related to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

53 This document is not a formal standard, but a set of guidelines, developed at pace, using an agile  
54 process. The first version of this document, as presented below, has been reviewed by an expert  
55 Advisory Group. This document will be revised frequently to reflect the dynamic situation, taking into  
56 account comments from users, government guidance, the level of risk and emerging knowledge.

57 Each version of this document will be available on BSI's website to provide ongoing guidance to  
58 business owners, managers, workers and other users as they deal with the complexities of this  
59 changing situation.

60 Users are encouraged to submit feedback on this document.

61 Although this document incorporates UK Government guidance, the information and  
62 recommendations within it are generally applicable to any organization that needs to manage the  
63 risks related to COVID-19, regardless of location.

64 Comments are therefore welcome from national and international users to ensure the document  
65 captures up-to-date knowledge and good working practices that are evolving.

66 In this document, the following verbal forms are used:

67 a) "should" indicates a recommendation;

68 b) "may" indicates a permission; and

69 c) "can" indicates a possibility or a capability.

70 **Version Control**

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78 *or PAS.*

79

## 80 **0 Introduction**

81 This document is a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased risk this disease presents  
82 to the health, safety and wellbeing of people in all settings, including the workplace.

83 The UK Government has published guidance on [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#). This  
84 guidance emphasizes that workers should not be forced to work in an unsafe workplace. The UK  
85 Government states that organizations should implement all reasonable measures to manage risks  
86 related to COVID-19 that can affect the health, safety and wellbeing of workers and other relevant  
87 interested parties.

88 This document is aligned to and complements the UK Government guidance. It provides practical  
89 recommendations to organizations and workers on how to work safely during the pandemic. It is  
90 suitable for organizations that need to resume operations as well as those organizations that have  
91 been operational throughout.

92 This document explains what is expected of both organizations and workers. The guidance is generic  
93 and applicable to organizations regardless of the nature of business or service provision or size or  
94 complexity. It includes practical examples for different types of organizations to help determine the  
95 actions the organization can take to make the workplace safer.

96 By implementing the guidance in this document, an organization will be able to:

- 97 a) understand what it needs to do to protect workers and other relevant interested parties from  
98 the risks related to COVID-19;  
99 b) demonstrate that it is addressing risks related to COVID-19 using a systematic approach; and  
100 c) put in place a framework to enable them to adapt to the rapidly changing situation

101 This document uses a Plan – Do – Check – Act approach.

102 **Plan:** plan what needs to be done for the organization to work safely (Clause 4 to Clause 6).

103 **Do:** do what the organization has planned to do (Clause 7 to Clause 9).

104 **Check:** see how well it is working (Clause 10).

105 **Act:** fix problems and look for ways to make what the organization is doing even more effective  
106 (Clause 11).

107 This document is not intended to be a single step-by-step set of recommendations. It provides a  
108 framework in which the PDCA cycle should be repeated, with all parts active at all times, to enable  
109 ongoing continual improvement and ensure the organization responds to changes.

110

111 **1 Scope**

112 This document provides general guidance to organizations on how to manage the risks related to  
113 COVID-19 in order to protect work-related health, safety and wellbeing.

114 This document is intended for use by organizations of all sizes and sectors including those that:

- 115 a) have been operating throughout the pandemic;
- 116 b) are resuming operations following full or partial closure; and
- 117 c) are re-occupying workplaces that were fully or partially closed.

118 This document also provides guidance relating to the protection of workers of all types, including  
119 employees, volunteers, contractors, those on zero hours contracts, freelancers and the self-employed,  
120 and other relevant interested parties.

121 *NOTE This document does not provide specific guidance for workers in high risk clinical roles.*

122 **2 Normative references**

123 There are no normative references in this document.

124 **3 Terms and definitions**

125 For the purpose of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

126 **3.1 organization**

127 person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and  
128 relationships to achieve its objectives

129

130 Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to, sole-trader, company, corporation,  
131 firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, association, charity or institution, or part or combination thereof,  
132 whether incorporated or not, public or private.

133 *[SOURCE: BS EN ISO 9000:2015, 3.2.1, modified]*

134

135 **3.2 worker**

136 person performing work or work-related activities under the control of the organization

137

138 Note 1 to entry: Persons perform work or work-related activities under various arrangements, paid or unpaid,  
139 such as regularly or temporarily, intermittently or seasonally, casually or on a part-time basis.

140 Note 2 to entry: Workers include top management, managerial and non-managerial persons.

141 Note 3 to entry: The work or work-related activities performed under the control of the organization may be  
142 performed by workers employed by the organization, workers of external providers, contractors, individuals,  
143 agency workers, and by other persons to the extent the organization shares control over their work or work-  
144 related activities, according to the context of the organization.

145 *[SOURCE: BS ISO 45001:2018, 3.3]*

146 **3.3 workplace**  
147 place under the control of the organization where a person needs to be or to go for work purposes  
148  
149 Note 1 to entry: The organization's responsibilities for the workplace depend on the degree of control over the  
150 workplace.  
151 *[SOURCE: BS ISO 45001:2018, 3.6, modified]*  
152

153 **3.4 pandemic**  
154 worldwide spread of a new disease  
155 *[SOURCE: World Health Organization, modified]*  
156

157 **3.5 COVID-19**  
158 infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus  
159 *[SOURCE: World Health Organization, modified]*  
160

161 **3.6 wellbeing**  
  
162 fulfilment of the physical, mental and cognitive needs and expectations of a worker related to their  
163 work  
  
164 Note 1 to entry: Wellbeing can also contribute to the quality of life outside of work.  
  
165 Note 2 to entry: Wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, including work organization, social factors at  
166 work, work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks.  
  
167 *[SOURCE: ISO WD 45003:2020, 3.2, modified]*  
168

169 **3.7 transmission**  
170 transfer of disease  
171

172 **3.8 common areas**  
173 spaces and amenities provided for the use of more than one person  
  
174 Note 1 to entry: examples of common areas include canteens, reception areas, meeting rooms, areas of  
175 worship, toilets, gardens, fire escapes, kitchens, fitness facilities, store rooms, laundry facilities  
176 *[SOURCE: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>, modified]*  
177

178 **3.9 clinically vulnerable**  
179 people who can be at increased risk from COVID-19  
180 Note 1 to entry: clinically vulnerable people include those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying  
181 health conditions  
182 *[SOURCE: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>, modified]*  
183

184 **3.10 clinically extremely vulnerable**  
185 people with specific underlying health conditions that increase the risk of severe illness if they  
186 contract COVID-19  
187 *[SOURCE: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>, modified]*



## 188 **4 Planning**

### 189 **4.1 Understanding the context of the organization**

190 To understand the specific risks to workers, organizations should consider what can affect the ability  
191 of individuals to work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. How organizations should operate has  
192 changed and there is currently an increased risk to health, safety and wellbeing at work.

193 Before assessing risks, organizations should consider the specific external and internal issues that  
194 can affect an organization's ability to work safely and how these issues have been impacted by the  
195 pandemic.

196 External issues can include, but are not limited to:

- 197 a) how workers travel to work;
- 198 b) workers' access to childcare and schooling;
- 199 c) changes or problems in the supply chain;
- 200 d) changes in customer needs and expectations, or behaviours;
- 201 e) increased or decreased demand for products/services;
- 202 f) prevalence of COVID-19 within the organization and the community; and
- 203 g) local, regional and national circumstances and related official guidance.

204

205 Internal issues can include, but are not limited to:

- 206 1) the number and types of workplaces;
- 207 2) the type of work;
- 208 3) the type of workers in the organization (e.g. employed, contractors, volunteers, freelance);
- 209 4) the degree to which it is possible to change the workplace to implement social distancing  
210 measures;
- 211 5) individual needs of workers (e.g. the clinically vulnerable, workers with childcare issues, carers  
212 of the clinically vulnerable, disabled workers, pregnant workers);
- 213 6) increased worker absence (e.g. due to sickness, self-isolation requirements, bereavement);
- 214 7) resource availability; and
- 215 8) how work is organized (e.g. changed work demands, pace of work, time pressure, shift work) and  
216 supported and how this impacts health, safety and wellbeing at work.

217 The organization should take these issues into account when assessing risk and planning to resume  
218 or modify operations.

### 219 **4.2 Leadership and worker participation**

220 Owners, managers and other decision makers should:

- 221 a) demonstrate leadership and commitment to safe working practices through effective  
222 communication and by complying with official guidance and internal policy at all times;
- 223 b) ensure adequate resources are provided (see Clause 5) and make them available to all relevant  
224 workers in a timely and effective manner;
- 225 c) actively consult workers, worker representatives and relevant trade unions on decisions that  
226 affect health, safety and wellbeing at work;

- 227 d) communicate how workers can report incidents or raise concerns and how these will be  
228 addressed and communicated; and  
229 e) protect workers from reprisals when reporting incidents or if workers remove themselves from  
230 unsafe work situations.

231 Organizations have a duty of care to their workers. The people who do the work are often more aware  
232 of risks related to their role and understand them better than the people at the highest levels of the  
233 organization. By encouraging wide input, organizations can have a better overview of risks to health,  
234 safety and wellbeing at work during the pandemic. Active and ongoing engagement with workers is  
235 likely to result in better outcomes when managing the risks related to COVID-19.

236 Organizations should:

- 237 1) involve workers, worker representatives and relevant trade unions in assessing risks related to  
238 COVID-19 and making decisions on how to manage them;  
239 2) communicate to workers and other relevant interested parties (e.g. customers, suppliers, visitors,  
240 investors, shareholders, regulators, unions) how the organization is managing risks from  
241 COVID-19 (communication can be through any appropriate method, see Clause 6);  
242 3) provide one or more ways for workers and other interested parties to give feedback on actions  
243 taken to manage work-related health, safety and wellbeing (e.g. through virtual meetings,  
244 collaboration tools, online surveys, emails); and  
245 4) take timely and appropriate action to address concerns raised by workers and other interested  
246 parties and communicate these actions to them.

### 247 **4.3 General planning**

248 Planning for safe working enables the organization to identify and prioritize risks related to  
249 COVID-19 that can affect work-related health, safety and wellbeing.

250 Although it is not possible to eliminate the risks related to COVID-19 entirely, planning should aim  
251 to ensure the risk to workers is reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

252 When planning for safe working, organizations should consider:

- 253 a) the types of work activities and how that work is organized;  
254 b) where the work takes place and practical changes that need to be made;  
255 c) interaction between workers or others, including the public;  
256 d) the safe use of common areas and shared equipment; and  
257 e) the impact of the pandemic on workers' psychological health and wellbeing at work.  
258

259 Organizations should take a systematic approach to determining and addressing risks related to  
260 COVID-19.

261 Organizations should identify work activities that:

- 262 1) can be done from home;  
263 2) cannot be done from home but can comply with social distancing guidelines in the workplace, if  
264 practical adjustments are made; and  
265 3) cannot be done from home and cannot comply with social distancing guidelines in the  
266 workplace.

267 The best way to mitigate work-related risks from COVID-19 is to enable and support workers to  
268 work from home. The organization should ensure additional support measures are implemented to  
269 protect the psychological health and wellbeing for workers who are working from home. The  
270 organization should consider if it is possible to enable a safe return to the physical workplace for  
271 individual workers when home working has a significant negative impact on their psychological  
272 health and wellbeing.

273 Work activities that cannot be done from home and cannot comply with social distancing guidelines  
274 with practical adjustments may only take place if they are essential for the operation of the  
275 organization and additional controls are implemented to mitigate the risks to health, safety and  
276 wellbeing at work.

277 When planning to address risks related to COVID-19, the organization should take into account  
278 existing occupational health and safety (OH&S) risks and measures already in place to manage these.  
279 The organization should:

- 280 - assess if existing safety measures and controls need to be adjusted;
- 281 - consider new OH&S risks that can be introduced by implementing additional safety measures to  
282 manage the risks related to COVID-19; and
- 283 - plan actions to address new OH&S risks.

## 284 **4.4 Workplaces**

### 285 **4.4.1 General**

286 The organization should ensure that workplaces (including all premises, sites and other locations  
287 where work takes place) and facilities within those workplaces are clean and safe to use.

288 To prepare for safe operation, the organization should, as a minimum:

- 289 a) assess all premises, sites, or parts of sites, including those that have been closed or partially  
290 operating;
- 291 b) perform maintenance checks and activities on equipment and systems;
- 292 c) establish enhanced and/or more frequent cleaning schedules;
- 293 d) provide enhanced personal hygiene facilities, including additional handwashing stations where  
294 possible and hand sanitizer points where this is not possible; and
- 295 e) coordinate and cooperate with other organizations on shared sites, including with contractors,  
296 landlords and other tenants.

297 Further actions organizations should take include, but are not limited to:

- 298 1) deep cleaning of workplaces and equipment;
- 299 2) disinfection of taps, showers and other sources of water, ensuring these are flushed through  
300 before use and tested if appropriate;
- 301 3) ensuring sufficient fresh air ventilation and minimizing recirculation of air;
- 302 4) restarting and testing specialist equipment which has been unused for longer than usual;
- 303 5) putting in place signs and floor or wall markings to indicate recommended social distancing;
- 304 6) creating working zones to limit the number of people in any one area;
- 305 7) limiting the number of people using shared equipment by creating working teams or pairs and  
306 assigning them to designated shared equipment;

- 307 8) establishing cleaning stations to enable workers to wipe surfaces and equipment throughout  
308 working hours;
- 309 9) reorganizing moveable equipment, desks and workstations to enable social distancing;
- 310 10) establishing processes for safe entry and exit from workplaces;
- 311 11) establishing one-way systems in corridors, stairways and other common areas and taking other  
312 actions to mitigate the risks where this is not possible;
- 313 12) determining safe ways of using lifts/elevators, including limiting capacity and providing hand  
314 sanitizer, ensuring guidance for safe use is communicated both inside and outside of  
315 lifts/elevators; and
- 316 13) providing additional outside spaces for workers to use for breaks, where possible.

#### 317 **4.4.2 Working in other people's homes**

318 Workers should not perform work activities in other people's homes where someone has symptoms  
319 of COVID-19 (or is self-isolating after being exposed to someone with COVID-19) or is considered  
320 clinically extremely vulnerable and has been asked to shield, except:

- 321 a) to provide essential health and personal care (e.g. medical or social care workers); or  
322 b) to remedy a direct risk to safety (e.g. emergency repairs by a plumber, electrician, gas engineer).

323 When preparing for workers to perform activities in other people's homes, the organization should:

- 324 1) check if anyone in the household has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been advised to shield;
- 325 2) consider if the work can be performed using digital or remote alternatives (e.g. video or phone  
326 consultations);
- 327 3) communicate with households prior to work commencing to discuss and agree how work will be  
328 carried out and general practices to minimize risk (e.g. how to enter the building without face-to-  
329 face contact, maintaining social distancing whilst the worker is in the home, leaving internal  
330 doors open to minimize contact with door handles);
- 331 4) assign workers to work in households local to them, wherever possible, to minimize travel and  
332 use of public transport; and
- 333 5) allocate the same individual or pairs of workers to a household if repeat visits are necessary or  
334 the work is ongoing (e.g. the same carers, cleaners).

#### 335 **4.5 Roles**

336 In assessing roles, activities and whether a worker should work on-site or at home, the organization  
337 should take into account those workers who:

- 338 a) are considered clinically vulnerable;
- 339 b) are caring for someone who is clinically vulnerable;
- 340 c) are in a household with someone who is clinically vulnerable;
- 341 d) have protected characteristics and are entitled to additional reasonable adjustments; and
- 342 e) need additional support to protect their psychological health and wellbeing.

343 Workers with roles that can be carried out remotely should continue to work from home. To ensure  
344 this is effective, the organization should:

- 345 1) provide access to the organization's systems (e.g. email, shared electronic drives, video  
346 conferencing, databases);  
347 2) determine if additional essential equipment is needed and provide this if possible;  
348 3) establish regular virtual meetings to provide support, monitor wellbeing, address wellbeing  
349 issues and ensure they are connected to other workers, including those working on-site; and  
350 4) ensure individual worker needs are understood and accommodated as far as possible.

351 For workers who need to be physically on-site, the organization should:

- 352 - determine which roles are critical for operational continuity, safe facility management or  
353 regulatory requirements and cannot be performed remotely;  
354 - identify workers in critical roles who are unable to work remotely due to home circumstances or  
355 the unavailability of specialist equipment;  
356 - determine the minimum number of workers needed on-site at any one time to operate safely and  
357 effectively; and  
358 - determine how activities are organized (e.g. reducing job rotation, requiring workers to perform  
359 one activity with one set of equipment throughout the shift).

360 The organization should offer clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable)  
361 workers who cannot work from home the option of the safest available roles in the workplace. Such  
362 roles should allow workers to maintain social distancing at all times. If clinically vulnerable  
363 workers cannot comply with social distancing guidelines, the organization should consult with the  
364 worker, worker representatives and relevant trade unions to assess if there is an acceptable level of  
365 risk if additional safety measures and controls are implemented.

366 The organization should ensure that safety measures or controls introduced do not have an  
367 unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others (e.g. workers with caring  
368 responsibilities, workers with religious commitments, workers with disabilities, pregnant women).

#### 369 **4.6 Activities**

370 If social distancing guidelines cannot be complied with for an essential activity, the organization  
371 should take all possible further mitigating actions to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19  
372 between workers and other people in the workplace.

373 Before resuming work, the organization should take mitigating actions, such as:

- 374 a) establishing fixed small teams or pairs of workers to limit the number of people in close  
375 contact: teams or pairs should be treated as a unit if any worker develops COVID-19 symptoms  
376 and all members of the unit should self-isolate following government guidance;  
377 b) revising work instructions to enable safe operation of activities (e.g. keeping activity times as  
378 short as possible, using screens or barriers to separate people, using back-to-back or side-to-  
379 side working instead of face-to-face);  
380 c) establishing distinct zones for work activities which cannot comply with social distancing;  
381 d) identifying activities where workers directly pass objects (e.g. job information, spare parts,  
382 samples, purchased items) to each other or to other people, including the public, and establish  
383 processes to remove direct contact (e.g. drop-off or transfer zones); and  
384 e) providing appropriate PPE and guidance on how it should be used.

## 385 **4.7 Emergency preparedness and response**

386 The organization should prepare for foreseeable emergencies and revise existing processes if  
387 necessary.

388 The organization should consider, for example:

- 389 a) fire evacuation processes (e.g. guidance on evacuating in teams to limit close contact, adjusting  
390 how workers are required to muster outside the building to increase social distancing between  
391 teams);
- 392 b) providing additional appropriate PPE for first aiders in case of medical emergency or accidents;  
393 and
- 394 c) providing clear guidance on processes for dealing with aggressive or violent people.

395  
396 In an emergency where there is immediate danger (e.g. chemical spill, fire, break-in) complying with  
397 social distancing guidelines can be challenging. The organization should take this into account when  
398 planning and amend emergency plans to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in emergency  
399 situations, as far as practicable.

400  
401 Organizations should consider carrying out fire drills, simulations or other practice exercises to raise  
402 awareness of amended emergency plans. When planning for these exercises, the organization should  
403 ensure that additional safety controls and measures are in place if social distancing cannot be  
404 maintained during, for example, evacuation from the workplace.

405  
406 The organization should ensure that workers who provide assistance to others in emergency  
407 situations take additional and immediate hygiene measures following the emergency event, including  
408 hand washing.

## 409 **5 Resources**

410 The organization should determine what resources are needed to effectively manage the risk  
411 related to COVID-19 and ensure sufficient resources are in place.

412 The organization should establish processes to ensure that essential resources are maintained,  
413 appropriately managed and can be supplied reliably as needed.

414 Workers with responsibility for managing resources to mitigate the risks related to COVID-19  
415 should be clearly identified and communicated to workers and other relevant interested parties.  
416 The organization should ensure there is a process to enable ongoing dialogue with workers about  
417 specific needs for resources to manage COVID-19 and how workers can escalate issues.

418 When determining the resources needed to resume and maintain essential activities, the  
419 organization should consider:

- 420 a) human resources, including practical and psychological support to workers;
- 421 b) financial resources;
- 422 c) appropriate PPE;
- 423 d) handwashing, hand sanitizing, and cleaning materials;
- 424 e) technology;
- 425 f) infrastructure and equipment;

- 426 g) communication methods (see Clause 6); and
- 427 h) the need for and availability of additional expertise and training.

## 428 **6 Communication**

### 429 **6.1 General**

430 The organization should communicate its commitment to managing the risks related to COVID-19  
431 and inform workers and other relevant interested parties of:

- 432 a) general safety measures and controls;
- 433 b) required ways of working, taking into account the needs of individual and groups workers;
- 434 c) what is expected of them;
- 435 d) what they can expect from the organization; and
- 436 e) how to report concerns or safety incidents.

437 The organization should use a combination of formal and informal communication methods (e.g.  
438 intranet, website, email, signs, images, symbols, phone calls, audio announcements, video) so  
439 messages are accessible and can be understood by all relevant interested parties, including those  
440 with disabilities, non-native English speakers and people with differing levels of literacy.

441 Preferred methods of communication (e.g. emails or personal phone calls rather than video  
442 conferences with groups) should be taken into account for workers with different needs, giving  
443 consideration to neurodiversity.

444 Communication with workers and other relevant interested parties should be two-way and  
445 methods should facilitate ongoing conversation as well as more formal consultation.

446 Communications should provide clear and up-to-date guidance on social distancing, hygiene and  
447 required behaviours:

- 448 1) before arrival at the workplace (e.g. by phone, website, intranet, email);
- 449 2) on arrival at the workplace (e.g. signs, posters, screens, announcements, induction [see 9.2]);
- 450 and
- 451 3) throughout the workplace (e.g. signs, posters, screens, announcements).

452 Regular communications should be provided on changes to processes, guidance and the levels of  
453 risk related to COVID-19.

454 The organization should:

- 455 - establish who is responsible for communicating safety guidance to visitors, delivery workers,  
456 customers and other people (ensuring more than one person can perform this role);
- 457 - provide necessary training to workers who act as hosts for visitors, or need to interact with  
458 delivery workers, customers, the public, etc.;
- 459 - communicate relevant information about operational changes, safety measures and controls to  
460 suppliers, customers and other relevant interested parties; and
- 461 - review communications frequently to ensure they are effective and take action if issues are  
462 identified.

## 463 **6.2 Communication for first return to work**

464 The organization should take all reasonable measures to ensure workers understand the  
465 behaviours, processes and working practices required to manage the risk of transmission of  
466 COVID-19 before returning to work.

467 In addition to the actions recommended in **6.1**, before workers return to the workplace the  
468 organization should:

- 469 a) develop communication and training materials;
- 470 b) provide guidance on safe travel to and from work (e.g. encouraging walking, cycling and  
471 personal vehicles where possible, and social distancing and face coverings if workers need to  
472 use public transport);
- 473 c) provide clear guidance on staggered start and finish times, shifts or any other altered working  
474 patterns or schedules;
- 475 d) provide guidance on social distancing, hygiene and general ways of working;
- 476 e) communicate new processes for entering the workplace, beginning work and the use of  
477 common areas; and
- 478 f) communicate changes to emergency procedures (see **4.7**).

## 479 **6.3 Ongoing communication**

480 The organization should ensure all workers are regularly reminded of safety measures and controls  
481 and kept up to date if these are changed or additional safety measures or controls are implemented.

482 The organization should:

- 483 a) ensure ongoing engagement with workers, worker representatives and relevant trade unions  
484 to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to ways of working, how work  
485 is organized and the physical workplace; and
- 486 b) communicate regularly with workers, including those working remotely, to check mental  
487 health and wellbeing and to give clear information on issues that are known to negatively affect  
488 mental health (e.g. uncertainty about pay, job security, availability of appropriate PPE).

## 489 **7 Hygiene**

490 The organization should implement processes to keep the workplace clean, reduce the risk of  
491 transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated surfaces and enable good hygiene throughout working  
492 hours and at the end of each working shift.

493 Frequent hand washing with hot water and soap is recommended to limit transmission of COVID-19.  
494 When hand washing is not possible, hands should be sanitized with an alcohol-based sanitizer.

495 The organization should implement processes to ensure:

- 496 a) workers wash their hands (or sanitize if this is not possible) at frequent intervals and  
497 communicate when this should be done (e.g. before entering or leaving an area of the  
498 workplace, before and after breaks, before and after handling shared resources such as  
499 telephones, computers, tools);



- 500 b) additional handwashing and/or hand sanitizing facilities are available in all workplaces;
- 501 c) additional cleaning materials are available to workers to enable frequent cleaning of
- 502 workstations and equipment, including between use by different workers;
- 503 d) frequent cleaning of surfaces that are touched regularly (e.g. door handles, light switches,
- 504 counters, pay points, testing surfaces, shared resources);
- 505 e) effective, adequate and frequent waste disposal;
- 506 f) promotion of good hygiene practices, including posters and signs to remind workers of required
- 507 handwashing techniques and frequency, the need to avoid touching faces, and to cough or sneeze
- 508 into a disposable tissue or into their elbow;
- 509 g) safe use of toilets, showers and changing rooms, replacing hand dryers with paper towels where
- 510 possible.

511 The organization should require workers to keep personal belongings in personal spaces, such as  
512 lockers, if possible, and to ensure that belongings are removed from the workplace at the end of each  
513 shift.

514 The organization should take action to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 through contact  
515 with objects that come into the workplace and vehicles used by the organization.

516 The organization should restrict non-essential deliveries, including personal deliveries to workers.

517 The organization should establish processes to:

- 518 1) ensure materials, equipment and other objects entering the workplace are cleaned to reduce
- 519 transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated surfaces;
- 520 2) clean shared equipment after each use;
- 521 3) regularly clean vehicles used for work activities, including vehicles workers drive home; and
- 522 4) increase handwashing for workers handling deliveries or provide hand sanitizer where this is
- 523 not practical.

## 524 **8 Use of personal protective equipment and face coverings**

525 Personal protective equipment (PPE) protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can  
526 include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear  
527 and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks. If  
528 workers are required to use PPE to protect against risks unrelated to transmission of COVID-19 they  
529 should continue to do so.

530 Unless workers are in a workplace or role where the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is very high  
531 (e.g. health and social care) the role of PPE in providing additional protection can be limited. PPE is  
532 not a replacement for working from home, social distancing, handwashing and other hygiene  
533 measures.

534 Face coverings can provide some protection against transmission of COVID-19, however specialist  
535 PPE (e.g. respirators, masks to protect workers from dust and other industrial airborne hazards)  
536 should be reserved for those who need them to perform their roles.

537 If face coverings or other additional PPE is required to manage the risks related to COVID-19, the  
538 organization should:

- 539 a) establish guidelines for when and how PPE should be used;  
540 b) provide suitable PPE free of charge;  
541 c) ensure PPE is used appropriately, correctly fitted and disposed of safely after use; and  
542 d) ensure workers take regular breaks to minimize fatigue caused by using PPE, which can lead to  
543 reduced compliance to safety measures and unsafe use of equipment.

544 Organizations should support workers who choose to use a face covering not required by the  
545 organization (e.g. homemade face coverings or other face coverings not provided by the  
546 organization) and ensure they:

- 547 1) wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before putting the face covering on and after removing it;  
548 2) avoid touching their face or face covering when wearing it, to avoid contamination;  
549 3) change the face covering if it becomes damp or if it has been touched;  
550 4) continue to regularly wash their hands and sanitize hands where this is not possible;  
551 5) change the face covering each day, as a minimum, and more often if necessary;  
552 6) wash the face covering at a high temperature before/after each use if the material is washable; if  
553 it is not washable, it should be disposed with the usual waste; and  
554 7) continue to comply with social distancing guidelines, wherever possible.

## 555 **9 Operations**

### 556 **9.1 General**

557 The organization should ensure processes are in place to address the risks identified in **4.3, 4.4,**  
558 **4.5, and 4.7,** including implementing measures to enable home working, and social distancing and  
559 other safety measures and controls in the workplace.

560 In activities and situations where it is impossible to fully comply with social distancing guidelines,  
561 organizations should implement the actions outlined in **4.6** and ensure that activity times involved  
562 are kept as short as possible.

563 If an activity requires face-to-face work for a sustained period without being able to comply with  
564 social distancing, or bringing workers into contact with people other than their assigned team or  
565 pair, the organization should assess if the activity can safely go ahead.

566 No worker is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

### 567 **9.2 First return to work**

568 The organization should ensure an induction process is implemented and maintained to ensure  
569 changes to the workplace and ways of working are communicated to all workers on first return to  
570 work. This should be in addition to communications provided before the return to work and should  
571 include guidance for specific roles or activities.

572 The organization should:

- 573 a) ensure all workers returning to work, or attending a different workplace or site, are provided  
574 with full induction;

- 575 b) limit the number of workers being inducted at one time to enable social distancing; and
- 576 c) consider using outside spaces for induction where safe and possible.

### 577 **9.3 Coming to work and leaving work**

578 The organization should ensure social distancing is maintained wherever possible and require  
579 handwashing (or hand sanitizing if this is not possible) on arrival and departure.

580 The organization should also:

- 581 a) stagger arrival and departure times to reduce crowding at entry and exit points;
- 582 b) provide additional entry and exit points if possible;
- 583 c) provide additional parking or facilities such as bike racks where possible;
- 584 d) limit the number of passengers in vehicles used by the organization, such as minibuses. This can  
585 include leaving seats empty;
- 586 e) use social distancing indicators on the floors or walls and introduce one-way systems at entry  
587 and exit points;
- 588 f) create separate entry and exit points for high-risk work areas or sites (e.g. mechanical test sites,  
589 wet labs);
- 590 g) provide alternatives to touch-based security devices, such as keypads;
- 591 h) provide storage for workers' clothes and bags;
- 592 i) provide facilities for workers to change into work clothing and equipment on-site, where social  
593 distancing and hygiene guidelines can be met; and
- 594 j) wash or clean work clothing and equipment (e.g. uniforms, hard hats, goggles, gloves) on-site if  
595 possible.

### 596 **9.4 Moving around workplaces**

597 The organization should ensure processes are in place to maintain social distancing wherever  
598 possible, while people move through the workplace.

599 Organizations should:

- 600 a) reduce movement within buildings and sites (e.g. restrict access to specific work areas only to  
601 workers who need to be there, encourage use of radios or telephones, where permitted, cleaning  
602 them between use if these are shared);
- 603 b) remove access controls (e.g. electronic barriers, keypads) in low risk areas to reduce surface  
604 contamination;
- 605 c) use teams/pairs or timed booking processes to reduce the number of people in a work area at  
606 one time;
- 607 d) introduce one-way systems through buildings, paying particular attention to long or narrow  
608 corridors, stairs, walkways and turnstiles;
- 609 e) encourage the use of stairs and reduce maximum occupancy for lifts/elevators, providing hand  
610 sanitizer for their operation; and
- 611 f) enable people with disabilities to safely access and use lifts/elevators.

## 612 **9.5 Work zones and workstations**

613 Organizations should ensure social distancing between individual workers in work zones and at  
614 workstations wherever possible.

615 The organization should:

- 616 a) review work zones and move workstations to enable social distancing between each station,  
617 paying attention to the space needed to move to and from workstations;
- 618 b) arrange workstations so that workers are side-by-side or back-to-back;
- 619 c) if workstations are fixed at less than the recommended distance, consider blocking the use of  
620 some workstations, or use screens to separate workers;
- 621 d) assign workstations and equipment to individual workers, wherever possible, or teams/pairs  
622 where this is not possible (e.g. call centres, training facilities);
- 623 e) use floor or wall markers to indicate recommended social distancing;
- 624 f) reduce the number of workers in a work zone to enable social distancing in restricted spaces; and
- 625 g) limit the use of high-touch items and shared equipment and enable frequent cleaning.

## 626 **9.6 Use of common areas**

627 Organizations should implement processes to facilitate the safe use of essential common areas,  
628 including:

- 629 a) frequent cleaning;
- 630 b) limiting the number of people in common areas at one time;
- 631 c) limiting how long people can be in common areas; and
- 632 d) social distancing.

633 Organizations should consider:

- 634 1) staggering break times and encouraging the use of safe outside areas if possible;
- 635 2) creating additional common spaces in other parts of the workplace;
- 636 3) installing screens to protect workers in reception or similar areas;
- 637 4) encouraging workers to bring in their own food or providing packaged meals to avoid opening  
638 canteens where appropriate;
- 639 5) moving seating and tables to enable social distancing and reduce face-to-face interaction;
- 640 6) encouraging workers to remain in the workplace (including designated outdoor space)  
641 throughout working hours and requiring compliance to social distancing if leaving the  
642 workplace;
- 643 7) regulating the use of locker or changing rooms, showers and other common facilities; and
- 644 8) encouraging storage of personal items in personal spaces, e.g. lockers, during working hours.

645 **9.7 Meetings and visits to the workplace**

646 Organizations should limit visits to the workplace and use remote working technology to avoid both  
647 external and internal face-to-face meetings.

648 If physical meetings are essential, the organization should:

- 649 a) limit participation to the minimum number of essential people and maintain social distancing;
- 650 b) avoid shared resources (e.g. pens, water or coffee jugs);
- 651 c) provide hand sanitizers in the meeting room;
- 652 d) hold meetings outside or in well-ventilated rooms, if possible; and
- 653 e) use floor or wall marking to indicate acceptable social distancing.

654 If visitors to the workplace are essential, the organization should communicate expected behaviours  
655 and processes for safely entering the building in advance of the visit.

656 The organization should also:

- 657 1) restrict access to required visitors only;
- 658 2) limit the number of visitors in the workplace at any time;
- 659 3) limit visits to specific times;
- 660 4) revise schedules for essential service and other contractor visits to reduce interaction (e.g.  
661 outside of normal hours to limit interaction with workers or customers);
- 662 5) ensure visitor details are recorded to enable contact tracing, if necessary (e.g. names, dates and  
663 who is hosting the visit);
- 664 6) revise how visitor details are recorded and how visitors enter and exit the workplace (e.g. details  
665 recorded by a receptionist to avoid shared pens, using one-way systems to enter and exit, using  
666 disposable visitor badges); and
- 667 7) ensure visitors understand and comply with social distancing and other safety measures and  
668 controls.

669 **9.8 Working with the public**

670 The organization should ensure controls are in place to maintain social distancing and to minimize  
671 risks to workers from interaction with customers and members of the public.

672 The organization should take actions such as:

- 673 a) using posters, signs, marketing emails and other communications to inform customers and other  
674 members of the public of safety measures and controls and how to maintain social distancing;
- 675 b) limiting the number of customers in the building so that social distancing can be maintained;
- 676 c) using safe outdoor space for queuing, where possible, using floor or wall markings to indicate  
677 social distancing intervals;
- 678 d) making regular announcements to remind customers to maintain social distancing and follow  
679 other safety measures;
- 680 e) providing hand sanitizers at entrances;
- 681 f) ensuring cleaning of frequently touched areas and shared resources, (e.g. card payment and cash  
682 machine keypads, handles of baskets and trolleys);
- 683 g) limiting customer handling of products (e.g. through different display methods, signs, rotation of  
684 high-touch items);

- 685 h) providing physical barriers such as screens in places where interaction between workers and
- 686 customers is frequent (e.g. pay points, customer service desks);
- 687 i) reducing customer facilities and adapting services if social distancing cannot be complied with
- 688 (e.g. closing fitting rooms, using fixed pairs of workers to carry heavy items to customers'
- 689 vehicles);
- 690 j) encouraging contactless payment and refunds;
- 691 k) establishing no-contact collection and return points; and
- 692 l) staggering collection times.

## 693 **9.9 Work-related travel and deliveries**

694 The organization should avoid all unnecessary work travel and ensure controls are in place to keep  
695 workers safe when they do need to travel or when making or receiving deliveries.

696 If work-related travel is necessary, the organization should:

- 697 a) minimize the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle;
- 698 b) use fixed teams or pairs;
- 699 c) increase ventilation in motor vehicles (e.g. open windows);
- 700 d) ensure workers avoid sitting face-to-face;
- 701 e) ensure vehicles are cleaned between shifts and before use by other workers; and
- 702 f) centrally log if a worker is required to stay away from home overnight and ensure overnight
- 703 accommodation complies with social distancing and hygiene guidelines.

704 The organization should take action to ensure deliveries can be made and received safely.

705 The organization should:

- 706 1) minimize person-to-person contact during deliveries including during payment and exchange of
- 707 documentation (e.g. electronic tools for payment, signing and document exchange);
- 708 2) revise pick-up and drop-off collection points (e.g. zones with social distancing markings, no-
- 709 contact drop-offs to customers and other work sites);
- 710 3) reduce the frequency of incoming deliveries (e.g. establishing central procurement processes to
- 711 avoid external deliveries to different sites, ordering larger quantities less often);
- 712 4) use single workers or fixed pairs to load or unload vehicles;
- 713 5) provide controlled, safe access to welfare facilities (e.g. toilets) for delivery drivers;
- 714 6) encourage drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise safe working
- 715 practice; and
- 716 7) ensure regular cleaning of reusable delivery boxes, loading equipment, etc.

## 717 **10 Performance evaluation**

### 718 **10.1 Monitoring and evaluation**

719 The organization should use a systematic approach to monitor and evaluate:

- 720 a) how effective safety measures and controls to protect workers are;
- 721 b) how the work is being done; and

722 c) behaviours of workers and other people in the workplace.

723 Monitoring and evaluation activities should:

- 724 1) determine the extent to which the guidance is being complied with;
- 725 2) determine if processes for ongoing risk assessments are in place and operating effectively;
- 726 3) determine the extent to which controls are working and if these need to be changed, enhanced  
727 or enforced more actively;
- 728 4) determine if the use of controls is creating new risks that need to be addressed; and
- 729 5) take into account feedback from workers, worker representatives and relevant trade unions.

## 730 **10.2 Management review, incidents and reporting**

731 The organization should review the outputs of monitoring and evaluation (see **10.1**) at regular  
732 intervals and take into account:

- 733 a) issues identified with people's level of compliance to safety measures and controls put in place;
- 734 b) incidents reported by workers and other relevant interested parties;
- 735 c) root cause(s) of incidents; and
- 736 d) effectiveness of actions taken to deal with incidents, including actions taken at the time of the  
737 incident and actions to address the root causes of the incident.

738 The results of the management review should be communicated to workers and other relevant  
739 interested parties as appropriate. Communications should include actions taken and other  
740 improvement measures that are or will be introduced (see Clause **11**).

741 It is a UK legal requirement that the organization make a formal report to the Health and Safety  
742 Executive (HSE) if:

- 743 1) an incident at work has led to someone's possible or actual exposure to the coronavirus that  
744 causes COVID-19;
- 745 2) a worker has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused  
746 by exposure at work; or
- 747 3) a worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

748 Further information on reporting requirements can be found on the [HSE website](#).

## 749 **11 Improvement**

750 The organization should determine opportunities for improving how it manages risks related to  
751 COVID-19 and implement necessary actions.

752 The organization should take into account the results of monitoring, evaluation and review (see  
753 Clause **10**) and:

- 754 a) take immediate actions to improve or change safety measures and controls that are not effective;
- 755 b) implement additional safety measures and controls if needed; and
- 756 c) address changes to the external and internal issues that can affect health, safety and wellbeing at  
757 work (see **4.1**), including changes to legal requirements or official guidance.

758 To ensure the organization continues to manage the risks related to COVID-19, it should review the  
759 recommendations in this document regularly to take into account the dynamic nature of the situation.



760 **Bibliography/Further resources**

- 761 BS 45002, *Occupational health and safety management systems — General guidelines for the*  
762 *application of ISO 45001 — Risks and opportunities*
- 763 BS EN ISO 9000:2015, *Quality management systems – Fundamentals and vocabulary*
- 764 BS EN ISO 22301, *Security and resilience — Business continuity management systems — Requirements*
- 765 BS EN ISO 22313, *Security and resilience — Business continuity management systems — Guidance on*  
766 *the use of ISO 22301*
- 767 BS EN ISO 41001, *Facility management — Management systems — Requirements with guidance for*  
768 *use*
- 769 BS ISO 31000, *Risk management — Guidelines*
- 770 BS ISO 45001:2018, *Occupational health and safety management systems — Requirements with*  
771 *guidance for use*
- 772 ISO/WD 45003:2020<sup>1</sup>, *Occupational health and safety management — Psychological Health and Safety*  
773 *in the Workplace — Guidelines*
- 774

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<sup>1</sup> To be published