

General Advice to Businesses on their responsibilities regarding the safety of employees and anyone else who may be affected by work activities during the Covid-19 pandemic

All businesses have a legal and moral duty to take reasonable and practical steps to protect their employees and anyone else who might be affected by their work activities.

During the current pandemic, there is a potential risk of spreading the Covid-19 virus if employers do not assess their work activities for infection risk, and take practical steps to minimise this risk.

Information is available on the government website which explains what coronavirus is, and lists the symptoms as well as advising people what to do if they suspect they may have the virus. We have provided links to this information at the end of this advice leaflet, as well as links to advice and guidance we have drawn up for specific sectors and risks.

This leaflet is designed to assist small & medium sized businesses undertake a risk assessment and put in place practical infection control measures to protect themselves, their staff and anyone else that may be affected by their work activity.

How is the Covid-19 virus passed on?

The Covid-19 virus is spread by fine aerosol droplets which become airborne when an infected person or a carrier coughs, sneezes or spits. Other people become infected when they breathe in the aerosols or when they come into contact with an infected surface on which the aerosols have landed, or an infected person has touched. The virus can survive for at least 3 days on hard surfaces. When someone else comes into contact with a surface where there is virus, then they can become infected. Examples in the workplace will include shared desks, keyboards, telephones and other contact surfaces such as door handles, tap handles, kitchen facilities, microwaves, fridge doors etc.

What practical steps can be taken to help prevent the spread of Covid-19

Cleaning & Disinfection

- Increase cleaning and disinfection regimes, and focus on cleaning hand contact points and shared equipment and areas. (For information on effective disinfection see Annex 1 at the end of this leaflet).
- Make alcohol based hand sanitisers readily available to employees in areas where such equipment is used (minimum 60% alcohol), as well as alcohol based screen, keyboard and telephone wipes.
- Where practical, avoid use of shared equipment. If this is not possible it must be cleaned and disinfected between different users. Examples of shared equipment in the workplace may cover a very wide range for example fork lift trucks and balers in a warehouse, delivery vehicles, to printers in an office. You will need to consider your workplace environment and all work activities before you draw up comprehensive cleaning and disinfection instructions and regular checks to ensure that this is being carried out effectively.

Employee Distancing

- How can you ensure employees remain 2m apart?
- Stagger employee arrival times and/or change shift patterns to promote social distancing and create more space around work stations.
- Break times can also be staggered to prevent overcrowding in staff canteens/rest rooms.
- Consider changing the layout of workspaces or introducing a one way system to promote social distancing.
- Where possible arrangements should be made for employees to work from home.
- Where employees work outside the office and/or come into contact with customers/members of the public, for example someone employed to carry out emergency repairs, employers will be required to provide appropriate PPE and hand sanitiser with instructions/training on how and when to use the PPE. Customers must be informed that they will be required to leave the room or area where the employee is working.

Controlling social distancing at the customer/employee interface

We have put together specific guidance for small independent grocers and retailers – see link at the end of this document. This guidance will apply to most retail businesses where customers purchase goods at a retail outlet. It is intended that this leaflet will be updated regularly when the government begin to lift restrictions, however, if you have any questions or concerns or require specific advice, please contact us:

By telephone: 01507 60111 or by email using commercial.team@e-lindsey.gov.uk

Links to Government advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/news/fsa-publishes-guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19> - Food business guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance> (links here to guidance for a number of specific sectors including care sectors)

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-safety-for-community-cooking-and-food-banks>
(community food banks and meals)

Guidance to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

The government, in consultation with industry, has produced guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible.

These 8 guides cover a range of different types of work. Many businesses operate more than one type of workplace, such as an office, factory and fleet of vehicles. You may need to use more than one of these guides as you think through what you need to do to keep people safe.

1. [Construction and other outdoor work](#)Guidance for people who work in or run outdoor working environments.
2. [Factories, plants and warehouses](#)Guidance for people who work in or run factories, plants and warehouses.
3. [Labs and research facilities](#)Guidance for people who work in or run indoor labs and research facilities and similar environments.
4. [Offices and contact centres](#)Guidance for people who work in or run offices, contact centres and similar indoor environments.

5. [Other people's homes Guidance for people working in, visiting or delivering to other people's homes.](#)
6. [Restaurants offering takeaway or delivery Guidance for people who work in or run restaurants offering takeaway or delivery services.](#)
7. [Shops and branches Guidance for people who work in or run shops, branches, stores or similar environments.](#)
8. [Vehicles Guidance for people who work in or from vehicles, including couriers, mobile workers, lorry drivers, on-site transit and work vehicles, field forces and similar.](#)
9. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

Links to trade/professional organisation advice for specific sectors:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

<https://www.cieh.org/media/4070/covid-19--food-delivery-and-takeaway-guidance.pdf>

<https://view.publitas.com/ukh/coronavirus-advice-for-hotels-and-the-hospitality-industry-25-02-2020/page/1>

<https://www.pwtag.org/guidance-on-temporary-pool-closure/> (swimming pools and spa pools temporarily closed)

<https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/social-distancing-in-retail-stores-and-warehouses/> (British Retail Consortium Guidance for retailers & warehouses)

<https://hta.org.uk/coronavirus-latest-information-and-advice/garden-centre-reopening.html> (Advice for Garden Centres and horticultural growers)

[https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/16104/CFSG-Animal-Business-Guidance-14-04-\(community food banks and meal provision\)](https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/16104/CFSG-Animal-Business-Guidance-14-04-(community-food-banks-and-meal-provision))

[20/pdf/CFSG Animal Business Guidance 14.04.20.pdf?m=637235888601700000](https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/16104/CFSG-Animal-Business-Guidance-14-04-(community-food-banks-and-meal-provision)20/pdf/CFSG%20Animal%20Business%20Guidance%2014.04.20.pdf?m=637235888601700000) (businesses involved with pets and animals)

<https://www.water.org.uk/publication/recovering-drinking-water-supplies-in-buildings-and-networks-after-prolonged-inactivity/> (Advice from Water UK on the safety of water systems in buildings which have been inactive for some time)

https://www.cieh.org/media/4208/legionella-guidance-covid-19.pdf?utm_campaign=11539549_Coronavirus%20Newsletter%20No%207%2013052020&utm_medium=email&utm_source=CIEH&dm_i=1RSV,6VBZ1,E8WSN0,RKLG1,1 (Guidance from the CIEH on minimising risk from Legionella following periods of inactivity)

Links to East Lindsey Advice Leaflets

<https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/15931/Guidance-on-social-distancing-for-food-retailers-and-takeaway-food->

[establishments/pdf/Guidance_on_social_distancing_for_food_retailers_and_takeaway_food_establishments.pdf?m=637207232959970000](https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/15931/Guidance-on-social-distancing-for-food-retailers-and-takeaway-food-establishments/pdf/Guidance_on_social_distancing_for_food_retailers_and_takeaway_food_establishments.pdf?m=637207232959970000) (Food takeaways)

[https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/15942/Taxi-and-Private-Hire-March-2020-Newsletter/pdf/Taxi and Private Hire - March 2020 Newsletter.pdf?m=637208133928070000](https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/15942/Taxi-and-Private-Hire-March-2020-Newsletter/pdf/Taxi%20and%20Private%20Hire%20-%20March%202020%20Newsletter.pdf?m=637208133928070000)

(Taxi and private hire)

https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/16110/Advice-on-minimising-legionella-in-water-systems-during-COVID-19/pdf/Advice_on_minimising_legionella_in_water_systems_during_the_Covid-19_pandemic.pdf?m=637236838578370000 (All businesses that are temporarily closed in respect of water systems and preventing Legionella)

https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/16079/Food-Safety-for-Community-Cooking-and-Food-Banks/pdf/Food_safety_for_community_cooking_and_food_banks.pdf?m=637229912862700000

<https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/16105/Dog-Walking-and-COVID-19-.pdf?m=637235888605600000>

(advice when walking other people's dogs)

Annex 1 - The Use of Bleach

Bleach is a strong and effective disinfectant. Its active ingredient, sodium hypochlorite, denatures protein in micro-organisms and is therefore effective in killing bacteria, fungus and viruses. Household bleach works quickly and is widely available at a low cost. Diluted household bleach is thus recommended for the disinfection of facilities.

As bleach irritates mucous membranes, the skin and the airway, decomposes under heat or light and reacts readily with other chemicals, caution should be exercised in the use of it. Improper use of bleach may reduce its effectiveness in disinfection and also lead to accidents which can be harmful to health. Overuse of bleach or using a bleach solution that is too concentrated results in the production of toxic substances that pollute the environment and disturb ecological balance.

Tools and Equipment

Before cleaning, get all necessary tools and equipment ready. Cleaning tools, cleansers/disinfectants, measuring tools and protective gear will be needed.

Cleaning tools:

Brush, mop, towel, spray can and bucket.

Cleansers/disinfectants:

Bleach and water.

Measuring tools:

Tablespoon and measuring cup.

Protective gear:

Mask, rubber gloves, plastic apron and goggles (recommended).

Procedures of Preparing/Using Diluted Bleach

1. Keep windows open when diluting or using bleach to ensure good ventilation.
2. Put on protective gear when diluting or using bleach as it irritates mucous membranes, the skin and the airway.
3. Cold water should be used for dilution as hot water decomposes the active ingredient of bleach and renders it ineffective.
4. Bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite should be diluted as follows (demonstration short):
 - 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing 10ml of bleach with 1litre of water) can be used for general household cleaning.

- 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing 10ml of bleach with 0.5litre of water) is used to disinfect surfaces or articles contaminated with vomitus, excreta, secretions or blood.
5. Make adjustments to the amount of bleach added if its concentration of sodium hypochlorite is above or below 5.25%.¹
 - Calculation: Multiplier of the amount of bleach added = $\frac{5.25}{\text{concentration of sodium hypochlorite in bleach}}$
 - For example, when diluting a bleach containing only 5% sodium hypochlorite, the multiplier is $\frac{5.25}{5}=1.05$. That means $10 \times 1.05 = 10.5\text{ml}$ of bleach should be used when preparing a bleach solution.
 6. For accurate measurement of the amount of bleach added, a tablespoon or measuring cup can be used.
 7. Rinse disinfected articles with water and wipe dry.
 8. Cleaning tools should be soaked in diluted bleach for 30 minutes and then rinsed thoroughly before reuse.
 9. Finally, wash hands with liquid soap, then dry hands with a clean towel or disposable towel.

Precautions

- Avoid using bleach on metals, wool, nylon, silk, dyed fabric and painted surfaces.
- Avoid touching the eyes. If bleach gets into the eyes, immediately rinse with water for at least 15 minutes and consult a doctor.
- Bleach should not be used together or mixed with other household detergents as this reduces its effectiveness in disinfection and causes chemical reactions. For instance, a toxic gas is produced when bleach is mixed with acidic detergents such as those used for toilet cleaning. This could result in accidents and injuries. If necessary, use detergents first and rinse thoroughly with water before using bleach for disinfection.
- As undiluted bleach liberates a toxic gas when exposed to sunlight, it should be stored in a cool and shaded place out of reach of children.
- Sodium hypochlorite decomposes with time. To ensure its effectiveness, it is advised to purchase recently produced bleach and avoid over-stocking.
- For effective disinfection, diluted bleach should be used within 24 hours after preparation as decomposition increases with time if left unused.

¹ If you are purchasing thick bleach from a supermarket it can be difficult to establish the concentration of hypochlorite. As a simple rule of thumb 10 teaspoons, (50mls) of thick bleach can be added to 450mls of water and used as an effective disinfectant to kill viruses.