

UNITE MANUFACTURING

Delivering sector best practice



COVID-19 – WORKING SAFELY GUIDANCE



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Unite is in the unique position in manufacturing of working with employers and representing workers across its many sectors, from; automotive and aerospace to graphic design, information technology and chemicals, from pharmaceuticals to rubber, plastics and general engineering. We work very closely with industry federations at a national and international level alongside employers from the largest publicly listed corporations to the SME's that make up the thousands of companies across our integrated supply chains.

During these unprecedented times, our officers, shop stewards and health and safety representatives have engaged constructively at every level of industry as well as with government, Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to ensure that the millions of workers that have continued to work throughout this COVID-19 pandemic have done so as safely as possible, while those currently furloughed are able to return to a safe place of work as quickly as possible to protect long-term job security and avoid what would be a very damaging long-term recession in the economy.

To support businesses, health and safety representatives and workplace health and safety committees in planning for a COVID-19 safe workplace, we have been compiling best practice across manufacturing. This guide attempts to bring this 'best practice' together in one place and provide some practical examples of actions taken across the sector to manufacturers of all sizes looking to meet the challenge of how to safely operate - while minimising any risk of virus transmission amongst employees, their families or our wider community.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of actions to take, these will be determined by detailed risk assessment at the workplace. It should be used in conjunction with government and HSE guidance as well as detailed regulation governing health, safety and welfare at work.

I hope you find this a useful and practical tool, adding to your knowledge as safety representatives and shop steward's during COVID-19. Union workplaces are safer workplaces in normal times, but protecting our members in this unprecedented period requires additional measures to be taken that not only protect our members at work, but our families, neighbours and friends in our communities.

Yours in solidarity



Steve Turner
Assistant General Secretary

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Unite disclaimer

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It is each company's responsibility to comply with the current health and safety law, legislation and related government guidance. Unite guides, information and best practice are not legally binding. Readers should always seek appropriate advice from a suitably qualified health and safety professional and/or union health and safety representative before taking, or refraining from taking, any action. Unite disclaims liability for any loss, howsoever caused, arising directly or indirectly from reliance on the information in this guide.

PART ONE - GENERAL

1. Working together for a safe workplace

Health and safety is an issue of mutual concern to all involved in the world of work. Trade unions elect and train workplace health and safety representatives in their statutory rights as well as the duties on employers. Our representatives work with employers and the workforce pro-actively to introduce measures to improve the health, safety and welfare of all at work. They also investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences at work to both learn the lessons from them and put in place safer systems of work to prevent any reoccurrence.

- ⇒ Health and Safety Committees at work provide a joint union/employer forum to discuss and analyse the effectiveness of measures in place and have a crucial role to play in the current situation as we face the additional risks associated with COVID-19.
- ⇒ The government recognises in its safe workplace guidance the role and independence of union health and safety representatives stating that *"you must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be"*. In a very positive development, many employers are going further and working with our safety representatives throughout their extended supply chains.

We all have the right to a safe and healthy place of work, to leave home in the morning and return to families that evening safe and well. COVID-19 is an invisible killer, it has no boundaries or false divides. In these circumstances it's important that workers understand their right to safeguard themselves and leave a place of imminent danger to a place of safety. This is a long-standing right under *Section 44, Employment Rights Act (1996)* and one that we will defend our members exercising in circumstances where they genuinely believe they are being placed at serious risk. Working constructively and jointly with employers we believe we can address the additional risks to health that COVID-19 poses, the vast majority of employers share that belief.

2. Risk assessment

Objective

Conducting appropriate and suitable risk assessments is a **statutory duty on employers** and this duty extends to their **review in light of the additional risks** associated with COVID-19. Where trade unions are

at the workplace and have **appointed health and safety representatives**, risk assessments must be **conducted in cooperation** and **with the involvement of them**, and the employers overall workplace safety strategy must be discussed with any established **workplace health and safety committee**. Details on how to conduct risk assessments – including **Unites, risk assessment guide**, and further information on the statutory framework can be found in the reference section of this guide.

Risk assessments should be **done in cooperation with contractors** and others who **share the workplace** to ensure comprehensive and complete coverage and understanding of workplace risks. It is the **risk assessment that should inform changes to work arrangements** and the **work environment** and the provision of **personal protective equipment** as required.

Risk assessment will identify specific additional workplace risks associated with COVID-19 and what measures need to be taken to **eliminate, control or mitigate** those risks. **As always when dealing with risks at work, employers must follow a hierarchy of actions** from a range of available options - from deciding **whether it's essential to perform the task at all**, to introducing **engineering and/or organisational controls** and finally issuing **appropriate and suitable personal protective equipment**.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ All risk assessments will be **reviewed** to assess all and any **additional risks** posed by COVID-19.
- ⇒ Risk assessments will be **carried out jointly with health and safety representatives**, reported to the **health and safety committee** and **published** on the company website.
- ⇒ All **risks will be managed** in line with a **clear hierarchy of control measures** to eliminate, control and mitigate. Personal protective clothing will be **issued as required by risk assessment** and will at all times be **suitable** to the individual and **appropriate** to the risk.
- ⇒ Union health and safety representatives will be **supported and encouraged to work with suppliers and contractors** on the implementation of safe systems of work to address COVID-19 risks. **Paid release** will be provided.
- ⇒ Risk assessment will inform the nature of any **changes to work organisation and/or arrangements** detailed in this guide.
- ⇒ The **Unite guide on risk assessment** can be downloaded here:
<https://unitetheunion.org/media/3069/009-riskassessandprocedures-2020-05-07.pdf>
- ⇒ **Additional Unite guidance on COVID-19** health and safety can be found here:
<https://unitetheunion.org/media/3018/007-unitecoronavirusguide-20-04-15-v14b.pdf>

3. Preparing for a safe return

Objective

Employers have a **statutory duty to provide and maintain a safe place of work**. Existing policies, processes, work arrangements and systems of work **should all therefore be reviewed** in light of the **additional risks** associated with COVID-19. The review should examine **how people travel to and from work** as well as operations at the workplace itself, avoiding rush hour travel and **minimising interaction or the risk of contamination**. Making suitable **alterations to work systems and processes** as well as **route planning** and arrangements for **deliveries and dispatch**.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Maintaining support for **home working for all those who can**.
- ⇒ **Staggering shift start and finishing times**; easing overcrowding on public transport and congestion on road networks while minimising the number of people arriving on site together.
- ⇒ Considering **short-time working and/or work rotation** measures to reduce overall numbers of workers on-site at any one time and a phased, inclusive return to work.

- ⇒ Encouraging the use of **cycling and walking where possible**. Providing additional secure storage areas for bicycles and encouraging take up of the governments cycle to work scheme.
- ⇒ Ensuring site security measures are introduced to **eliminate biometric controls** on access and exit and/or **key pad operations** including while clocking in and out.
- ⇒ Implementing **contactless clocking in/out** systems and a **one-way system for entering and exiting** the building.
- ⇒ Managing shift changes and **staggering rest/lunch breaks** to prevent congestion and allow time to **appropriately clean shared tooling and common use areas**.
- ⇒ Introducing **one-way systems for vehicle entry and exit** alongside changes to barrier controls.
- ⇒ Closing **fitness centres**.

4. Preparing the site - reception, security controls

Objective

Entering the reception and security control area is the first contact most visitors will have with your business. It is vital that the right impression is given to all those entering your premises from the start and clear signage and instruction is provided from the outset.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Ensure **signage and floor markings** are in place to ensure social distancing.
- ⇒ Place a **physical barrier** in front of the **reception desk** to ensure a two-metre distance between visitors and your employees.
- ⇒ Introduce arrangements to minimise requirements for document handling and registering, ensuring any **shared equipment, visitor book, sign-in/out logs** are cleaned after every use and that **pens** are not shared.
- ⇒ **Provide hand sanitiser** throughout the reception area.
- ⇒ **Limit access to reception areas** to ensure social distancing and rearrange/remove any available furniture.
- ⇒ Ensure that clear instruction is provided on the **safe use of lifts**, with **social distancing** measures marked out and **restrictions on their use and occupancy**.
- ⇒ Ensure an adequate **lift cleaning regime** is in place and that **touch pads** are given particular attention. Provide hand sanitiser in the lift.
- ⇒ Chock open doors (except fire doors) at all times, or **remove handles and retro-fit kickboards** and self-closing mechanisms.
- ⇒ Provide a designated area for the **delivery and collection of mail** eliminating hand to hand contact.

5. Preparing the site – work environment

Objective

Risk assessment's will identify specific additional workplace risks associated with COVID-19 and what measures need to be taken to **eliminate, control or mitigate** those risks. In addressing the risks to workers from COVID-19 employers have taken a number of measures, including making straightforward adjustments to the workplace and work organisation. **As always when dealing with risks at work, employers must follow a hierarchy of actions** from a range of available options from deciding whether it's essential to perform the task at all, to issuing appropriate and suitable personal protective equipment.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Introducing **one-way systems** on **walkways** and at **entry/exit** to buildings and introducing **separate entry and exit** points to avoid congestion.

- ⇒ **Removing door handles** where possible, **fitting kick boards** along with spring closure mechanisms.
- ⇒ Lay out **clear floor markings** and **suitable signage** to ensure **social distancing** across site with particular attention to potential bottle necks such as; car parks, bike sheds, reception areas, locker rooms, canteens, rest and smoking areas as well as at **visitor and contractor reception areas** and employee clocking in/out machines.
- ⇒ **Water storage facilities** will need to be checked following any period of stagnation due to furlough alongside **heating and ventilating systems** which must be checked and adjusted as necessary to ensure full protection is afforded at all times.
- ⇒ **Rearranging tables and seating areas** to observe **social distancing**, avoiding face-to-face and side by side seating in canteens or rest areas. **Removing crockery and shared utensils** and working with catering providers to offer **packed lunches in canteen or vending areas in disposable packaging**.

6. Preparing the site – work arrangements

Objective

Employers must assess the risks to all workers on site and take actions to eliminate, control or mitigate those risks. **Changes to work organisation will be key** to this, whether **adjusting the layout** of working areas and the **line-side delivery** of goods, minimising any risks associated with **shared tooling, touchscreen controls, repair and maintenance tasks** or simply providing hand sanitiser at work stations and suitable PPE where unavoidable close working makes this is appropriate.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Analysing and **reconfiguring internal goods**, people and **traffic flows** to minimise the number of potential employee interactions or encounters. **Review lineside delivery arrangements** to minimise any unnecessary interaction.
- ⇒ **Reviewing** production processes, **work cell organisation and tack times/line speed** to minimise the number of employees working at the same or nearby workstations.
- ⇒ **Reducing the rotation of jobs** to ensure small workgroups are kept together and worker movements within and between teams are minimised.
- ⇒ Reviewing **break times** and introducing **staggered start and finish** times to minimise cross shift/workgroup contact.
- ⇒ Providing **physical screens if social distancing cannot be maintained** and **suitable PPE where this is not practical** due to the nature of work.
- ⇒ Introduce measures to allow the **reporting of defects and/or repair and maintenance requests** to be made **maintaining social distancing**; the use of **white boards** for messages and **laser pens** to pin point problems.
- ⇒ Ensure measures are in place to **protect visitors and contractors onsite** and that any measures introduced are done so **in cooperation with other employers** using your site, **clearly explained** to workers prior to their admission to site and **effectively monitored and enforced**.
- ⇒ Where **PPE** is necessary ensuring it's **appropriate and suitable to the task/risk**, changed as necessary and that **training** is provided on its use and how to **dispose of it safely** at end of use.
- ⇒ A **deep cleaning and disinfecting programme** will need to be introduced alongside **an enhanced regular cleaning regime** throughout and between shifts. **Particular attention must be made to shared spaces**; rest and canteen areas, smoking bays and changing facilities and toilets.

7. Social distancing

Objective

Employers must introduce **clear control measures to ensure onsite social distancing** in line with government guidance. This is currently **maintaining a two-metre distance** between people at all

times. **Where this is not possible and the job is essential to the overall process**, adequate and suitable control measures must be put in place. **Such is the importance of social distancing** to the control of COVID-19 that **best practice in this area can be found throughout this guide**.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Providing **clear floor markings** to maintain a two-metre distance throughout the workplace, alongside **appropriate signage and instruction**.
- ⇒ **Work with trade unions** to **appoint COVID-19 Marshals'** to assist with the **effective monitoring and enforcement** of social distancing.
- ⇒ Providing **physical screening** where maintaining a two-metre distance is not possible and **appropriate PPE** where this is not practical and the work in question has to be done.
- ⇒ **Discouraging physical greetings**, such as handshakes.
- ⇒ **Limiting physical meetings** and **encouraging phone** calls, **digital** meetings or other measures such as the **provision of whiteboards** for messaging and **laser pens** for highlighting issues.

8. Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Objective

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is **the last measure to be taken to protect** workers and others from **known risks to their health and safety**. For this guide we are only examining specific **additional measures to be taken in respect of COVID-19**. Protections from COVID-19 are to be taken **in addition to existing requirements for safe working** and PPE provided for everyday workplace health and safety such as goggles, face shields, gloves, safety shoes, protective clothing such as aprons, hair nets, masks and air-fed/local exhaust ventilation. **All PPE provided must be suitable** for both the task and risk(s) it is controlling **and appropriate** for the person. Particular attention must be paid to the need to ensure a secure fit and that the design is appropriate for women and those with beards. **Social distancing and regular hand washing with appropriate sanitizer is the most effective protection against COVID-19**.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Conducting **appropriate risk assessments** will identify where, with all necessary control measures in place, additional PPE should be provided and worn.
- ⇒ **Providing appropriate PPE** where there is a risk that social distancing may not be observed.
- ⇒ Developing and **agreeing a PPE policy** including the provision of face masks, gloves, safety glasses and/or visors for roles where social distancing may not be observed
- ⇒ In confined spaces or performing tasks where other control measures are not possible, **it may be appropriate to introduce local exhaust ventilation and or air-fed masks**.
- ⇒ **Training and clear instructions** should be issued detailing how PPE should be **used, cleaned and disposed of** in safe manner.
- ⇒ Particular attention should be paid during the risk assessment to **identifying those areas where social distancing may not be possible or observed**, where the job entails frequent close interactions with other workers and/or visitors and contractors to site.
- ⇒ Increasing the **provision of cleaning equipment** and introducing more **frequent cleaning regimes for PPE using alcohol and/or disinfectant wipes** at regular intervals and at start of shifts, breaks and lunch times and at the end of shift.
- ⇒ **Adequate supplies of soap and/or sanitiser** must be provided and clearly identified across the workplace, including at workstations, to both **wash hands regularly** and to use **prior to and after putting on PPE**.
- ⇒ Where suitable and sufficient control measures are in place **there will not be a requirement to issue and/or use additional PPE**.

Face masks

There is a **lot of discussion about the use and appropriateness of face masks** in the fight to control COVID-19. The debate is a broad one covering their use in the community, on public transport and at work. In a work setting it is **a suitable risk assessment that should identify any need for additional PPE** such as face masks and **areas/circumstances** in which they should be worn. **In all cases where face protection is required, it must be suitable and appropriate.** Face mask specifications are varied with masks available in many shapes, sizes and designs with their own specific capabilities to safeguard against risk.

Employers should be aware that the widescale issuing of face masks can lead to a false sense of security for some and could **undermine more effective control measures** such as social distancing and regular hand washing. **Monitoring and enforcement of social distancing measures and regular handwashing** is key in the fight against COVID-19.

Where face masks are identified as appropriate for use by a risk assessment:

- ⇒ Masks **must be suitable and appropriate** for both the risk and person.
- ⇒ **Sufficient masks must be available at all times**, recognising that masks will need to be **changed regularly** and used ones will need to be **disposed of safely**.
- ⇒ Special attention must be paid to the **secure fit of any face protection**, especially for **women** and those with **beards**.
- ⇒ **It may be appropriate from a risk assessment** that masks are considered to be **mandatory in shared spaces**; canteens, rest areas, toilets, locker rooms, vending areas, offices and entry/exit points to the building.

9. Training, education, communications and induction

Objective

Employers should consider **what training, education and communication will be required** to ensure **employees, visitors and contractors** know and understand the changes to work organisation and arrangements introduced, new PPE requirements and other measures introduced to keep themselves and others on-site safe.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Developing an **induction programme** for all employees on return to work, with **written materials** explaining the changes and **reinforcing why** the changes have been made.
- ⇒ Ensuring that any **materials, signage and instruction is clear, easily understandable and in appropriate languages** to reflect the make-up of the workforce and contractors on-site.
- ⇒ Providing for a **physical walkthrough** of the site to familiarise workers, visitors and contractors with COVID-19 measures introduced and other changes to work arrangements.
- ⇒ Ensuring that any **induction, training and communication programme** covers areas such as; the principles of **how COVID-19 is spread**, new **standards and/or protocols** and the **importance of following them**.
- ⇒ Workers **must have a clear way of reporting any concerns and/or issues** that may arise while on-site or on the way to and from work.
- ⇒ Providing daily briefings and reminders to all workers on the new standards and requirements.
- ⇒ Displaying **visual posters, leaflets** and information on **white boards** to ensure employees are reminded of company standards and government guidelines.
- ⇒ Ensuring a **consistent approach** is adopted across the whole site, including **'stop and think' boxes**, and/or any **direction of travel** indicators.

10. Dealing with accidents and evacuation

Objective

Employers will have long established procedures for dealing with accidents and should have an evacuation procedure already in place. This should be reviewed however, in light of COVID-19 to ensure that it protects against the **additional risks of the virus**, particularly in respect or any **vulnerable workers** on-site.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ **Review first-aid training** to ensure the additional risks of COVID-19 are factored into procedures.
- ⇒ Ensure that **appropriate PPE is provided to first-aiders** who will be in closer contact with those involved in any incident.
- ⇒ Ensure that **details of first-aiders** and where available **medical departments** on-site are clearly posted and that any **induction programme** covers responding to accidents and emergency situations.
- ⇒ Ensure that **evacuation procedures are reviewed** in light of the additional risks of COVID-19. Particular attention should be given to evacuation **routes, exits** and **bunching up**, how this could be avoided for **vulnerable groups** on site and social distancing at **muster points**.

11. An outbreak at work or contact with a confirmed case

Objective

To reduce the risk of virus spread its important that everyone respects and adheres to **government guidance** on what to do if you **show symptoms** yourself or **come into contact** with someone who has the virus. This included self-isolation and not leaving home. Employers will need to put in place necessary actions in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 at the workplace. This may require a complete shutdown of operations and a deep cleaning programme initiated prior to any restart.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Ensure a **clear procedure is in place and known** for reporting illness and symptoms of COVID-19 to the employer at the first signs. If while at work, **workers should know where to go** having been issued with **clear guidance on isolation and containment**.
- ⇒ **Arrangements for testing** should be made where this is available.
- ⇒ All those who may have **been in contact** with the worker; including, team members and those travelling in shared vehicles, should be **isolated and arrangements made to ensure safe travel home**. Workers should be **told to self-isolate** following government guidance.
- ⇒ A **widespread outbreak of COVID-19 at the workplace** will necessitate a **full closure and deep clean** operation. Strict guidance on **self-isolation** and any return to work in these circumstances will need to be agreed and the occurrence **reported to the Health and Safety Executive** under provisions of the **Reporting of Injuries, Deceases and Dangerous Occurrence's Regulations** and appropriate **public health authorities**.
- ⇒ Employers should **ensure that workers do not suffer a financial penalty** for controlling the spread of COVID-19 and **pay full pay** to those expected to stay away from work in isolation.

12. Working from home

Objective

Where employees can work from home they should do so in line with government guidance. To facilitate this, employers should make suitable arrangements for safe working at home with

workstations and seating transferred alongside necessary computers, screens and other hardware to the home environment. Particular attention should be paid to employee mental and physical health during long periods of isolation and/or homeworking.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Arrangements should be made to **provide/upgrade internet access**, appropriate **security** and **bandwidth** to ensure home working can be successfully introduced and maintained.
- ⇒ Assessments must be made to **ensure a suitable working environment** is available at home with suitable office **furniture** in place to provide a safe and **ergonomically sound** workspace.
- ⇒ The **transfer of appropriate hardware/software** to the home environment.
- ⇒ Ensuring that special measures are introduced to **monitor and enforce appropriate breaks** and that **rest periods** are taken as required. Further, that the **working day is both monitored and enforced**.
- ⇒ That a **separate phone line is installed** or that appropriate protections are in place to ensure that both **fixed and additional costs** of working at home are **covered** by the employer.
- ⇒ **Regular contact** should be made by line managers to home workers **monitoring both safe working, work-loads and the mental well-being** of employees.
- ⇒ Establish **open access to occupational health professionals** where available in-house and **signposting** where this is not available with **support** for those requesting such support.

13. Working in offices and open plan environments

Objective

Where working from home is not possible and it is necessary for workers to travel to and from the workplace, **employers have a duty** to ensure that shared offices are set up to **observe social distancing**, appropriate hardware is provided to **avoid sharing** and **appropriate cleaning and disinfecting regimes** are in place. Additionally, **hand sanitiser** must be in place and where identified by a suitable risk assessment, **suitable** and **appropriate PPE** is provided.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ **Reorganising office spaces**; including desk orientation to maintain social distancing and minimise face to face contact.
- ⇒ Introduce **personal screening** where close working is unavoidable.
- ⇒ Establish **one-way systems** and separate entrances/exits to minimise unnecessary contact.
- ⇒ **Remove door handles where possible** and introduce **kick boards and self-closing mechanisms** to minimise hand contact.
- ⇒ Provide **appropriate and suitable PPE** where identified by risk assessment.
- ⇒ Implement **frequent cleaning and disinfecting programmes** across all shared office areas and ensure that **hand sanitiser** and **cleaning wipes** are available throughout the office.
- ⇒ Ensure that **shared equipment** is appropriately **cleaned between shifts** and/or prior to the **passing on** to others.

14. Meetings and meeting room environments

Objective

Where possible **all meetings should be held remotely** using **social media platforms** such as skype, zoom and teams. Where this is not possible and face to face meetings are required, **additional measures will need to be put into place** to protect workers from infection.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ **Cancel all face to face meetings** unless business critical and **only as a last resort** where platforms such as **skype, zoom** and **teams** cannot be utilised and a **phone conference** is not appropriate.
- ⇒ If unavoidable, take **appropriate measures** to ensure the safety of those attending; **room size** should safely accommodate attendees providing for **social distancing**, attendees should be limited to those absolutely necessary, **limit meetings to no more time than is necessary**.
- ⇒ **Open windows and doors** where possible to air meetings rooms, **clean desks, chairs and equipment before and after** any meeting, paying particular attention to **touch pads** and surfaces.
- ⇒ **Rearrange furniture** and other equipment to ensure social distancing, **remove unnecessary chairs** from the room.

15. Protecting the vulnerable, shielding and self-isolating

Objective

It has been clear throughout this pandemic that there are **certain groups at work and across society that are more susceptible to COVID-19** and that its **impact on them can be fatal**. Employers must therefore take additional measures to protect them from exposure.

For the most vulnerable, those that are designated as **extremely vulnerable**, and have received a letter from the NHS to this effect, **should remain at home shielding** in line with current government guidance. For others, it may be safe to return to work with **specific measures** being taken to protect them while **those who have been advised to self-isolate must be supported** in doing so. **In addition** to the three categories of vulnerability initially identified by government; those with long-term health conditions, older age and pregnancy - **recent evidence has identified ethnicity, specifically a Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAEM) background and obesity** may also be associated with increased vulnerability, **particularly in association with other risk factors**.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Those identified as **extremely vulnerable must stay at home** shielding in line with current government guidance.
- ⇒ **Special consideration** must be given to identified high risk and vulnerable employees, including **carers, pregnant and nursing mothers** as well as those **living with others shielding** - redeploying to **lone working roles** and areas where **social distancing** can be fully observed.
- ⇒ Ensuring that **suitable and appropriate PPE is provided and worn** when in open or shared areas; entry and exit to buildings, walkways and that **shift start and finish times are adjusted** to minimise contact with others.
- ⇒ Where possible **designate toilets** for high risk and vulnerable employees.
- ⇒ Make special arrangements to ensure the **safe use of canteens and rest areas**, with separate break and lunch times or designated areas with food provided.
- ⇒ **Where appropriate and agreed** with individuals concerned, provide a **visible method of identification** such as **coloured overalls** or **high viz vest**.
- ⇒ **Paying full pay** to those expected to stay away from work due to COVID-19.

16. Childcare and other caring responsibilities

Objective

The lockdown due to COVID-19 has resulted in many parents of younger **children** alongside those with **caring responsibilities for vulnerable parents**, those **shielding** and others needing assistance, have been unable to return to work. The re-opening of schools albeit on a part-time basis, and **loosening of shielding** requirements will necessitate both **particular attention to be paid to**

returning carers and also some flexibilities being introduced to facilitate, part-time and other flexible working.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ **Work environments and arrangements** should be **reviewed** in line with risk assessments for **pregnant workers/nursing mothers** as well as those caring for or living with others shielding at home - redeploying to **lone working roles** and areas where **social distancing** can be fully observed.
- ⇒ Where **working from home is not available** and necessary changes to the **work environment** cannot be introduced, those living with shielding should **stay at home**.
- ⇒ Ensuring that **suitable and appropriate PPE is provided and worn** when in open or shared areas; entry and exit to buildings, footways and that **shift start and finish times are adjusted** to minimise contact with others.
- ⇒ As with vulnerable workers above, **special arrangements** should be put in place to **minimise close contact in shared areas** such as toilets, canteens, entry and exit points, rest areas and walkways.
- ⇒ **Paying full pay** to those expected to stay away from work due to COVID-19.

17. Mental health

Objective

Employers should take into consideration employee mental health as a result of COVID-19, in particular the effects that may arise due to the bereavement of family and friends, personal illness, isolation and long-term home working.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Put in place a **mental health awareness programme** as part of your **induction** to promote mental health and wellbeing to employees.
- ⇒ Regularly **communicate mental health information** and post notices, posters across the site.
- ⇒ Encourage and identify **'listeners'** at work, **access points to trained and able to recognise the signs of mental health** and able to **signpost** those affected.
- ⇒ **Ensure regular contact** from line managers **to home workers and those isolating monitoring** both safe working, work-loads and the **mental well-being** of employees.
- ⇒ Establish **open access to occupational health professionals** where available in-house and **signposting** where this is not available with **support** for those requesting such support.

PART TWO - EMPLOYEES

1. Employee self-assessment

Objective

Employers should look to minimise the risk of bringing COVID-19 into the workplace by implementing a policy of **employee assessment before coming to work**. Further, to ensure that workers are **supported financially during periods where we expect them to stay away** from work, measures must be introduced to **support self-isolation** and **shielding** such as **continued furlough** or where this is not possible, employer **agreement to pay the wages** of those self-isolating or shielding.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Implementing an **employee health assessment process**, including daily self-assessment by employees before travelling to work.

- ⇒ Introducing a **check-in log and daily health checks on arrival** against known COVID-19 symptoms such as checking **temperature**, for any **new or continuous cough** or **difficulty in breathing**.
- ⇒ Providing **clear guidance to employees** in the event that they are taken ill whilst at work; from **informing line management** as soon as the symptoms arise to **avoiding touching surfaces, using tissues for coughs and/or sneezes** and **arrangements to return home** safely.
- ⇒ **Paying full pay** to those expected to stay away from work due to COVID-19.

If employees or others in their homes have any known COVID-19 symptoms, they should:

- ⇒ **Stay at home and not come to work.**
- ⇒ Inform their **line manager** who will offer support and inform **HR and payroll departments**.
- ⇒ **Contact NHS 111** for further health guidance and recommended actions.
- ⇒ Comply with **government guidance** that employees **should not come to work if any person in their home is self-isolating**.

2. COVID-19 test, trace, isolate and temperature screening

Objective

To protect all workers many employers are introducing **temperature scanning** at the start of each shift, others are expecting employees to **self-assess** prior to leaving for work each day. Those workers showing a **high temperature** or **other symptoms** of COVID-19 **should be isolated** and arrangements put in place for their **safe return home** with advice to **self-isolate**. The **government are introducing a test, trace and isolate strategy** and devolved governments are introducing additional national measures such as **'Test and Protect' in Scotland**. Employers must prepare for this to impact on work operations.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Introducing **temperature screening facilities** on entry to the workplace. Providing **information** to workers on the **process and arrangements** to protect both **personal data and medical** information.
- ⇒ Making **suitable arrangements to isolate** anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 and **providing appropriate safe transport home** where necessary.
- ⇒ Ensuring that **testing facilities** are **available to workers** as test, trace and isolate is rolled out across the economy.
- ⇒ Providing **clear information** to workers on **what to do in the event of contact from the NHS** and a request to self-isolate.
- ⇒ **Reviewing contingency planning** should **key workgroups become subjected to isolation**. Making provision for this to occur **on more than one occasion**.
- ⇒ **Paying full pay** to those expected to isolate and stay away from work due to COVID-19.

3. Travelling to and from work – car sharing and car pool arrangements

Objective

When considering safe working or safe return to work it's important to recognise how workers will be traveling to and from the workplace. COVID-19 is **not simply a workplace issue, the virus surrounds us** and current government advise to **avoid public transport** and use **private cars, cycle or walk to work** is **not always practical** without other measures being taken to support this.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Introducing new **shift patterns and staggered start and finish times** to avoid rush hour travel where this is possible.

- ⇒ Recognising that with **greatly reduced capacity on public transport** due to social distancing requirements, it may be difficult for workers to travel and this will, on occasions, lead to **unpredictable arrival times**.
- ⇒ Providing additional **safe and secure bike storage** capacity on-site.
- ⇒ **Prohibiting** and if not possible restricting all **non-essential business travel**.
- ⇒ Issue clear **guidance for those using private vehicles**, advising against car sharing or where this is not possible recommending a **maximum of two people per vehicle** suitably spaced front and rear, the wearing of **face masks** while in the vehicle and **maintaining a stable pairing** to avoid regular new contact risks.
- ⇒ Providing **sanitation and hand wash points** in car parking facilities
- ⇒ Where possible **leaving a car space between vehicles** in car parks and ensuring **clear floor markings** are in place to maintain social distancing.
- ⇒ Introducing **one way traffic flow** and **disabling touchpad access** or security measures, using a static security presence to confirm employee ID.
- ⇒ Consideration should be given to **whether business travel and car pool access is absolutely necessary**, consider alternatives such as conference calls and video platforms.
- ⇒ Business travel should be **limited to individuals** where possible.
- ⇒ If multiple employees are required to **travel use multiple vehicles**. If this is not possible, **apply clear vehicle share guidelines**.

4. Personal hygiene and cleanliness

Objective

Employers must **implement a thorough and frequent cleaning schedule** across the whole site with particular attention to shared areas and high use routes. In addition, employees, visitor and contractor's should be made aware as part of any planned induction programme of the importance of **personal hygiene measures** and ensuring that **work areas** are kept tidy and regularly cleaned down. These measures should be **regularly communicated** and everyone on-site reminded of them with **posters and clear guidance** located throughout the site.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Establishing **clear cleaning and disinfecting practices** and a **regular cleaning schedule** for all working areas including; offices, meeting rooms, shared facilities such as toilets, restrooms and smoking areas as well as throughout production areas.
- ⇒ Increase **cleaning and disinfecting schedules** for objects such as **touchscreen and shared tooling** as well as **surfaces and equipment** touched regularly. Particular attention should be given to **communal areas** such as canteens, smoking areas, vending areas/equipment, toilets and locker rooms.
- ⇒ Ensuring a clear communicated procedure is in place in the event of **spillages and regular maintenance** operations.
- ⇒ Providing clear signage across the site including **clear instruction on hand washing and methods**, where and how to find hand sanitiser, cleaning products and the importance of **using disposable towels and alcohol base wipes with air dryers shut off**.
- ⇒ **Showers** should be placed **out of use** during the pandemic.
- ⇒ **Extra bins** should be provided throughout the site.

DELIVERIES, IN-BOUND AND OUT-BOUND LOGISTICS

1. Compounds, warehousing and loading bays

Objective

To ensure that all visiting drivers understand the rules operating on-site, receive clear guidance and instruction and that controls are in place to minimise any risk of cross contamination or contact between workers.

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Ensure **liaison between the company and logistics providers** to eliminate paper transfers and **minimise** any requirement for **written manifest and/or log entries**.
- ⇒ Provide clear **guidance on arrival** at site of rules in place to **minimise the risk** of virus transfer.
- ⇒ Ensure that **site access** and **internal roadways** are **clearly marked** and that deliveries and dispatch operations **minimise waiting times** on-site.
- ⇒ Provide **adequate spacing between vehicles** and where the load will allow, **encourage visiting drivers to remain within the cab or in designated areas** within the compound.

2. Use of shared facilities

Objective

Employers have a responsibility for all workers entering their premises, including contractors, visitor and those delivering goods and services. It is vital that **all workers have access to hand washing and toilet facilities** as well as where possible, **access to a hot meal** if required. The Health and Safety Executive and Department for Transport have issued a joint letter making the responsibilities of the client/premises operator very clear on this:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887867/dft-hse-letter-drivers-facilities.pdf

Established industry best practice

- ⇒ Ensuring that visiting drivers have **full access to toilet and hand washing facilities**. Arranging for designated access facilities where appropriate and a ready **supply of hand sanitiser and wipes** must be made available in the compound/dock area.
- ⇒ Where a **staff canteen** is available on-site, visiting drivers should be able to **obtain a hot meal and drink**. Arrangements should be put in place for this to happen **without providing direct access to the canteen** facility itself and by **avoiding the use of cash** payments.
- ⇒ Clear **direction and signage** should be provided to visiting drivers including **directions to shared facilities** and **floor markings** to ensure adequate social distancing.

Resources

The **Unite guide on risk assessment** can be downloaded here:

<https://unitetheunion.org/media/3069/009-riskassessandprocedures-2020-05-07.pdf>

Additional Unite guidance on COVID-19 health and safety can be found here:

<https://unitetheunion.org/media/3018/007-unitecoronavirusguide-20-04-15-v14b.pdf>



Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations:

<https://resources.unitetheunion.org/media/843/safety-reps-brown-book.pdf>

Public Health England (PHE): <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

Health & Safety Executive (HSE):

https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=home-page-banner

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

Government guidance for employees, employers and businesses:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/face-mask-ppe-rpe-coronavirus.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm>

Guidance on social distancing and business in other nations of the UK:

Northern Ireland: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>