



# COVID-19 Response Plan

**Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for  
Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19**

# COVID-19 Response Plan

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 Response Plan outlines the measures necessary for employers to meet the Government's [Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#) (January 2022).

This includes measures to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace, and the ongoing safe operation of workplaces.

The Response Plan will give an overview of key areas that employers should assess to take account of the changed public health advice and the advice in the Transitional Protocol.

The Response Plan needs strong commitment from management and workers, and should continue to be maintained, or updated in consultation with workers and communicated to them, once finalised. Consultation with workers and their representatives is key to ensuring the success of your COVID-19 Response Plan.

**Note: The Response Plan is a live working document and it should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated to take into account new guidance from [gov.ie](#), [hse.ie](#), [hpsc.ie](#), [dbei.ie](#) and [hsa.ie](#)**

**It is important that in following this guidance, your workplace continues to comply with existing health and safety, fire safety, food and building regulations.**

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## How to use this plan

Your COVID-19 Response Plan should detail how your business will put in place infection, prevention and control measures (IPC) to help prevent the spread of COVID -19 in the workplace. The Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance on Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, details what employers should continue to do to control and manage COVID-19 hazards and risks in the workplace. Additional information is contained in the Transitional Protocol. The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is through prevention measures such as proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, good ventilation and workers themselves deciding to be vaccinated. The rapid self-isolation when a worker is symptomatic is also an important prevention measure. Employers, in consultation with their workers, may also decide to keep some of the measures outlined in the Work Safely Protocol (January 2022), if they consider them necessary in their workplace, e.g. physical distancing measures.<sup>1</sup>

The following sections cover key information and guidance that will assist you in developing a COVID-19 Response Plan. Specific checklists are available to assist you further when considering the content of your Response Plan. They are as follows:

- A COVID-19 Policy, signed and dated by the managing director and/or business owner. The Policy will outline management's commitment to implementing the Response Plan and associated checklists.
- Checklist - Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19
- Checklist - Cleaning and Disinfection
- Checklist - Workers
- Checklist - Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
- Checklist - Ventilation
- Checklist - Returning to the Office
- Checklist - Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADTs)
- [Guidance \(Interim\) for Employers on Fitness for Work following COVID-19 Absence](#)

The Response Plan is a 4-step process (Fig.1).

**N.B.** The plan is a live document and it is important to continue to keep it in place, and updated in line with with Public Health and Government advice, and to follow up on all actions identified, to make sure that they are completed.



<sup>1</sup> Wearing a face mask/covering is still a requirement in the public transport, taxis, retail, public offices and healthcare sectors

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## Step 1 - Employer COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 Policy outlines our commitment as an employer to implement the COVID-19 Response Plan and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The policy will be signed and dated by the managing director and / or business owner and brought to the attention of our managers, supervisors, workers, contractors, visitors and clients.

### COVID 19 Policy Statement

\_\_\_\_\_ is committed to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our workplace. We have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan and have reviewed it in line with the updated Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19. A combined effort by managers, supervisors and workers is required to ensure the success of this Plan in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our workplace. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and update this Plan in consultation with our workers
- communicate the Response plan to our workers, once finalised
- provide up to date information to our workers on the public health advice issued by hse.ie, gov.ie and hpsc.ie
- ensure all workers receive a briefing on COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) measures
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and other IPC measures
- facilitate the appointment of at least one Lead Worker Representative, in consultation with our workers and their representatives
- communicate the identity of the appointed Lead Worker Representative(s) and their role
- keep workers informed about the importance of adhering to IPC measures - hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and ventilation requirements
- adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to facilitate COVID-19 IPC measures. In doing so we will ensure that workers are not inadvertently exposed to additional occupational health and safety hazards and risks
- consult with our workers and their representatives in advance, where the introduction of a programme of Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Testing (RADT) is being considered
- adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- take into account workers' individual risk factors
- take into account workers' fitness for work following COVID-19 (or a suspected COVID-19 case) absence
- ensure measures are in place to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace, or an outbreak of COVID-19
- provide clear instructions for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work
- inform workers that they must stay at home from work if they have symptoms of COVID-19, to self-isolate, and get tested
- inform workers to follow Public Health advice in relation to their test result
- identify a lead person (s) to communicate specific measures to workers whose first language is not English and how often they will be updated.
- ensure contingency measures are in place to address the effects of COVID-19 in the workplace
- continue with the cleaning measures in place and disinfection measures, where necessary.
- comply with all GDPR requirements in relation to maintaining personal information.

All managers, supervisors, Lead Worker Representative(s) and workers will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

Feedback / concerns can be communicated through

Lead Worker Representative(s)

**Names (s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Step 2 - Persons Responsible for Performing Tasks

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

Key personnel are identified who have agreed to take responsibility for carrying out tasks such as:

- role of Lead Worker Representative(s)
- use of checklists to identify any areas for improvement
- regular checks to ensure the COVID-19 Response Plan is implemented
- review of risk assessments and the safety statement
- training
- reviewing emergency procedures and first aid
- ensuring relevant records and checklists are maintained

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

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

See Register template for Persons Responsible below.

Responsible Persons Task Register (Non-Exhaustive)			
No.	Tasks (non-exhaustive list)	Responsible Person(s)	Signature
1	Person responsible for overall implementation of the Response Plan		
2	Appointment and training of Lead Worker Representative (LWR)		
3	Checklist - Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19		
4	Checklist - Cleaning and Disinfection		
5	Checklist - Workers		
6	Checklist - Lead Worker Representative (LWR)		
7	Checklist - Ventilation		
8	Checklist - Returning to the Office		
9	Checklist - Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADTs)		
10	Other		
11	Other		

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## Step 3 - Employer Information

Employer Name:	
Workplace Address:	
Managing Director / Senior Manager in the Workplace:	
Lead Worker Representative(s) (LWR):	
Type of Business:	
Number of Workers (including full-time, part-time, contract and agency):	
Phone:	
Email:	



## Step 4 - Checklists

Use the checklists (a) to (h) below to plan your response.



### a) Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

This section deals with the measures we are implementing to prevent or minimise the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and in our communities. Vaccinations are a useful supplement to existing IPC measures but do not replace them. There is no requirement on workers to accept the offer of a vaccination or to inform their employer if they have availed of a vaccine.

**While many restrictions have been removed, these measures should continue to be considered:**

- Hand hygiene / Hand sanitising
- Respiratory hygiene
- Increased ventilation
- Considering at-risk workers
- Information and advice specific to the workplace for workers (including workers with customer facing roles), contractors and visitors to workplaces

### Further Information

- [Checklist - Ventilation](#)
- [Checklist - Returning to the Office](#)
- [Checklist - Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests \(RADTs\)](#)
- [HSE advice on 'How to Clean your Hands' on hse.ie](#)
- [How to Properly Wash Your Hands video](#)
- [HSE-HPSC posters and videos](#)

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## b) COVID-19 Information

Workers will be kept informed about changes in the workplace and updated on new ways of working. Our standard induction, or workplace familiarisation for new employees includes measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. At a minimum, this training will include the latest up to date guidance and advice on public health.

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

### (Non- exhaustive list)

- Communication system
- [Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 \(at home and in the workplace\)](#)
- Information on how the virus is spread
- Measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Lead Worker Representative(s) (LWR)
- Changes to risk assessments and safety statement
- Changes to emergency plans and first aid procedures
- Measures for dealing with a suspected COVID-19 case(s)
- Reporting procedures
- Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Testing (RADTs) (where relevant)
- Fitness for Work following a COVID-19 absence

### Further Information

- [Checklist - Workers](#)
- COVID-19 translated resources available from [hse.ie](#) and [hsa.ie](#)
- [Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- [Data Protection and COVID-19](#)
- [HSE advice on 'How to Clean your Hands' on hse.ie](#)
- [How to Properly Wash Your Hands video](#)
- [HSE-HPSC posters and videos](#)



## c) Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

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

We have a response team in place and have assigned a case manager / designated contact person(s) for dealing with suspected cases. They have been provided with information on how to do this safely. We have a designated isolation area(s) to be used to isolate the affected person from the rest of the workforce. The route to the isolation area(s) is easy to access. The isolation area has the necessary provisions such as tissues, hand sanitisers, gloves, medical grade masks / respirators, waste bins / bags available. Procedures are in place to enable the person to safely leave the premises. Contingency plans are in place should more than one person present with COVID-19 symptoms at work.

### Further Information

- [Checklist - Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19](#)
- [Checklist - Cleaning and Disinfection](#)
- [Checklist - Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests \(RADTs\)](#)
- [HSE-HPSC Outbreak Management Guidance](#)



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## d) Cleaning and Disinfection in the Workplace

We have put in place an effective cleaning system that is carried out at regular intervals. Disinfection is carried out in addition to cleaning, where required, and never as a substitute for cleaning. Cleaning and disinfection will help reduce the spread of the virus. We have also arranged for contact / touch surfaces, such as table tops, work equipment, door handles, handrails, etc. to be cleaned regularly.

Welfare facilities and communal areas (e.g. locker rooms) will also be cleaned regularly. If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is required, this will be done in addition to cleaning.

Workers will be advised to regularly clean any personal items brought in from home. Where it applies, workers will be provided with hand sanitiser and cleaning equipment for their work vehicle, and advised to clean before and after each shift. Alcohol-based (or non-alcohol based hand sanitisers) may be used. When choosing a hand sanitiser we ensure it is effective against COVID-19 and check the Biocidal Product Registers at the [Department of Agriculture and the Marine \(DAFM\)](#) to make sure the product is registered, and can be used. Where an alcohol-based hand sanitiser is provided, it must contain a minimum of 60% alcohol. Waste collection points have been increased in the workplace, and these are emptied regularly.

Waste, including cleaning materials, wipes and used tissues are disposed of properly in line with measures outlined in the [Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance](#). Isolation areas are cleaned and disinfected properly, and the measures outlined in the Protocol are adhered to.

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

### Further Information

- [Checklist – Cleaning and Disinfection](#)
- [Checklist – Returning to the Office](#)
- [Guidance from European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#)



## e) Workers' Responsibilities in the Workplace

Aside from the normal day-to-day responsibilities that workers must comply with, the spread of COVID-19 brings new challenges that workers should also address, in order that they can be protected from the virus and the Transitional Protocol can be implemented effectively.

Workers should:

- continue to keep themselves updated on the latest advice from [gov.ie](#) and [hse.ie](#).
- co-operate in maintaining any measures put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus
- report any issues or concerns they may have to their manager / supervisor or the Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
- know to stay at home from work if they have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (even if fully vaccinated/boosted), or if they have had a positive COVID-19 test
- report to managers immediately if they develop any symptoms during work, and co-operate with Public Health personnel and their employer for contact tracing purposes, where required
- follow any Public Health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their workplace.

### Further Information

- [Guidance \(Interim\) on Fitness for Work for Workers following COVID-19 Absence](#)
- [Checklist – Workers](#)
- [HSE-HPSC Outbreak Management Guidance](#)

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## f) Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

We will facilitate the appointment of at least one Lead Worker Representative for the workplace, to ensure that COVID-19 measures are followed. The Lead Worker Representative(s) will receive training and information on their role and the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus. We will tell workers who their LWR is and how to contact them.

Good communication channels in the workplace are essential for all stakeholders. Managers, supervisors and workers should engage with the Lead Worker Representative(s) to highlight concerns, report issues or concerns, submit ideas and identify improvements in the workplace.

### Further Information

- [Checklist – Lead Worker Representative \(LWR\)](#)
- [HSA Lead Worker Representative online course](#)
- Lead Worker Representative Poster ([A3 Poster](#) and [A4 Poster](#))



## g) Ventilation

Ventilation will not stop the spread of COVID-19 on its own and it is not a substitute for other infection prevention measures, such as vaccination, cleaning, face masks/ coverings, maintaining good hand and respiratory hygiene, staying at home if you have symptoms of COVID-19. However, increase ventilation wherever possible, particularly where workplaces are occupied or poorly ventilated.

### Further Information

- [HSA Guidance on Ventilation](#)
- [Checklist – Ventilation](#)
- [Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance on Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, Section 2.C9](#)
- [Ventilation posters and other resources](#)

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## h) Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADTs)

If we are considering setting up a RADT programme in the workplace we will discuss and agree the implementation and administration of RADTs with our workers and their representatives, including the Lead Worker Representative and Safety Representative. LWRs and Safety Representatives will be involved in the implementation of any RADT testing regime.

Workers do not have to participate in RADT testing, if they so wish. The COVID-19 Response Plan should take account of the agreed testing policy and approach taken and communicate it to all workers.

### Further Information

- [Checklist - Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests \(RADTs\)](#)
- [Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, Section 2.C10](#)
- [A list of RADTs with a CE-Marking, which are available on the EU market can be found on the Joint Research Centre \(JRC\) homepage](#)

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