

# COVID-19 Response Plan

## Introduction

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for the employers to meet the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) published in May 2020, in helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. A revised 'Work Safely Protocol' is now published and should be referred to help you keep your COVID-19 Response Plan up to date. The revised Protocol was necessary to reflect the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 and to update the Public Health advice that was published in the original Protocol.

The Plan will give an overview of key areas that employers must assess to ensure they meet the measures outlined in the Protocol in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

All workplaces are required to develop a Plan and the use of this guidance and associated HSA checklists available at [hsa.ie/covid19](https://hsa.ie/covid19) will help with this.

The Plan needs strong commitment from management and workers, and should be developed in consultation with workers and communicated to them once finalised. Consultation with workers<sup>1</sup>, supervision, information and clear direction for workers including those in customer facing roles is key to ensuring the success of your COVID-19 response Plan. In addition, information and advice specific to the workplace should also be provided to contractors and visitors.

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



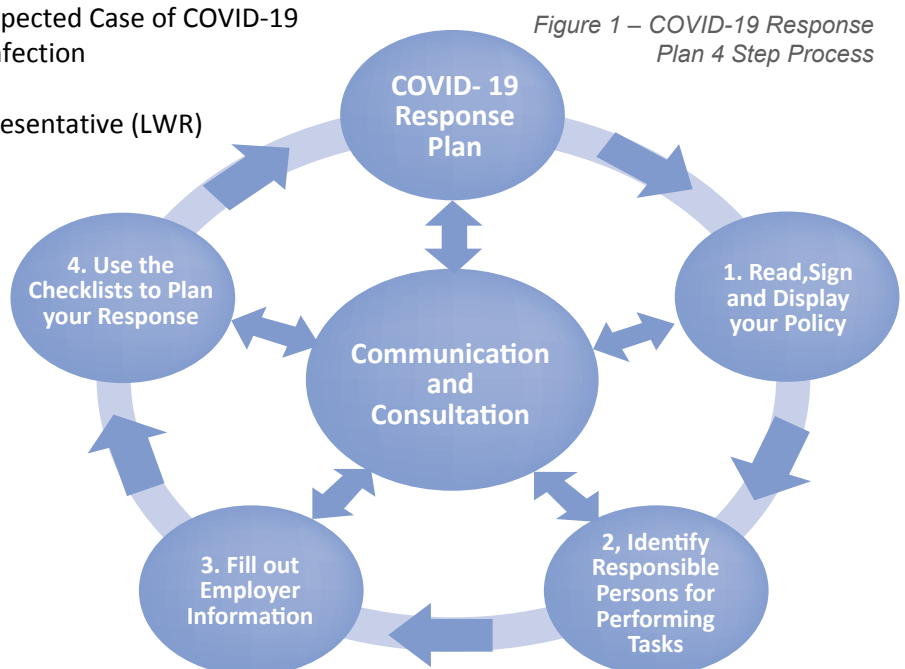
## How to use this plan

Your COVID-19 Response Plan must detail how your business will put in place the infection and prevention control (IPC) measures to manage COVID-19 hazards and risks and help prevent the spread of the virus in the workplace. The following sections will cover key information and guidance, which will be supported by the checklists below. They are as follows:

- A COVID-19 Policy, which will outline management's commitment to implementing the Plan and checklists. The policy must be signed and dated by the managing director / business owner.
- Checklist No. 1 - Planning and Preparing (Opening or re-opening the workplace after closure)
- Checklist No. 2 - Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures
- Checklist No. 3 - COVID-19 Induction
- Checklist No. 4 - Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19
- Checklist No. 5 - Cleaning and Disinfection
- Checklist No. 6 - Workers
- Checklist No. 7 - Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

The Response Plan is set out as a 4-step process (Fig.1) below.

N.B. It is important to keep the Plan under review to ensure it is kept up to date with Public Health and Government advice, and to follow up on all actions identified on each checklist, to make sure that they are completed.



<sup>1</sup> and Trades Unions where applicable

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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 the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the managing director / business owner and brought to the attention of our managers, supervisors, clients and workers.

### COVID 19 Policy Statement

\_\_\_\_\_ is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our workers and customers. We have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan and have reviewed it in line with the updated 'Work Safely Protocol'. All managers, supervisors and workers are responsible for the implementation of this Plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and update this Plan in consultation with our workers
- provide up to date information to our workers on the public health advice issued by hse.ie and gov.ie
- ensure all workers receive an induction / familiarisation 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 / or representatives
- communicate the identity of the appointed Lead Worker Representative(s) and their role
- keep workers informed about the importance of adhering to hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to facilitate physical distancing and other 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
- adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to protect workers from COVID-19 exposure to / from others (public, customers, co-workers)
- take into account workers' individual risk factors
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- follow procedures in place in the event of someone displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19 while at work or in the workplace
- provide clear instructions for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work
- identify a lead person(s) to communicate specific measures to workers whose first language is not English
- 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, in line with government advice

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 fed through the Lead Worker Representative(s).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Step 2 - Responsible Persons for Performing Tasks

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

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

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

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

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

### Responsible Persons Task Register (Non-Exhaustive)

No.	Tasks (non-exhaustive list)	Responsible Person(s)	Signature
1	Person responsible for overall implementation of the Plan		
2	Identification and training of Lead Worker Representative (LWR)		
3	Planning and Preparing to Return to Work (Opening or re-opening the workplace after closure)		
4	Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures (Checklist No.2)		
5	COVID-19 Induction (Checklist No.3)		
6	Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 (Checklist No.4)		
7	Cleaning and Disinfection (Checklist No.5)		
8	Worker Information (Checklist No.6)		
9	Lead Worker Representative (LWR) (Checklist No.7)		
10	Pre-Return to Work forms		
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):	
Up-to-date Information on all Workers (including full-time, part-time, contract and agency):	
Phone:	
Email:	



## Step 4 - Checklists

### a) Return to Work – Planning and Preparing (Opening or re-opening the workplace after closure)

The planning and preparing phase is critical to ensure a safe return to work (whether opening or re-opening for business) as well as continuing to work safely when open. It covers such items as information and guidance, Pre-Return to Work forms, communicating the identity of the Lead Worker Representative, revising our induction briefing, identifying and putting in place infection prevention and control (IPC) and other control measures, and updating our safety statements, risk assessments and emergency plans.

Workers have been advised to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and not to come to work if they are displaying any signs or symptoms of if they feel unwell. The symptoms outlined on [hse.ie/coronavirus](https://www.hse.ie/coronavirus) have been explained to them, and the Pre-Return to Work form will be used to assess workers' health before they enter / re-enter the workplace. Specific measures will be implemented for workers with individual risk factors.

#### Further Information

- Checklist No. 1 - Planning and Preparing (Opening or re-opening the workplace after closure)
- Pre-Return to Work form

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## b) Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Other Control Measures

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

Measures which must be complied with include:

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

### Further Information

- Checklist No.2 – Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures
- HSE advice on 'How to Clean your Hands' on [hse.ie/coronavirus](https://www.hse.ie/coronavirus)
- [How to Properly Wash Your Hands video](#)



## c) COVID-19 Induction

Workers will be kept informed about changes in the workplace and updated on new ways of working. Our usual induction, or workplace familiarisation, for new employees has been revised to include measures outlined in the Work Safely Protocol to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. All workers will be brought through this induction when they return to work after workplace closure, and re-opening. The induction will be carried out in a safe manner with physical distancing measures in place.

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

- Communication system
- Pre-Return to Work form
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (at home and in the workplace)
- Information on how the virus is spread
- Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures
- COVID-19 contact log
- 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
- Minimising contact (including organising workers into teams or pods)
- Reporting procedures

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

### Further Information

- Checklist No.3 – COVID-19 Induction
- HSA *Work Safely Induction* online course [hsa.ie/covid19](https://www.hsa.ie/covid19) – this may be provided to workers as part of the overall Induction training provided.

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

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

We have 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 and has a closed door. The isolation area has ventilation via a window, and necessary provisions such as tissues, hand sanitisers, gloves, masks, waste bins/bags, are 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 No.4 - Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19
- Advice from HPSC.ie on [managing an outbreak of COVID-19](#)



## e) 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. Cleaning and disinfection will help reduce the spread of the virus. We have also arranged for frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, light switches, kitchen appliances etc. to be cleaned twice daily.

Welfare facilities and communal areas (e.g. locker rooms) will also be cleaned twice daily.

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

Workers will be provided with cleaning materials to keep their own workspace hygienically clean and advised to regularly clean any personal items brought in from home. Alcohol-based (or non-alcohol based hand sanitisers) may be used. When choosing a hand sanitiser we ensure it is effective against COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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 contains a minimum of 60% alcohol.

Waste collection points have been increased in the workplace, and these are emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day. Waste, including cleaning materials, wipes and used tissues are disposed of properly in line with measures outlined in the Work Safely Protocol. 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 No.5 – Cleaning and Disinfection
- [Guidance from European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#)

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## f) 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 must also address, in order that they can be protected from the virus and the Work Safely Protocol can be implemented effectively.

Workers must continue to keep themselves updated on the latest advice from gov.ie and hse.ie. They must also cooperate in maintaining the IPC measures put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus, and report any issues or concerns they may have to their manager / supervisor or the LWR.

### Further Information

- Checklist No.6 – Workers



## g) Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

We will facilitate the appointment of at least one Lead Worker Representative for the workplace, in consultation with our workers, 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 communications 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 No.7 – Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
- HSA Lead Worker Representative online course [hsa.ie/covid19](https://hsa.ie/covid19)

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