

# COVID-19: RE-STARTING YOUR MANUFACTURING BUSINESS



Re-starting your business after a temporary shutdown or reduction in operations can present specific hazards, which if not planned or managed properly, may result in damage, injury, legal action and further disruption to your business.

## HERE'S WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Where activities are scaled up or scaled down compared to the pre-shutdown period, there can be increased risk of:

- fire / explosion
- injury and machinery / plant damage or breakdown
- water damage.

These may be caused by a variety of factors including production overload, delayed maintenance cycles and frequent start up / shut down periods.

Your business operations and activities may need to adapt where different raw materials are used due to supply chain challenges, producing different products, keeping an increased level of stock, introducing different processes or

procedures, changes in shift patterns and staffing etc. Where these changes introduce new hazards or exposures, risk management measures, should all be re-assessed and adapted. This may include:

- safe systems of work / working procedures
- training
- cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
- fire and security protection systems.

If you've furloughed staff, you'll need to consider the timeframe agreed for returning to the workplace so allow for this in planning arrangements.

If you're unable to create a safe working environment on site, those operations should be postponed until corrective measures can be put in place.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following provides a checklist of key considerations to safely recommence your manufacturing operations:

- **Observe and enforce COVID-19 workplace restrictions** in line with government regulations and guidance including for employees working offsite / at third party premises and those relevant to:
  - o travel to work
  - o driving at work
  - o welfare provision
  - o cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
  - o social distancing
  - o floor markings
  - o protective equipment
  - o staggered working hours and breaks
  - o ventilation
  - o face coverings
  - o managing records of employees and visitors to support test and trace.

Where the regulations and guidance can't be met, work activities should either be revised to achieve them or stopped altogether. Guidance is available from:

- o **UK Government**, including **COVID Secure guidance** specific to Construction and other outdoor work
- o **Public Health England**
- o **Health Protection Scotland**
- o **Public Health Wales**
- o **Health and Safety Executive (HSE).**



Information relating to testing and vaccinations can be found in [our testing and vaccination PDF](#) and the [People FAQs section](#) of our Coronavirus Resource Hub. Further information can also be found via the above referenced government websites.

- **Review existing risk assessments and actions** including safe systems of work / working procedures to check they're relevant to your manufacturing operation and that you're taking all the appropriate measures to ensure a safe working environment.

Where your business operations and activities are required to change, plans should be updated and careful consideration given to whether:

- o new risk assessments should be completed and the results and consequent actions shared with your employees (including any temporary and agency personnel) and any visitors, contractors and other occupants or users where premises are shared
- o fire, security, water damage, traffic management and COVID-19 specific precautions are in your review, implementing changes and / or enhancements where necessary to maintain an appropriate level of protection.

Specific considerations may include:

- the scope of fire and intruder alarm detection, CCTV coverage and guarding
- opening / closing procedures
- removal / restriction of touch points where practical. For example, vending machines and other canteen equipment for general employee use
- procedures and safe systems of work specific to machinery interventions such as cleaning, servicing, maintenance and repair
- IT and cyber security
- continued support (practical and wellbeing) for any employees who continue to work from home.



- use of signage to highlight social distancing requirements
- provision and maintenance of suitable ventilation
- adequate and suitable welfare facilities, including areas for safely changing and storing clothing and PPE. Where overalls and other PPE are provided, laundry arrangements should be specifically reviewed
- arrangements for social / physical distancing may include:
  - o thorough work planning to avoid close working
  - o managing breaks and welfare provision / use
  - o use of vehicles and plant / machinery / equipment
  - o careful management of meetings and training delivery
  - o improved signage
  - o physical barriers
  - o PPE provision and use, for example.

Further support can be found on our [health & safety risk assessment](#), [safe systems of work](#), [fire risk assessment](#), [escape of water](#) and [cyber security](#) pages. See also external guidance provided by the [HSE](#) and [Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers \(CIBSE\)](#).

- **Develop and carry out enhanced workplace cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation programmes** both pre and post re-opening. Pay particular attention to communal areas and touchpoints such as washing facilities, toilet flush and seats, door handles and push plates, hand rails, office equipment, production machinery controls, food preparation areas, company vehicles, forklift trucks and pallet trucks etc. Record cleaning and set out ongoing expectations / requirements.

If you're introducing alcohol-based hand sanitisers, remember they're flammable. Update your fire risk assessment, to keep your premises and people safe, ensure storage and use is clear of ignition sources (for example, electrical equipment, hot surfaces, smoking areas etc.) and ideally store within purpose designed flammable liquid cabinets, or otherwise, steel cabinets. Further support can be found on our [storage and use of flammable / explosive materials](#) page.

- **Undertake a thorough inspection of your site** including:
  - o all buildings (interior and exterior)
  - o boundary fences and gates
  - o utility services (including power facilities for production equipment)
  - o machinery / plant (including guarding, protection devices and controls)
  - o storage arrangements



- o any hazardous operations, emergency backup systems and safety equipment to establish and correct any unsafe or abnormal conditions, such as damage, maintenance issues, leaks, faulty safety and emergency systems, improper housekeeping or storage, signs of vandalism or theft etc.

Our **equipment checklist** may assist you.

- **Plan sufficient time to recommission previously shutdown machinery / plant and processes** in line with all standard operating procedures (SOPs) and manufacturer's guidelines.
- **Complete and reinstate any inspection, testing and maintenance procedures** including those of a statutory nature that may have lapsed since the shutdown. This could include utility services for buildings and production, machinery / plant such as machinery guarding and interventions, adequacy / safety of storage racking, emissions control equipment, noise control equipment, process related safety equipment (relating to prevention of fire / explosion for instance), pollutants control, other waste management plant, control equipment for hazardous substances etc.

Competent persons should verify that all protection / detection systems, including fire sprinkler / suppression systems, fire pumps, water supplies, fire alarm systems, intruder alarm systems, CCTV, access control etc. are in service and functioning correctly.

Further support can be found in our **equipment checklist**, **general-manufacturing** and **forklift truck pre-use checks** pages and external guidance provided by the **HSE**.

- **Ensure work competence and capability of employees for the activities to be carried out** checking all:
  - o possess the necessary and appropriate skills
  - o have received appropriate information, instruction and training, and hold the correct and up-to-date certificates and licenses, where required.

Additional training programmes and / or certification, instruction, information and supervision may be required where there is an insufficient number of competent personnel regarding your return to work policy (where in place). This will help provide structure and a framework to ensure your personnel are fit for work and consider issues such as mental health, well-being and physical fitness.

When reviewing the training arrangements and competency requirements, specific consideration should be given to the following:

- Availability and responsibilities of key personnel
  - o Senior managers
  - o Human Resources and Health, Safety & Environmental personnel
  - o Department managers / supervisors
  - o Appropriately qualified technicians and plant / machinery operators
  - o Maintenance personnel
  - o First aiders
  - o Fire marshals.
- Formal induction / re-induction
  - o specific expectations and controls relating to COVID-19 and any amendment to rules
  - o consider the specific requirements of any vulnerable workers (young persons, new and expectant mothers, any groups identified as being at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19).
- Other training needs
  - o expired tickets, certificates and interim measures - a number of trade organisations have sites indicating interim arrangements where training may have expired
  - o familiarisation (site, plant and machinery for example) to be specifically considered, with returning furloughed employees and operatives potentially not having operated plant or been in a site environment for a significant period of time.
- Training delivery
  - o requirements for social and physical distancing for example, are likely to impact the practicalities of training delivery, including induction and toolbox talks. This should be

considered as part of the risk assessment process, including available facilities, numbers that can be safely accommodated, duration, potential barriers to communication etc.

Further support can be found on our **training** page.

- **Consider methods and timing of communications to employees** around re-opening and re-starting procedures and associated expectations.
  - o can electronic / remote platforms be used to release initial communications before re-opening?
  - o before activities start, should the first days of re-opening be used to communicate expectations, deliver training, deal with maintenance / inspection issues, and the practicalities of managing challenges relating to social and physical distancing?
- **Review your business continuity plan** including:
  - o supply chain resilience (raw materials, machinery and equipment parts and components, including software where relevant)
  - o implementation and mitigation measures, to reflect any changes to your business operation and lessons learned from the temporary shutdown. Please visit our **business continuity** page for further support.
- Review emergency response procedures to verify:
  - o they're up-to-date
  - o adequate coverage for assigned positions on all shifts, including for example first aiders and fire marshals.

Further support can be found on our **emergency procedures** page.

- **Further information and support:**

Further information and support is available on our **risk management portal** and **Coronavirus resource hub**.