

COVID-19: RE-STARTING YOUR LEISURE 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 either scaled up or scaled down compared to the pre-shutdown period, there can be increased risk of:

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

These may be caused by a variety of factors including delayed maintenance cycles and/or frequent start up and shut down procedures.

Your business operations and activities may have changed particularly around premises layout, staffing, capacity and opening hours, for example.

Where these changes introduce new hazards or exposures, risk management measures, should all be re-assessed and adapted. These may include:

- safe systems of work/working procedures (including food safety management)
- training
- cleaning/disinfection/sanitisation
- fire and security protection system.

If you've furloughed staff, you'll need to consider the timeframe agreed for returning them 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 operations:

- **Observe and enforce COVID-19 workplace restrictions** in line with government regulations and guidance regarding both employees and others (customers and contractors for example) potentially impacted by your activities. Including those relevant to:

- travel to work
- welfare provision
- cleaning and sanitisation
- social distancing
- floor markings
- digital rather than paper use
- personal protective equipment (PPE)
- staggered working hours and breaks
- ventilation
- face coverings
- 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:

- **UK Government**, including **COVID Secure guidance** specific to Construction and other outdoor work
- **Public Health England**
- **Health Protection Scotland**
- **Public Health Wales**
- **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.

• **Consider how and when to communicate to employees** regarding re-opening and re-starting procedures and associated expectations:

- Can electronic/remote platforms be used to release initial communications before re-opening?
- 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? Can appointed contractors meet your requirements pre and post opening?
- Use the first days to integrate employees back into their job roles and activities. Consider the potential impacts of a significant period of time away from work, with some employees likely to benefit from a gradual/phased reintroduction.

• **Review existing risk assessments and actions** including safe systems of work/working procedures to check they're relevant to your business' operation and that you're taking all the appropriate measures to ensure a safe environment for your employees, guests, appointed contractors and other visitors.

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

- new risk assessments should be completed and the results and

consequent actions shared with your employees (including any temporary and agency personnel) customers, contractors and other occupants or users where premises are shared.

- fire, security, general premises safety (including management of slip, trip and fall risks), people safety/wellbeing, IT and cyber security and COVID-19 specific precautions are in your review, implementing changes and/or enhancements where necessary to maintain an appropriate level of protection.

Specific COVID-19 considerations will depend on the range of facilities and activities provided and may include:

Customers

- re-assessing the layout of external and internal areas and maximum occupancy levels to ensure that social distancing guidance can be met. Review the activities and facilities that are open and how they're opened to assist the management of numbers, social distancing and cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation.

Appreciating the need for ongoing review in line with government and sector specific/governing body guidance, some examples of areas to consider on initial opening include:

- limiting swimming pool use to pre-booked lane swimming only
- opening gym and fitness studios for designated sessions, with these areas closed for a period post session to allow for cleaning and disinfection
- removing or taking gym equipment out of use to allow for social distancing
- limiting the use of changing rooms or keeping changing rooms closed
- taking hairdryers and lockers out of

use to in changing areas to reduce touchpoints

- keeping spa areas (saunas, steam rooms, jacuzzis etc.) closed
- removing or closing any children's play equipment, soft play areas and crèche areas
- taking inflatables out of use, recognising the challenges associated with social distancing
- restricting group activities (5 a-side football, basketball, netball, gymnastics, trampolining and roller skating for example) or events (swimming galas and other competitions for example) where social distancing is likely to be a challenge
- limiting activities where managing high use touchpoints will be a challenge, including climbing walls, for example
- requiring those wishing to participate in racket sports to use their own equipment
- not opening cafes or retail areas until the impact of queueing and social distancing is fully understood
- keeping spectator seating and viewing areas closed
- using outdoor space to run fitness classes, where the area in question can be managed.

- changing opening hours to allow for additional cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation between sessions
- reviewing terms and conditions for booking, recognising the need to restrict access/numbers on site and to specific areas and classes
- only permitting access to customers that have pre-booked, with all bookings to be confirmed electronically
- controlling the number of customers allowed inside the premises and external areas, through the allocation of pre-booked time slots
- limiting the number of entry and exit points with separate entry and exit points to both internal areas, and external areas, if possible
- providing customer-facing social distancing coordinators near entry and exit points to highlight the social distancing requirements, assist with queue management and control the numbers entering and leaving. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for coordinators to include SIA registered personnel



- encouraging customers (other than children under the age of 3, anyone with a pre-existing condition that would render the use of a face covering inappropriate or where not safe or comfortable to do so) to wear face coverings where practical, and in line with latest government recommendations and guidance
- providing clear signage and markings outside (including in car park areas) and inside of the premises to explain the social distancing measures that customers should follow
- establishing one-way routes to assist with social distancing
- providing cleaning stations at entrance and exit points and other strategic locations (including in areas such as reception, gyms and fitness studios for example), with signage to remind customers of the importance of washing hands and hygiene
- establishing enhanced cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation procedures for all items and equipment used/accessed by customers including for example gym equipment, weights, swimming pool floats, flumes (where opened), lane ropes and accessibility equipment
- identification and regular cleaning of other frequent touchpoints including doors, door handles, stair handrails, lift buttons and turnstiles at access points, for example
- limiting the need for face-to-face contact by using or introducing technology (apps for example) to facilitate bookings being placed from smart devices
- encouraging contactless payment whenever possible
- making regular announcements reminding customers of social distancing and hygiene expectations
- using TV screens and monitors in gym areas, fitness studios etc. to remind customers of social distancing and hygiene expectations
- installing physical barriers/screens at reception areas. Any such barriers must be subject to appropriate cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation
- limiting numbers (to one at a time) using lifts
- removing or emptying vending machines and taking water dispensers out of use to reduce touchpoints; customers should be advised to bring their own water/bottles and that such items must not be shared
- limiting access to customer toilets (one in/one out policy, for example)
- installing sliding locks with 'occupied' indicators on the outer/external doors to customer toilets and changing facilities
- ensuring ventilation systems operate properly and increasing circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, providing this doesn't introduce additional health and safety risks
- prohibiting smoking and/or vaping in outdoor areas used by customers
- using social media, websites and apps to inform customers of policies and procedures relevant to social distancing, hygiene etc., use of face coverings, in addition to hours of opening, booking conditions, any significant changes in the way sites will operate (including staffing levels and first aid provision for example), and communicate that customers must not come up to the premises if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 or should be self-isolating in line with government regulations and guidance.

Employees and suppliers

- encouraging employees to avoid using public transport if possible, and where use can't be avoided, to comply fully with government regulation and advice, and the advice of the transport operator
- discouraging car sharing or employees from different households travelling to work together
- considering the health and wellbeing of those returning to work and any specific anxieties individuals may have. Communication is key, and it may be potentially beneficial for those employees who have already returned to share experiences (travel, the working environment etc.) with those who will be expected to return at a later date
- reviewing staffing levels, recognising the challenges with social distancing but also the need to provide a safe environment for employees and customers
- reviewing provision of personal protective equipment and requirements for the use of face coverings
- limiting the need for rotation of equipment where practical
- reviewing arrangements for first aid provision (including personal protective equipment, hand washing and hygiene, maintaining social distancing where possible) and the guidance provided to first aiders, including that specific to CPR and resuscitation
- removing/restricting touchpoints in staff areas where practical e.g. vending machines and other canteen equipment for general employee use



- managing breaks and welfare provision, including encouraging employees to bring in their own food/drink, cutlery etc., and not to leave the site to visit other premises during breaks
- providing adequate and suitable welfare facilities for employees and visiting drivers, including areas for safely changing and storing clothing and personal protective equipment. Where overalls and other personal protective equipment is provided, laundry arrangements and provision should be specifically reviewed
- identification and regular cleaning of regular touchpoints including doors, door handles, stair handrails, key pads on doors, electrical switches, lift buttons, turnstiles at access points, lifeguard chairs and pool hoists, for example
- the need for careful and clear communication with suppliers and contractors specific to goods-in delivery arrangements, and planned or reactive maintenance works, including timings, avoiding contact and arrangements for social distancing
- considering the potential for non-contact goods-in deliveries
- scheduling goods-in deliveries to avoid the potential for overcrowding in delivery areas and interaction with customers
- limiting those involved in loading and unloading, and where more than one person is needed, using the same pairs of people.
- encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this doesn't compromise their safety and existing safe working practice
- continued support (practical and



wellbeing) for any employees who continue to work from home.

Further support can be found on our [health & safety risk assessment](#), [mental health in the workplace](#), [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 \(CIBSE\)](#). Our other trade sector guidance may also be relevant to your business, particularly [public houses](#), [cafes and restaurants](#), and [hotels and guest houses](#).

- **Develop and carry out enhanced cleaning programmes** for all guest, visitor-facing and staff areas both pre and post re-opening. Pay particular attention to touchpoints such as washing facilities, toilet flushes and seats, doors, door handles, push plates, hand rails, electrical switches, lift buttons, gym and other fitness equipment, swimming pool floats, lifeguard chairs and rescue equipment.

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**, liaising with appointed contractors as appropriate, including:

- all buildings (interior and exterior communal areas, for example)
- boundary fences, gates and barriers
- utility services (including water systems and any other potential sources of legionella, power facilities and ventilation/air conditioning systems)
- fall protection systems, plant/equipment (including kitchen equipment and extraction systems, and pool plant)
- emergency back-up systems and safety equipment (including camera systems and drowning detection systems where installed) 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 [kitchen fire safety](#) and [legionella bacteria](#) pages and [equipment checklist](#) may assist you. The HSE have released specific guidance on [legionella risks](#).

- **Review arrangements for pest control** and management.
- **Review emergency response procedures** to verify:
 - they're up-to-date
 - adequate coverage for assigned positions on all shifts, including for example first aiders and security personnel.



Further support can be found on our [emergency procedures](#) page.

- **Plan sufficient time to recommission previously shutdown machinery/ plant and processes** in line with all standard operating procedures (SOPs) and manufacturers' 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, machinery/plant (for example, passenger lifts and escalators) and emergency systems.

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, barriers, gates etc., are in service and functioning correctly.

Further support can be found in our [equipment checklist](#) and external guidance provided by the [HSE](#).

- **Ensure work competence and capability of employees** for the activities to be carried out checking all:
 - possess the necessary and appropriate skills
 - 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 with regard to your return-to-work-policy (where in place). This can help provide structure and a framework to ensure your personnel are fit for work and consider issues such as mental health,

wellbeing 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
 - senior managers
 - Human Resources and Health, Safety & Environmental personnel
 - lifeguards
 - first aiders
 - fire marshals
 - cleaning personnel (internal and externally appointed contractors)
 - technical and maintenance staff and
 - where relevant, security personnel.
- Formal induction/re-induction
 - specific expectations and controls relating to COVID-19 and any amendment to rules
 - 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)
 - address changes in methods of work, and associated expectations and challenges.
- Other training needs
 - activity specific training, including for example **lifeguard training**
 - conflict resolution/management training to address potential customer challenges in implementing COVID-19 measures
 - 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

- 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.

- **Review your business continuity plan** including:

- supply chain resilience
- implementation and mitigation measures, to reflect any changes to your business operation and lessons learned from the temporary shutdown.

Visit our [business continuity](#) page for further support.

- **Further information and support is available:**

- sector specific information being produced by organisations including [UK Active](#), [Swim England](#), [Royal Life Saving Society UK](#) and [The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity](#), with a number of sports governing bodies also producing guidance
- **Allianz UK's risk management portal** and [Coronavirus resource hub](#).

