

COVID-19: RE-STARTING YOUR HOTEL & GUEST HOUSE



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; for example, premises layout, 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. These may include:

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

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.

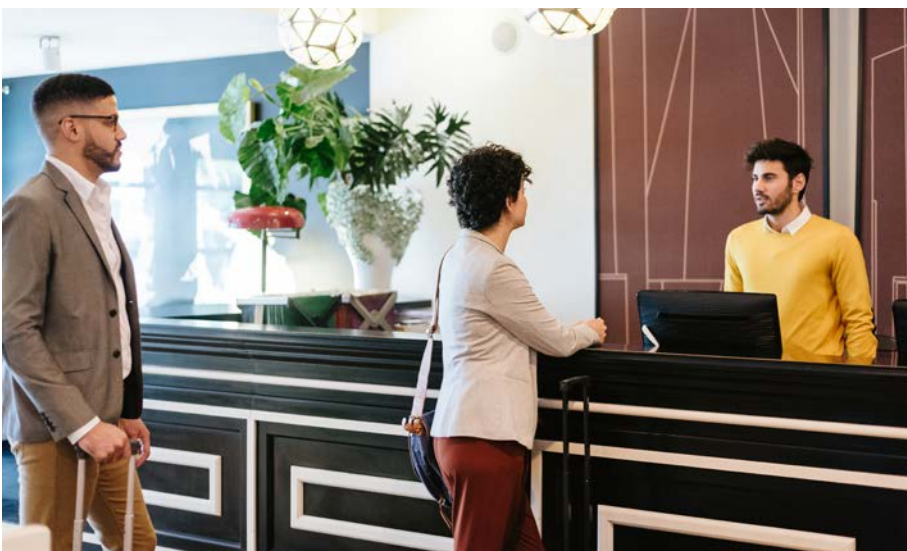
KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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 employees, guests, appointed contractors and other visitors potentially impacted by your activities. This includes 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.

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).**



- **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?
- Use the first days to integrate employees back into their job role 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) and appointed contractors
- 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:

Guests and other visitors

- re-assessing the layout of external and internal areas, and maximum occupancy levels to ensure that social distancing guidance can be met
- reviewing terms & conditions for booking, recognising the likely need to restrict access/numbers on site
- only permitting access to guests and other visitors that have pre-booked, with all bookings confirmed electronically
- providing pre-determined staggered check-in and check-out time slots
- encouraging contactless check-in/check-out and payment wherever possible

- providing keyless/contactless access to rooms
- removing concierge and room services to reduce touchpoints and assist social distancing
- opening restaurants only for guests who have pre-booked and not offering buffets
- using TV screens and monitors in rooms and communal areas to remind customers of social distancing and hygiene expectations
- installing physical barriers/screens at reception areas, subject to appropriate cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation
- developing, implementing and communicating a strategy to maintain social/physical distancing in communal areas, especially where the footfall is significant, such as reception areas, bedroom corridors, etc. Formally communicate associated expectations to guests and other visitors
- limiting the number of entry and exit points with separate entry and exit points if possible
- social distancing coordinators in car park areas and near building entry points to highlight the social distancing requirements and control numbers entering the premises/property at any one time. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for coordinators to include SIA registered personnel
- encouraging guests and other visitors (other than children under the age of 3 and anyone with a pre-existing condition that would render the use of a face covering inappropriate or not safe) to wear face coverings where practical, and in line with latest government recommendations and guidance



- providing markings and signage to assist with social distancing requirements in communal areas both inside and outside of the premises, taking into account traffic management and pedestrian segregation
- liaising with nearby/proximate premises to assist with possible shared parking
- providing appropriately marked one-way systems in car parks and communal areas to help maintain social distancing
- providing cleaning stations at entrance and exit points and other strategic locations within communal areas, with signage to remind employees, appointed contractors and other visitors of the importance of washing hands and hygiene
- providing anti-viral disinfectant wipes in all guest rooms
- ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist for cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation of guests' bedrooms prior to new guests taking over the room, with a focus on regular touchpoints such as door handles, electrical switches, TV remote controls, etc.
- considering the removal of some touchpoints including, for example, coat hangers and hairdryers, where it might be possible for guests to bring their own
- removing or emptying mini-bars
- establishing cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation procedures for communal areas and other areas used by maintenance personnel, security personnel, appointed contractors and cleaners, for example. Focus on identification of regular touch points including door handles, lift buttons, keypads, stair and escalator handrails, welfare facilities, etc.
- ensure appropriate arrangements for cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation of any accessibility equipment (wheelchairs for example)
- if provided, restricting available cash points in communal areas to reduce touch points
- limiting numbers to one at a time using lifts
- limiting access to customer toilets and



welfare facilities (one in/one out policy for example)

- installing sliding locks with 'occupied' indicators on the outer/external doors to customer toilets and welfare facilities
- ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase 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 guests or other visitors (including appointed contractors)
- limiting escalator use, considering the viability of using markings to indicate required social distancing
- removing promotional stands, children's play equipment, vending machines and plants from communal areas, keeping communal pedestrian routes as clear as possible to assist with social distancing
- closing off any internal or external children's play areas
- using social media, websites and apps to inform customers of policies and procedures relevant to social distancing, hygiene etc., including specific reference to any services not available.

Employees, suppliers and contractors

- 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
- reviewing provision of PPE and requirements for the use of face coverings for employees
- reviewing arrangements for first aid provision (including PPE, hand washing and hygiene and maintaining social distancing where possible) and guidance provided to first aiders
- removing/restricting of 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





- **Undertake a thorough inspection of your site**, liaising with appointed contractors as appropriate, including:
 - all buildings (interior and exterior)
 - boundary fences, gates and barriers
 - utility services (including water systems and any other potential sources of legionella, power facilities, ventilation/air conditioning systems)
 - all protection systems
 - dry risers
 - machinery/plant/equipment (including kitchen equipment and extraction systems)
 - 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 [kitchen fire safety](#) and [legionella bacteria](#) pages and [equipment checklist](#) may assist you. The **HSE** has released specific guidance on legionella risks during the coronavirus outbreak, with advice also available on our [legionella bacteria](#) page.

- **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 fire marshals.

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.

- providing adequate and suitable welfare facilities for employees and visiting drivers, including areas for safely changing and storing clothing/PPE. Where overalls and other PPE is provided, laundry arrangements and provision should be specifically reviewed
- careful and clear communication with suppliers specific to goods-in delivery arrangements, 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 guests and other visitors
- 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
- establishing procedures and safe systems of work specific to machinery interventions such as cleaning, servicing, maintenance and repair
- 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](#) and [cyber security](#) pages. Our other trade sector guidance may also be relevant to your business, particularly [hotels](#) and [guest houses](#), and [leisure](#).

- **Develop and carry out enhanced cleaning programmes** of 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, door handles, push plates, hand rails, light switches, lift buttons and equipment used by employees.

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.

- **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, facilities management and Health, Safety & Environmental personnel
 - maintenance personnel
 - first aiders
 - fire marshals
 - cleaning personnel (internal and externally appointed contractors) and
 - 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).
- Other training needs
 - activity specific training
 - conflict resolution/management training to address potential customer challenges in implementing COVID -19 measures
 - familiarisation (site and plant 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 (stock, machinery and equipment parts and components and IT systems of software, for example)
 - 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:**
 - Allianz UK's **risk management portal** and **Coronavirus resource hub**.

