



## **Health and Wellbeing Standards**

### **Contents**

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>SECTION</b>
Introduction	<b>1</b>
Preventing the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace	<b>2</b>
Office risk assessment	<b>2.1</b>
Monitoring	<b>3</b>
Further Reading	<b>4</b>

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of these health and wellbeing standards is to ensure that we protect not only the physical health of our workers but also put in measures that will also assist in their health and general wellbeing.

### **2. Preventing the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace**

As we learn to live safely with coronavirus (COVID-19), there are actions everyone can take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce the spread of other respiratory infections, such as flu, which can spread easily and may cause serious illness in some people. A person can be infected with a respiratory virus such as COVID-19 and not have any symptoms but still pass infection onto others.

The risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 is greatest when someone who is infected is physically close to, or sharing an enclosed and/ or poorly ventilated space with, other people. When someone with a respiratory viral infection such as COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release small particles that contain the virus which causes the infection. These particles can be breathed in or can come into contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth. These particles can also land on surfaces and be passed from person to person via touch.

There are simple things everyone can do in their daily life that will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections and protect those at highest risk:

1. Get vaccinated.
2. Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors.
3. Practice good hygiene
  - Washing hands regularly
  - Covering coughs and sneezes
  - Cleaning surroundings frequently

If a person is able to work from home, they should discuss with their manager about the possibility of working from home if they are presenting cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms. If it is not possible for a person to work from home, they should as much as possible avoid close contact with others in the workplace whilst they are presenting symptoms. Where close proximity working is needed because of the task that is being undertaken the person should consider wearing a face covering for the period they are displaying symptoms.

#### **2.1 Office risk assessment**

All offices must have a suitable and sufficient assessment of all health and safety risks, completed by the relevant Office Manager. This risk assessments should contain the measures to be put in

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place to inhibit the spread of respiratory infections. This will include ensuring adequate hand washing/ sanitisation facilities, cleaning and ventilation in enclosed areas.

Providing adequate hand washing/ sanitisation facilities, can be achieved by having:

- Sinks with hot and cold running water, soap and paper towels or hand driers in all toilets and kitchen areas.
- Hand sanitiser in communal touch point areas, such as photocopier rooms and reception.
- Antibacterial cleaning products in communal areas to encourage staff to wipe down surfaces after use.

Offices must be cleaned regularly and documented via a cleaning record. The frequency of cleaning will depend upon the office size and number of personnel within the building.

The method of ventilation of an office will depend upon the building and each Office Manager will need to decide which options work best for their particular office. Natural ventilation relies on doors, windows and other openings such as trickle vents, air bricks or grilles to provide air. Mechanical ventilation uses fans and air conditioning units to move air into and out of rooms.

As part of the risk assessment process poorly ventilated areas need to be identified, this can be achieved by looking for areas where there is no natural or mechanical ventilation; or feel stuffy or smell bad. Consider using a CO2 monitor to identify poor ventilation.

If an area where someone is working is assessed as having poor ventilation, then steps must be taken to provide sufficient fresh air to the area or an alternative workspace must be found.

### **3. Monitoring**

The general health and wellbeing of our employees is monitored by the HR Department through the employment engagement survey and other HR matrixes.

The Office Manager monitors office cleaning, sanitisation and ventilation via regular spot checks and an annual review of the office risk assessment. The Group HS&E Department reviews the office risk assessment via periodic office HS&E inspections.

### **4. Further reading**

[Ventilation in the workplace \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/ventilation/)

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