Wilkins
Safety Group

Your COVID-19 Five-Point Action Plan

BACK TO
BUSINESS
2020

Let's Get You Back to Business

On the evening of Sunday 10 May, Boris Johnson introduced an overview of the government's phased plan to gradually move the country out of lockdown.

The measures, which came into force on Wednesday 13 May, include 'unlimited' time outdoors (as long as social distancing is maintained), encouraging those who can't work from home – such as those in construction or manufacturing – to return to work and plans to open schools in stages. The country is now starting to look toward life beyond total lockdown.

As a business owner, you're probably thinking about your next steps when it comes to opening the doors of your business. In this action plan, **The Wilkins Safety Group** have gathered the top 5 points for you to be dealing with right now and ensure you are 'Covid Secure'.

Work from home if you can

The guidance states that "all reasonable steps" should be taken by employers to help people work from home but "for those who cannot work from home and whose workplace has not been told to close, our message is clear: you should go to work."

If you've made the temporary move to homeworking, it's now time to start considering how you will make that arrangement more permanent, at least in the medium to long term. Here's some starting points to consider.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Is homeworking a benefit for your business? Can you reduce overheads on office space by allowing more of it?

- ☐ If full time homeworking wouldn't work, could staff do part office/part home based?

- ☐ Do you have a homeworking policy?

- ☐ Flexible working applications – what has been your approach before, what is your view now? Discuss the advantages of a proactive approach.

- ☐ Do you need to review your data protection policy where confidential and sensitive information is being taken home etc?

- ☐ Have you considered how best to keep in regular contact with your people, maintaining their wellbeing and managing anxiety around returning to work?

- ☐ Have you undertaken a DSE (Display Screen Equipment) assessment of your employees' home work station?

- ☐ Have you given them advice on fire and electrical safety?

Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, and put relevant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) in place
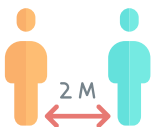
All businesses, regardless of size have to legally carry out a COVID-19-specific risk assessment, to establish what safety measures you need to put in place before your people start returning to the workplace.

The guidance also states "if possible, employers should publish the results of their risk assessments on their website and we expect all businesses with over 50 employees to do so".

Here are some considerations you need to make when it comes to properly risk assessing your premises.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Are you confident that you can conduct a robust risk assessment yourself?
- ☐ Will your risk assessments help you decide if you need to use PPE or RPE in the workplace?
- ☐ Can you confidently select the right PPE/RPE for your people to use?
- ☐ Is your risk assessment easily understandable for all your employees?
- ☐ How will you train your employees in the content of the risk assessment?
- ☐ Are you able to update your website with your COVID-19-specific risk assessment?
- ☐ Have you completed your Covid Secure certificate and displayed it?

Maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible, and if not possible, manage transmission risk

It's highly likely that when it's time for you to reopen your doors and start to introduce people back into the workplace, you'll have to redesign your workplace to maintain the required 2-metre social distancing. If you can't maintain 2-metre distancing, it's down to you as an employer to put in place measures to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Take our COVID 19 Awareness Online course at: https://wilkinssafety.co.uk/course/coronavirus-covid-19-and-pandemic-awareness/

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Do you need to remodel your workspace? Can you create one-way walkthroughs to ensure people are 2-metres apart?
- ☐ Can you open more entrances and exits to avoid a bottle neck of people?
- ☐ Can you change seating or desk layouts to keep people apart? Is staggering start and finish times a way to manage social distancing?
- ☐ If your people can't be 2 metres apart, can you put barriers in shared spaces? Create workplace shift patterns or create fixed teams to manage risk of transmission?
- ☐ Where people have to work closely, can they face away from each other and still fulfil their duties?

Reinforcing cleaning processes

Safe hygiene practices are going to be key for a long time to come in the workplace and will be vital in managing transmission of the COVID-19 virus among your people.

Do you already have core hygiene practices in place? Here are some of our top tips for upping your hygiene practices when you're back in the workplace.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Additional cleaning materials around the offices and in kitchens/toilets will be needed (along with a COSHH Assessment for these cleaning materials). This should include disinfectant spray known to kill coronavirus and antibacterial wipes.

- ☐ Encourage staff to clean equipment (phones, keyboards, tools etc.) before use and at the end of the working day.

- ☐ Bins must be provided (ideally near the exits) for safe disposal of PPE/RPE.

- ☐ Any communal equipment (cutlery, crockery etc.) should be taken out of use and people should be encouraged to use their own.

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Fire processes/procedures

Despite the major changes that the fight against COVID-19 has introduced, the government has not relaxed fire safety requirements for business owners. Whether your business is currently closed, or you're still operating during lockdown, it's likely that your fire risk will change. Here's some key points

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Is your Fire Risk Assessment up to date? If your workplace has been closed – or if your way of working has significantly changed – that can change your fire risk.

- ☐ Are your escape routes still viable?

- ☐ Are your fire marshals coming back to work or are they furloughed? Can you train anyone else up in the meantime?

- ☐ Are you confident that your fire alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and fire doors are still up to scratch? Will they need to be retested by a professional before you reopen?

GOT QUESTIONS?
Drop us an email at:
info@wilkinssafety.co.uk

How can The Wilkins Safety Group help?

Thanks to our many years of working with businesses across the country – especially during this unprecedented time – we know that making sure you leave no stone unturned is one of the most important steps to reopening your doors safely and compliantly from day one, when the time comes.

When you partner with us, our team of experts become an extended part of your team. So we're on hand to make sure that you've got access to all the information, tools and templates you need to keep you compliant from day one.

If you're ready to start planning your return to business and you want the help, guidance and advice of our expert Health & Safety - Fire & Electrical Safety - Care Home/CQC support and CDM consultancy teams, you can call us on **01458 253682 f**or a chat about what you need and to get the ball rolling.

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