

COVID-19 guidelines for **phased return of open retail outlets**



Introduction

We understand that businesses may be struggling to manage the new set of risks which they find themselves facing. We have created this guide to help your clients and their employees protect themselves during this difficult time.

This guidance applies to:

- Open retail outlets that are primarily outdoor (e.g. garden centres, hardware stores, farmers markets)
- Open retail outlets that were open in Tier 2 (e.g. homeware, opticians, motor, bicycle & repair, office products, electrical, IT, phone sales & repair etc.) during the Covid-19 outbreak

In this guide you will find...

- Employers duties
- Permit phased return guidelines
- Further information
- Employee safety briefing sign off



Permit phased return of open retail outlets

Guidelines for Employers

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (SHWW) Act, 2005, employers have specific duties to **ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees**.

The primary obligation under the SHWW Act 2005 is for the employer to “ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees.” Employers must be able to demonstrate that they have done all that was reasonably practicable and that to do more would have been grossly disproportionate to the risk.

While there is no expectation that employers will be able to guarantee that staff will not contract COVID-19, the 2005 Act requires employers to introduce specific health surveillance and protection measures in order to discharge their obligations.

For the permit phased return of open retail outlets that are primarily outdoor or were open in Tier 2 (garden centres, hardware stores, farmers markets, homeware, opticians, motor, bicycle & repair, office products, electrical, IT, phone sales & repair etc.), employers

should also be familiar with requirements set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Applications) Regulations 2007 (where applicable).

Employers duties

Key duties include:

- managing and conducting all work activities to ensure, as far as practical, the safety, health and welfare of employees
- providing safe systems of work that are planned, organised, and maintained
- assessing risks and implementing appropriate control measures
- providing safe equipment including personal protective equipment, where necessary
- providing employees with information, instruction, training and supervision in relation to safety and health

Return to Work Safely Protocol

COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers

A **Return to Work Safely Protocol**, is the result of a collaborative effort by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health Services Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health which has been designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. You can find the **Return to Work Safety Protocol** here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

This guideline document is not a substitute for the Return to Work Safety Protocol but has been prepared to provide general guidance on Industry specific measures which should be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Some questions to consider

As an employer you should think about the following:

- Has the work been adequately risk assessed in advance of returning to work?
- Are suitable arrangements in place?
- Can the work be done safely?
- Do you need to put control measures in place to further protect employees?

You should review / revise your approach as required.

COVID-19

Compliance Officer

Have you appointed a COVID-19 Compliance Officer who has been fully briefed to oversee all matters related to managing the health and wellbeing of all employees?

Health Check for Returning Employees

Have you established and issued a pre-return to work form for workers to complete at least 3 days in advance of the return to work? A copy of this form can be found in the Return to Work Safety Protocol by clicking the link to the left.

Has a COVID-19 response plan been developed/updated?

Are suitable arrangements in place for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace?

Health and Safety Documentation

Have written procedures including response plans been put in place for managing COVID-19 to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe place of work and safe use of equipment for all returning employees?

Have these procedures been communicated to all employees in a form, manner and language that they understand?

Physical Distancing

In order to slow the transmission rate of COVID-19 a physical distancing of a minimum of 2 metres is recommended by the HSE.

Things to consider:

- Travel to/from work – where possible workers should travel to work alone. Where this is not possible they should sit as far apart as the vehicle allows and keep windows open for additional ventilation. They should avoid using public transport if possible. Where this is not possible take all necessary precautions to reduce the possibility of infection
 - Ensure the workplace can allow for the recommended 2 metre separation in so far as is reasonably practicable – these include general places of work as well as welfare facilities such as canteens and toilets
- Where physical distancing recommendation of 2 metres cannot be achieved, additional risk control measures must be implemented as required. Examples include:
- Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards between workers
 - Maintain at least a distance of 1 metre or as much distance as is reasonably practicable
 - Minimise any direct worker contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids, such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc. that are readily accessible, so workers can perform hand hygiene as soon as the work task is complete
 - Organise breaks in such a way as to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing during breaks
 - Stagger canteen use
 - Provide one-way systems for access / egress routes in the workplace where practicable



Social distancing floor graphics can be downloaded from https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_coronavirus.html

Customer Facing Roles

Employers must:

- Eliminate physical interaction between workers and customers as much as is reasonably practicable through revised working arrangements. For example, through provision of online or phone orders, contactless delivery or managed entry
- Provide hand sanitisers at entry / exit points
- Install physical barriers and clear markings to ensure that contact between workers and customers is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues do not form between customers as they wait to be served
- Implement a cleaning regime to ensure that contact points for workers and customers are kept visibly cleaned at all times
- Display the advice on the COVID-19 measures in visible locations to ensure that customers are also adhering to what is required

Coronavirus COVID-19 Public Health Advice

If you have fever and/or cough you should stay at home regardless of your travel or contact history.

If you have returned from an area that is subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 you should restrict your movement for 14 days. Check the list of affected areas on www.dfa.ie

All people are advised to:

- > **Reduce** social interactions
- > **Keep a distance** of 2m between you and other people
- > **Do not** shake hands or make close contact where possible

If you have symptoms visit hse.ie OR phone HSE Live 1850 24 1850

How to Prevent

- Stop** shaking hands or hugging when saying hello or greeting other people
- Distance** yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell
- Wash** your hands well and often to avoid contamination
- Cover** your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue
- Avoid** touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean** and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Symptoms

- > Fever (High Temperature)
- > A Cough
- > Shortness of Breath
- > Breathing Difficulties

For Daily Updates Visit
www.gov.ie/health/covid-19
www.hse.ie

Ireland is operating a Risk Strategy in line with WHO and ECDC advice

HSE | **Rialtas na hÉireann**
Government of Ireland

Public information posters can be downloaded from https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_coronavirus.html

Hygiene

All employees should wash their hands well and often to avoid contamination – for a minimum of 20 seconds.

Other things to consider include:

- Ensure there is access to facilities to support hand hygiene (e.g. hand sanitiser / hand wipes / hand washing facilities)
- Display posters on how to wash hands in appropriate locations
- All surfaces should be regularly disinfected / cleaned
- Limit equipment usage to 1 person where possible – clean down touchpoints before and after use
- Try to avoid sharing of equipment – clean down touchpoints before and after use
- Ensure all employees:
 - practice correct coughing and sneezing etiquette
 - Wash hands before and after eating, smoking or vaping, after toilet use etc.
 - Dispose of used tissues correctly after use

PPE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is any device or appliance designed to be worn or held by an individual for protection against one or more health and safety hazards. Examples of such include gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing and safety footwear.

Now more than ever PPE should be personal and not shared with any other person during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is recommended that disposable gloves should not be worn in place of washing hands. Wearing disposable gloves can give a false sense of security and hands can become contaminated when gloves are taken off.

Face masks are also unlikely to be of any benefit if the wearer is not sick – the preferred approach is to ensure social distancing and good hygiene measures.

Further Information

Rialtas na hEireann
Government of Ireland
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

The Health and Safety Executive
www.hse.ie

The Health and Safety Authority
www.hsa.ie

Return of Open Retail Outlets Induction Checklist

The following checklist is intended as a guide for you to confirm with your employees that they are aware of the HSE / HSA guidelines for return to work. Use this checklist to confirm with each employee, that they understand the protocols under the following headings.

Pre-return to work form completed

Employee is aware of and has access to appointed COVID-19 officer

Social Distancing

Travelling to / from work

Written procedures for managing COVID-19 on return to work

Additional control measures where required 2 metre social distancing is not possible

Hygiene

Handwashing

Coughing / Sneezing Etiquette

Touchpoints

Cleaning / Disinfecting

Welfare

Toilets

Canteen

Work Equipment

Controlled Access / Use

PPE

Provision / Use

Trainer: (Name & Signature)	Date:
Staff Member: (Name & Signature)	Date:

Contact us

We understand the importance of working together during these difficult times. If we can help you, please get in touch.

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