

# COVID-19: ENSURING A SAFE RETURN TO WORK

This document was developed by Business for SA as a guideline in explanation of the OHS directive as issued on 29 April 2020.

Employers with **MORE than 10 employees** must implement the following measures:

## ADMINISTRATIVE



**Conduct or update** the employer's **risk assessment** to give effect to the minimum measures required by the Direction taking into account the specific circumstances of the workplace.

If the employer employs **more than 500 employees**, **submit** a record of the **risk assessment together with a written policy** concerning the protection of the health and safety of its employees from C19 to its **health and safety committee** and the **Department of Employment and Labour** (at the Provincial Chief Inspector on the DEL's website).

**Notify employees** of the **contents** of the Direction and how it will be implemented

**Notify employees** that if they are **sick or have symptoms** associated with C-19 that they must not come to work and must take sick leave in terms of s22 of the BCEA

**Appoint a manager** to address worker concerns and consult with health and safety representatives / committees on the hazards and the measures to be taken

**Minimise the number of workers** through rotation, staggered working hours, shift systems, remote working arrangements, etc.

Take measures to **minimize contact** between workers and between workers and members of the public.

Provide employees with **information** (by way of leaflets, notices, etc.) regarding dangers of the virus, manner of transmission, measures to prevent transmission, e.g. personal hygiene, social distancing, use of masks, where to go for screening, etc.

If a worker is diagnosed with C-19 **inform the Department of Health on the COVID hotline: 0800-02-9999, and the Department of Employment and Labour**

If a worker is **diagnosed** with C-19 investigate the cause, including any control failure, and review the risk assessment to ensure that the necessary controls and personal protective equipment requirements are in place.

Give **administrative support** to any **contact-tracing** measures implemented by the Department of Health.

Ensure that the measures required by the Direction and the employer's risk assessment plan are **strictly complied with through monitoring and supervision.**

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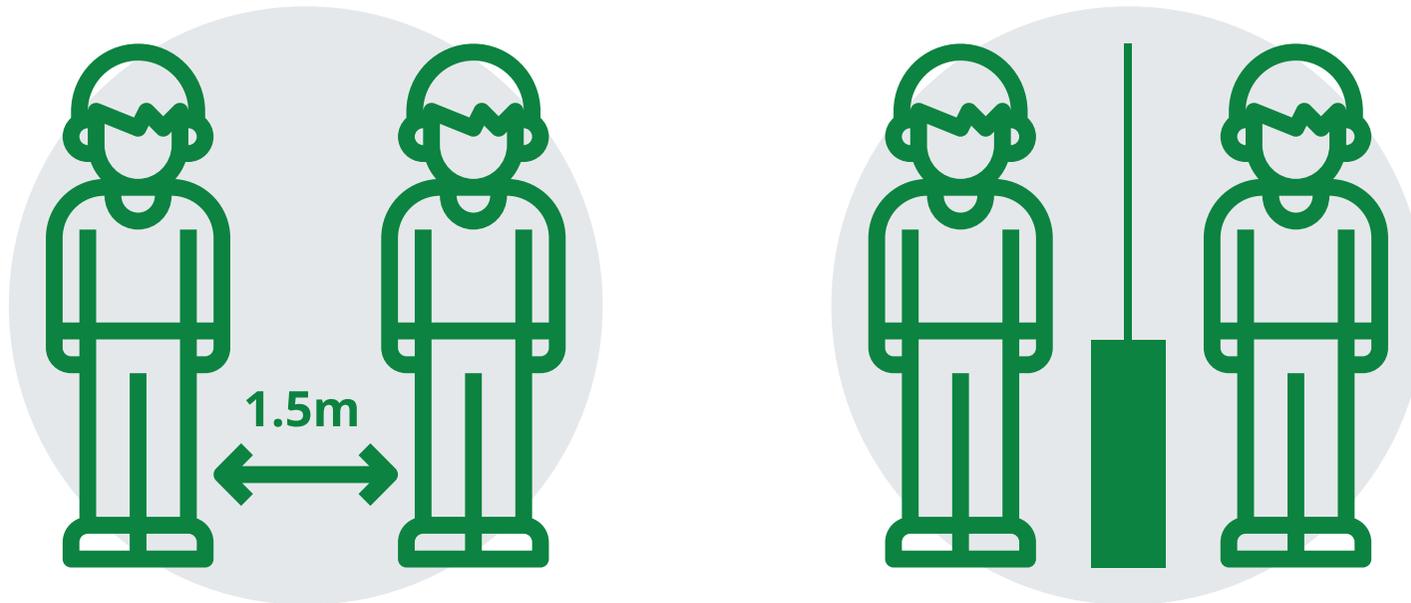
Employers with **MORE than 10 employees** must implement the following measures:

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

Arrange the workplace to ensure **minimal contact** between workers and, as far as practicable, ensure that there is **at least 1.5 metres between workers** when they are working.

If it is not practicable to arrange the workspaces to be 1.5 metres apart, arrange **physical barriers** to be placed between workstations; or supply employees free of charge with appropriate personal protection equipment.

Ensure that **social distancing measures** are implemented through **supervision** in the workplace and in common areas (e.g. at canteens or toilets) through queue control, staggering breaks, etc.



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## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### SYMPTOM SCREENING



**Screen workers**, when they arrive at work, to **ascertain** whether any worker, when arriving at work, has **observable symptoms** associated with C-19 (cough, sore throat, redness of eyes, shortness of breath, etc)

**Comply with guidelines** issues by the National Department of Health in consultation with the Department of Employment and Labour in respect of **symptom screening** and if required to do so, **medical surveillance and testing**.

**Require every worker to report** whether they suffer from symptoms such as body aches, loss of smell, loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness.

**Require employees to immediately inform** the employer if they experience symptoms associated with C-19 as set out above.

If a worker **presents with typical C-19 symptoms**:

- do not permit the worker to enter the workplace or report for work;
- if the worker is already at work, immediately isolate the worker, arrange for the worker to be transported in a manner that does not place other workers or members of the public at risk, either to be self-isolated or for a medical examination;
- immediately assess the risk of transmission and if necessary, disinfect the area and workstation;
- refer employees who may be at risk for screening;
- ensure that the employee who presents with symptoms is tested or referred to an identified testing site;
- place the employee on paid sick leave, or if sick leave is exhausted, make application for illness benefits from the UIF in terms of the Directive issued on 25 March 2020;
- ensure that the employee is not discriminated against on grounds of having tested positive for C-19;
- if there is evidence that the worker contracted C-19 as a result of occupational exposure, lodge a claim under COIDA.

If a worker has been **diagnosed** with C-19 and **isolated** in accordance with the DoH Guidelines, the worker may only **return to work** if:

- the worker has undergone a medical examination confirming that s/he has been tested negative for C-19;
- the employer ensures that the worker adheres to social distancing, wearing of masks, personal hygiene and cough etiquette;
- the employer closely monitors the worker for symptoms on return to work.

Require employees to regularly **wash their hands and sanitize their hands** while at work.

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### SANITIZERS



Hand sanitizers must contain at least **70% alcohol**.

Ensure that there are **sufficient quantities of hand sanitizer** available at the entrance to and in workplace, free of charge.

Provide employee who **work away from the workplace**, other than at home, with an adequate supply of hand sanitizer.

If a **worker interacts with the public**, provide the worker with sufficient supplies of hand sanitizer at the work station for both the worker and the person with whom the worker has interaction.

Take measures to ensure that **all surfaces and equipment are disinfected** before work begins, regularly during the working period and when work ends.

Take measures to ensure that **biometric systems** are disabled or are made C-19 safe.

Take measures to ensure that **all areas** such as toilets, common areas, door handles and shared electronic equipment are regularly **cleaned and disinfected**.

Ensure that there are adequate facilities for the **washing of hands** with soap and clean water.

Ensure that **paper towels** are provided to dry hands after washing. **Fabric toweling is prohibited**.

Ensure that **workers are required to wash and sanitise hands** regularly while at work.

Instruct employees who **interact with the public** to **sanitize their hands** between each interaction.

Ensure that **surfaces** that employees and members of the public come into contact with are routinely cleaned and disinfected.

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Employers with **MORE than 10 employees** must implement the following measures:

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### CLOTH MASKS AND PPE

On 9 April 2020 the DoH recommended that **all people should wear cloth masks in public** to prevent the spread of C-19. This is particularly because asymptomatic persons may be infected with C-19.

Employers **must provide each employee with at least two cloth masks** to every worker, **free of charge** to wear while at work and while commuting to and from work;

Require **any other worker** (who are not its own employees) **to wear a mask in the workplace.**

The **number and replaceability** of cloth masks that must be provided to employees or required or other workers must be determined in accordance with any **sectoral guideline and in light of the worker's conditions of work.**

Ensure that workers are **informed, instructed and trained as to the safe and healthy use** of cloth masks.

Make appropriate arrangements for the **washing, drying and ironing of cloth masks.**

The general requirement for workers to wear masks does not derogate from the fact that, where a risk assessment indicates that PPE is required, the employer must provide them with **medical, surgical or other types of masks, shields or other PPE in accordance with Department of Health guidelines.**

**Check regularly** on the **websites** of the National Institute of Communicable Diseases and the National Institute for Occupational Health whether **additional PPE** is recommended given the nature of the workplace or the nature of the worker's duties.



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Employers with **MORE than 10 employees** must implement the following measures:

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Depending on what is reasonably practicable, arrange the workplace to ensure that there is a distance of at least **1.5 metres between workers and members of the public**, or between members of the public.

If reasonably practicable, put in place **physical barriers** or provide workers with masks or face shields, or visors.

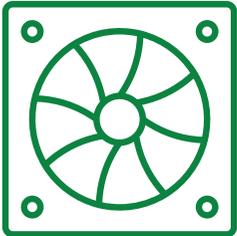
If reasonably practicable and appropriate, undertake **screening measures** of persons other than employees who enter the workplace.

If appropriate, **display notices** advising persons other than employees entering the workplace of the precautions they are required to observe while in the workplace, and **require members of the public**, including suppliers, to **wear masks** when inside the premises.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### VENTILATION



Keep the workplace **well ventilated** by natural or mechanical means to reduce the SARS-CoV-2 viral load.

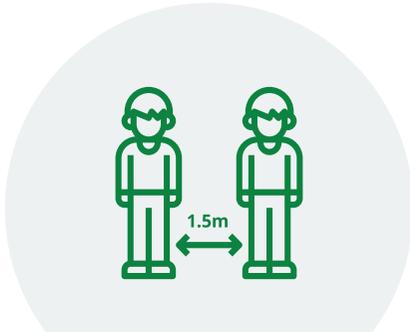
Where reasonably practicable, have an effective **local extraction ventilation system** with HEPA filters, which is regularly cleaned and maintained, and its vents cannot feed in through open windows.

Ensure that **filters are cleaned and replaced** in accordance with manufacturer's instructions by a competent person.

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Employers with **LESS than 10 employees** must implement the following measures:



Arrange the workplace to ensure that employees are least **1.5 meters apart**, or if not practicable, place **physical barriers** between them to prevent the possible transmission of the virus.



Ensure that employees with C-19 like symptoms are **not permitted to work**.



Immediately **contact the hotline: 0800 02 9999** for instruction and direct the employee to act in accordance with those instructions.



Provide **cloth masks**, or require the employee to wear some form of cloth covering over their mouth and nose while at work.



Provide each employee with **hand sanitizers, soap and clean water** to wash their hands, and **disinfectants to sanitize their workstations**.



Ensure that each employee while at work **washes their hands** with soap and water, and sanitizes their hands.



Ensure that **workstations are regularly disinfected**.

A contravention of the Direction places the employer at risk of enforcement proceedings under OHSA, and the offences and penalties set out in section 38 of OHSA will apply.

Labour inspectors are tasked with the monitoring of compliance with this Direction and may attend at workplaces for this purpose.