

This document has been created to assist companies to implement the revised [Work Safely Protocol](#) issued on the 20th November 2020. It is based on document control changes that were provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), and suggested updates to the Covid-19 Response Plan and related documents and practices where appropriate. **Version 1- 23 November 2020. Please note this document is not a substitute for reading the Work Safely Protocol.**

Return to Work Safely Protocol Section/Subsection/Title	Work Safely Protocol Section/Subsection/Title	Changes	Suggested Actions
A.1. Context	1. A Context	Section has been rewritten to reflect the current context and in particular the Government’s Resilience and Recovery Plan Living with COVID-19 2020-2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and ensure your Covid-19 Response plan is now updated with new terminology e.g. “Work Safely Protocol”.
A. 2. Working together to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace	1. B Working together to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace	Updated to take account of current context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update links in COVID-19 Response Plan.
	1.C Lead Worker Representative (LWR)	Separate section on the Lead Worker Representative now added.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure link to LWR is up to date. Review coverage of LWR and training provided if necessary.
A. 3. Overseeing and responding to a rapidly moving challenge	Deleted	Removed as this is no longer a reactive document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove references in Covid-19 Response Plan (if any) to initial reaction to pandemic.
B. Work Safely Protocol for Employers and Workers regarding the Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in the workplace	Deleted	Removed as this was a general statement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replaced with Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19.
C. Employer-Worker Engagement, Communication and Training	Deleted	Removed as the LWR role is addressed separately in 1.C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As before- LWR cover and training review.

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E. Getting Back to Work – Steps for Employers and Workers to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace	3. Steps for Employers and Workers to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace.	Removed reference to Getting back to Work in Title.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align Covid-19 Response Plan with Plan for Living with Covid-19. Link here: https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/resilience-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-Covid-19/
E.1 Develop and/or Update the COVID-19 Response Plan	3.A Keep their COVID-19 Response Plan up to date	<p>New/Amended Employer Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. facilitate the appointment of one lead worker representative for the workplace, which shall be done in consultation with the workers and/or representatives. ii. ensure that where work practices have been changed or modified to prevent the spread of COVID-19, workers are not inadvertently exposed to additional occupational health and safety hazards and risks iii. include in the plan any specific communication measures that are required for workers whose first language may not be English. iv. include in the plan any specific measures or response for dealing with an outbreak of COVID-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As before, review LWR coverage and training. ii. When determining what actions to take- consider the current Level in the Plan for Living with Covid-19 and conduct a risk assessment to ensure <u>all</u> risks are considered. iii. If relevant to your organisation, include this and the proposed solutions in your Covid-19 Response Plan. iv. Include lesson learnt from previous outbreaks (if any) and cross reference to BCP/Crisis Management Plan.

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E.2 Develop or Amend policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19 as appropriate	3.B Implement and maintain policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19	<p>New/Amended Employer Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. maintain up to-date information on all workers (full-time, part-time, contract, agency) in the workplace. display information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19, not working while ill ii. provide information on how to receive illness benefits or other Government COVID-19 supports. iii. provide public health advice and information in languages other than English as required iv. cooperate with the local Department of Public Health if a case of COVID-19 and/or an outbreak is confirmed in their workplace and implement any follow up actions required v. maintain personal information collected in line with GDPR requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure agency workers are addressed in the Covid-19 response plan and associated documentation. Appoint case manager(s) to manage the data. ii. Update link for COVID-19 illness benefit - https://www.gov.ie/en/service/df55ae-how-to-apply-for-illness-benefit-for-covid-19-absences/ and define who qualifies eg: Medically certified with COVID or required to self - isolate / restrict movements. iii. Make arrangements for alternative languages if required. iv. Ensure contact details of local Public Health are published in the Covid-19 Response plan. v. Reference: https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/dpc-guidance/blogs/data-protection-and-covid-19

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E.2 Develop or Amend policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19 as appropriate	3.B Implement and maintain policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19	<p>New/Amended Worker Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not go to work if they are ill • immediately self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test • stay at home, if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, and not go to work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Covid-19 Response Plan with new employee requirements and any associated policies or procedures such as Absence Management.
E. 3. Develop, Consult, Communicate and Implement Workplace Changes and Policies	3.C. Develop, Update, Consult, Communicate and Implement Workplace Changes and Policies	<p>New Employer Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information on how to receive illness benefits or other Government COVID-19 supports. • ensure that conditions, including the employment of staff via agency contracts, support the prevention and spread of COVID-19 • minimise rotation of staff across multiple settings and workplaces, particularly in relation to staff employed under agency contracts <p>Note added regarding use of occupational health services rather than including as an action as the majority of workplaces do not have such a service. Note added re encouraging downloading of the COVID-19 Tracker App.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above 3. B re Covid-19 Illness Payments

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E. 4 Implementing the COVID-19 Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures to Minimise Risk to Workers.	3.D Implement the COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures to Minimise Risk to Workers.	General changes: Reordered sections as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand hygiene (D1) • Respiratory etiquette (D2) • Physical distancing (D3) • Pre-Return to Work (D4) • Dealing with a suspected case of COVID in the workplace (D5) • At Risk Workers (D6) • Working from Home (D7) • Business Travel (D8) • Contractors and Visitors (D9) • Cleaning (D10) • Use of PPE (D11) • Customer facing roles (D12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Covid-19 Response Plan & related documents to ensure all sections are covered.
	D.1 Hand Hygiene	Employer requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details added to hand sanitisers covering alcohol-based products. • Video/Web links updated Worker requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added to wash hands when entering and exiting vehicles • Video link updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all stock of hand sanitiser on site to ensure it is being safely stored.
	D.2 Respiratory Etiquette	Updated details on safe use, storage and disposal of face masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure employees have access to method of disposal appropriate for bio-hazardous waste where disposable masks are being used. • Disposal of face coverings: https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/useofsurgicalmasksinhealthcaresetting/

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E. 4 Implementing the COVID-19 Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures to Minimise Risk to Workers.	D.3 Physical Distancing	Employer requirements updated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. working from home advice now has reference to Government Resilience and Recovery Plan for Living with COVID-19 ii. Added note on provision of canteens to reduce need for workers to congregate in other less well controlled locations iii. Removed reference to 1 metre Added/Updated two notes on face masks/coverings and screens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review plan for employees working from home each time there is an update to the Government Resilience and Recovery Plan for Living with Covid-19. • Ensure protective measures such as screens and face coverings are aligned with the requirements in the Protocol.
	D.4 Pre-Return to Work Measures	Employer Requirements amended/new: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Removed 3-day requirement to complete Return to Work form as it may be more suitable to complete closer to returning to work. ii. Questions on pre-Return to Work Form have been amended from 5 to 7 by splitting previous questions and updating symptoms of COVID iii. implement temperature testing as advised by public health. Currently there is no public health requirement to undertake temperature testing/screening in the workplace. However, in certain sectors and workplaces, public health have advised the employer to put in place temperature check on entry to the facility and in such sectors, the employer will implement this requirement as it is advised by public health. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure that the 3-day period is reviewed as it may suit the organisation to do this closer to the return date/time. ii. Review and update questions in the pre-Return to Work form accordingly. iii. None for most companies as temperature testing is not a requirement.

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	D.4 Pre-Return to Work Measures	<p>iv. implement any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing requirements as advised by public health.</p> <p>Worker Requirements added/updated: A number of new requirements have been included based on current public health advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference explicitly made to staying at home if unwell. • updated advice on what to do regarding self-isolation and restricting movements. • cooperate with the employer on the prevention measures. • undergo any COVID testing as part of serial/mass testing. <p>Pre-return form to be completed after workplaces open for the first time/reopen after required closures. Employers may wish to have workers reconfirm answers as submitted in the original form following an absence from the workplace.</p> <p>Form can also be provided in a range of ways (apps, online etc.).</p> <p>Note added on new travel arrangements in place since 9 November 2020.</p>	<p>(iv) Add reference in Covid-19 Response Plan that employees will be required to comply with any testing required by Public Health Authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Covid-19 Response Plan and related procedures to reflect these changes. • Update terminology in Covid-19 Response Plan and review Pre-Return form to determine if changes should be made in response to the new requirements.

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	D.5 Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19 in the Workplace	Amended reference to manager under employer requirements: appoint a case manager/designated contact person(s) for dealing with suspected cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review role & terminology in Covid-19 response plan. Ensure Case managers/designated contacts have been appointed and trained.
	D.6 At Risk Workers	Updated details to take account of current public health advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insert link here: https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html
	D.7 Working from Home	Re-emphasised importance of working from home. Added link to the new guidance on Working from Home by the Health and Safety Authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of staff currently working on site to ensure anyone who can work from home does so.
	D.8 Business Travel	Separate section on Business Travel now included. Advice remains largely as previously advised. To note, two changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added advice on use of face masks/coverings in work vehicles. Added reference to Government Resilience and Recovery Plan for Living with COVID-19. Note added on new travel arrangements in place since 9 November 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Travel Policy is up to date and fit for purpose considering new European Traffic Light System, DFA advice and company specific requirements.
	D.9 Contractors and Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate section on Contractors and Visitors now included. Advice remains as previously provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Covid-19 Response Plan to ensure it is fit for purpose for contractors and visitors.
	D.10 Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added new requirement for work vehicle Added advice on disposal of personal waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with Facilities Department and Cleaning Contractors to ensure that systems in place- Risk Assessments up to date.
	D.11 Use of PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated links to HPSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure links are updated: https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/

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	D.12 Customer Facing Roles	Updated details to include use of face coverings in line with new regulations. Also added requirement to provide staff with masks where physical distancing cannot be maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Risk Assessments for Customer Facing Roles and make changes if required.
5 Worker Role – Workplace and Community Settings	4. Worker Role – Workplace and Community Settings	Section expanded. It now covers requirements for workplaces as set out in the Protocol but also requirements outside of the workplace (community, travel to/from work etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review commute to work arrangements. Update Risk Assessments.
6 Customer Facing Roles	New section D.11	See above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above.
7. Occupational Health and Safety Measures and Recommendations	5. Occupational Health and Safety Measures and Recommendations	<p>A. Reporting Requirements If A Worker Contracts COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraphs 1 and 2 reordered New paragraph added on Biological Agents Regulations that come into force on 24 Nov 2020. <p>B. First Aid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated web links added <p>C. Mental Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated web links added <p>D. Heating, ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated with further information on natural and mechanical ventilation as well as updating web links <p>E. Legionella</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated web link added 	<p>A. Update Covid-19 Response plan and related procedures.</p> <p>B. Review and include link to PHECC https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx and https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/First_Aid/First_Aid_Frequently_Asked_Questions/First_Aid_FA_Q_Responses/</p> <p>C. Review and include HSA link: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_advice_for_employers_and_employees/covid-19_stress_and_work_-_may_26_2020.pdf</p> <p>D. Links (page 28) should be reviewed.</p> <p>E. Review and include</p> <p>F. https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/biological_agents/specific_biological_agents_infections/legionellosis/covid19_legionella_information_note.pdf</p>

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Section/Subsection/Title	Section/Subsection/Title		
8. Advice for Employers and Workers	6. Advice for Employers and Workers	Details and websites updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update links. (page 30)
9. Information on Public Health and Occupational Health and Safety	7. Information on Public Health and Occupational Health and Safety	Details and websites updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update links (page 31)
10. Information on Business Continuity and Supports	8. Information on Business Continuity and Supports	Details and websites updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update links (page 32)
	9. Appendix – Further Public Health Advice and Information	<p>New appendix providing general public health information on a number of areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of a case/outbreak in a workplace Choosing a hand sanitiser Use of identified teams or pods Face coverings – face masks – visors Sectoral specific advice and guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review or create procedure on managing a case based on information provided.
	10. Glossary		

Disclaimer

This document is provided for informational purposes only. The employer is advised to ensure that they keep up to date with any changes to the protocol and/or public health advice. It provides the holder with an overview of the issues that may arise during crisis management and situations where there is an interruption to normal business operations. It is not a substitute for specialist employment, legal and or any other advice where appropriate.