

Revo

Retail. Property. Community.

Getting Ahead

Considerations for exiting lockdown



Foreward.

Since 24 March 2020, all businesses considered to be non-essential have been required to be closed. The lockdown has been extended to 7 May. Over the next few weeks, the options for easing of restrictions in a phased manner, by sector, geography and groups, will be under consideration.

Easing the lockdown will not see 'business as usual' re-emerge as it was before Covid-19 restrictions. Based on Government commentary, it is likely to see the continuation of social distancing of at least 2 metres, hand hygiene guidance and limiting the number of people that can be in confined places at one time until sustained low levels of Covid-19 are achieved or a vaccine is found. It may also mean the introduction of new restrictions to manage health risks.

Introduction.

Revo is working with Government in one of its six 'Safer Workplaces Group' focussed on non-food retail, including real estate. The objectives of the group are to consider ways businesses might adapt to help them reopen and operate in a safer way, developing guidance setting out best practice. Revo will be keeping it's members closely informed of the latest position as it develops¹.

Until Government has published its guidelines, many in the industry, owners and occupiers, are getting ahead and developing their own thinking. This framework is intended to support site owner members in making their own preparations for re-opening, drawing upon current information and practice amongst retail currently operating, members' own preparations, actions being planned and taken elsewhere in the world and assumptions for what to expect with easing lock down. It is intended primarily for shopping centres and retail parks so that they are ready to reopen.

This is a framework of guidance and is not intended to be definitive or suitable for every situation, as each will have differing needs. Government guidance once issued, must take precedence.

In settling reopening plans, it is highly desirable that owners, occupiers and Local Authorities work together given the intersectionality of their physical presence. This framework will therefore be shared with the British Retail Consortium and LGA and Solace with the aim of achieving compatible approach to safety in the interests of the general public.

¹ The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has set up a working group for non-food retail including real estate, which Revo sits on. This is one of six groups set up by BEIS to serve as a forum for technical discussion of adaptations to the working environment.



Pre-Recovery Governance.

With the process of lockdown being reviewed in Government and announced on 7 May, the following steps are recommended now:

- Identify the priorities for reopening. Revo members are treating hygiene and security (social distancing) as the most important things to get right for a successful reopening and continuous operation. Prepare detailed plans for how security and hygiene will be managed on site.
- Prepare a communication strategy to manage the psychology of returning to public spaces for staff and customers - see below.
- Review and revise operational rules and guidelines for staff and occupiers including hygiene, Covid-19 related signage and staff shift working to avoid cross-contamination.
- Prepare a countdown programme of reopening actions², drawing on the topics explained below, and working in from the lengthiest to put in place.
- Prepare a risk assessment for reopening, to manage the safety of staff occupiers and visitors, including crowd control and reputational risk.
- Prepare a site business continuity plan, to manage the risk of cross contamination leading to large numbers of staff quarantine or cover the possibility of infection being detected on site or a second wave of the virus reinstating a form of lock down.

In all the above, ideally working with occupiers and Local Authorities pre-recovery, in order to achieve the best outcome for all.

Communication.

It is recognised that there will need to be a psychological shift to encourage people from staying at home to coming out into public places, for fear of contracting Covid-19, taking into account the alarm that has been exacerbated by social media and this will continue. Managing sentiment correctly will be a critical aspect of a successful reopening³. The Government will need to develop very clear messaging to explain what activity is and is not safe so that people are actively encouraged to move about, in a safe way.

Government communication should be reinforced by owners and occupiers honestly, explaining the actions being taken to manage hygiene and security in their sites in order to give staff and visitors the confidence to be there. Communication plans will detail the combined owner and occupier key messages and the pattern and platforms for communication.

- Implement a communication strategy ahead of reopening as soon as an exit date is known so that staff, visitors, and local authorities have confidence in the reopening plans and maintain a visible presence in the locality.
- Design messaging ,including audio, for common parts using the NHS website.
- Be ready to respond to misinformation on social media.
- Clearly publicise and update revised public opening hours, which may change depending upon the ability to open and/or numbers of occupiers allowed to open.
- Update site communication with Covid-19 guidelines and new rules including social distancing/ hand-wash/disinfection/mask wearing and circulate amongst occupiers and staff.
- All colleagues, service suppliers and occupiers **must** advise site management of an actual or suspected case of Covid-19 within their teams and have a plan in place to manage it e.g. isolation measures, calling 111, advise close colleagues, cleaning possibly affected areas etc.

Maintain a continuous dialogue with occupiers to ensure their experience of the implementation of hygiene and security activities are meeting the site operators' objectives.

²Drawing on experience elsewhere – Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, it is anticipated that a staggered approach to reopening will be adopted based upon e.g. size, type, geography

³Government recognises the need for positive messaging to accompany a relaxation of lockdown





Site Preparation.

The return from lockdown will be a psychological hurdle for people. It will involve mixing in closer proximity with other people than visitors and occupiers' staff have been used to during lockdown and trusting the public places they come into.

Staff.

As on-site staff will be your ambassadors, they will need to be communicating the confidence in the site for visitors to believe in.

- As part of the countdown programme, establish resourcing requirements and consider shift work and sequential return to work patterns for staff to be brought back into the working environment if they have been placed on furlough. Consider establishing team 'bubbles'; small numbers who work together. Consider creating an agile office workforce, with home working provision made.
- Those that have not worked at the site will need to be familiarised with the policies and procedures, which are likely to be different in the 'new normal'.

- Management should be visible and available for staff, occupiers and service providers in order to listen to their concerns and manage issues before they grow out of hand.
- On site, particularly cleaning, staff should be as visible as possible to engender confidence with customers. Consider a temporary change of uniform to draw attention to staff.
- HR advice should be taken to establish whether additional Covid-19 related staff policies are needed, communicated and upheld. These should include

personal hygiene, the process for regular disinfection of the workplace, including PC-keyboards and cell phones.

- PPE is not recommended by Public Health England but could be offered to staff who feel exposed.
- Arrangements for safe management of public transport are likely to be introduced by Government but until then, encourage staff to avoid peak travel hours - remind staff that 15 minutes maximum is currently the recommended time to spend facing somebody at 2m.

Supply Chain.

- Keep a dialogue with service suppliers, monitor their situation and have a back-up plan if service suppliers are not able to sustain their operation due to personnel or financial issues.
- Restrict suppliers' access to staff meeting rooms.

- Make sure service suppliers report directly to the site operator in case of confirmed or suspicion of an infected co-worker having been present on site.

Occupiers.

The communication strategy will determine how changes in site rules and guidelines are to be made known to and implemented by occupiers together with any changes in policies and normal routines. Consider the below as minimum:

- Explain the changes as a positive, necessary to protect occupiers' visitors and site staff.
- Update the handbook regulations for the site, to clarify lease compliance requirements. Observing safety rules will be vital and owners and occupiers will be

taking a strict approach to compliance for everyone's safety and wellbeing e.g. checklist completion assuring compliance.

- Ensure engagement between owner and occupiers over managing social distancing and any necessary changes in the service charge regime.

Security - social distancing.

- Review routines for goods reception and limit personal contact where goods are received or handled. Plan for goods delivery and temporary storage. Be aware this may be more than usual initially. A booking system may need to be implemented based on size of the service yard.
- Health and safety, referred to below, should also be discussed with occupiers including, flushing and checking the water system and if it has been isolated and not flushed weekly, chlorinated and sampled for Legionnaires and TVCs (Total Viable Count), flushing taps and drain traps, checking grease traps/ check waste arrangements (these may have been reduced and frequency of collections adjusted during lockdown stage) /check fire systems functioning, fire exits clear, emergency lighting checked, check emergency exits routes and doors, check the presence and expiry date of fire extinguishers and review emergency protocols based on the prevailing situation and staff count, review fire risk assessments and update, given changes.
- Security, referred to below, should be discussed with occupiers so that the management of social distancing at entry points into and within stores by occupiers is clear and does not prejudice other occupiers and common areas e.g. prevents the risks of queues in common areas/ floor stickers for queuing within stores and consider mounting Plexiglas

sheets for additional protection/in-store communication to remind customers to give each other space and respect social distancing requirements. Store capacity, reflecting social distancing rules will need to be understood and managed by occupiers with eg customers being turned away and asked to return later.

- Important to maintain two-way communication for new protocols and/ or ideas between site operators and occupiers.
- Keep staff list and contact information up to date with site operators.

Discuss reopening plans with occupiers to ensure they are compatible with the site's own plans. Take legal advice on the extent to which it is necessary for a site owner to be satisfied with occupiers' risk management plans particularly in high touch areas e.g. gyms, prior to reopening.

Until Government has issued guidance/rules determining where responsibility for crowd control sits whilst social distancing is in place, this framework adopts practices currently in place. It is assumed current social distancing rules will continue to be applied after exiting lockdown, i.e. 2m-circumference pp.

- Establish the revised site capacity taking account of 2m social distancing.
- Establish the means by which site capacity will be maintained e.g. footfall technology/ existing or additional staff enforcement / reduced and one-way entrances and access points/educating customers and occupiers.
- Consider taking measures in car parks for adjusting the flow of people into a site and the gaps between parked cars.
- Determine whether a site is of a scale to accommodate queuing at the entrances.
- If it is not, agree with the Local Authority how queues will be managed where the site directly fronts the public highway, and close doors to manage capacity on site.
- If it is, minimize queuing with a site queuing management policy and establish the means by which it will be implemented, including obtaining SIA licencing for staff managing queues. This will require consultation and coordination between occupiers and site operators.
- Establish rules for crowd control in common areas including food courts and toilets, e.g. installing floor stickers to indicate the distance to be maintained between visitors/ barriers/taking units out of action/remove furniture to increase space.
- Remove furniture from the common areas, if it eases the flow.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring food courts are separately closed off from the rest of the centre common area (if possible). Customers' access limited to agreed numbers of people in the area or better, based on seats that are available in line with social distancing arrangements.
- Review and adapt emergency response and evacuation procedures based on prevailing conditions.
- Discuss with the local police constabulary, how they will support disruptive behaviour on site⁴.
- Work closely with third party suppliers as numbers of security may need to be phased depending on number of stores allowed to open.
- Trial preparations.

Be prepared to coordinate site security arrangements with occupiers' own arrangements and commercial needs and for these to potentially conflict with planned site arrangements when compromises will be necessary.

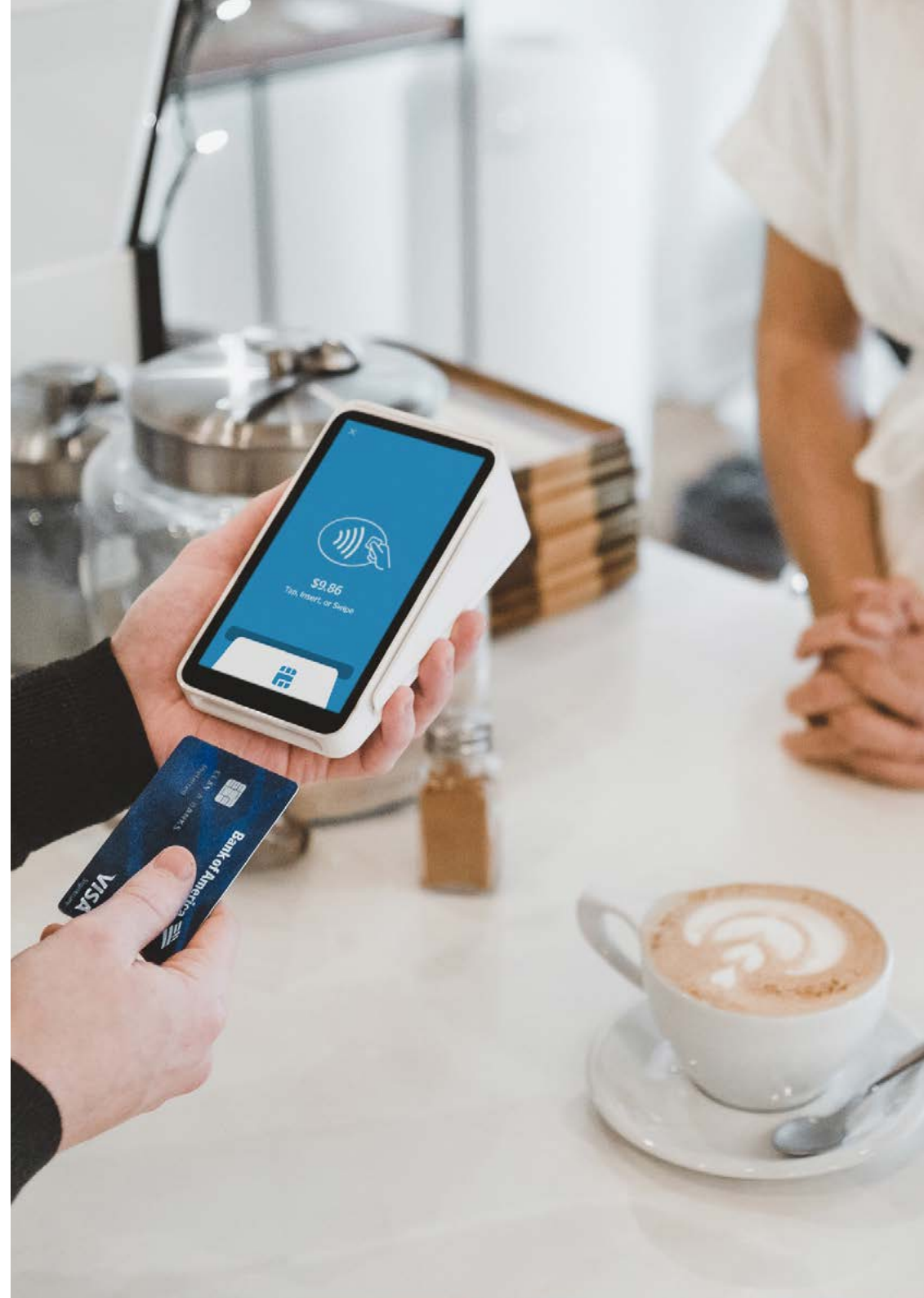
⁴Government is aware of the need to manage the potential for ASB

Hygiene.

No new nationwide hygiene standards have yet been issued. The Local Authority is the primary enforcing body for hygiene and local authority recommendations should be followed. The HSE will act as a conduit between owners, occupiers and local authorities where clarification is required.

This framework therefore assumes current standards continue to apply with site operators exercising their discretion as to the approach they adopt. The following topics are therefore options for operators to consider:

- If cleaning has not been sustained during lockdown, consider a specialist Covid-19 suitable cleaner to bring hygiene up to chosen standards.
- Determine which cleaning products and machinery will be adopted, ensure its availability through the supply chain, and consider COSHH implications.
- Train and provide regular guidance and PPE to cleaning staff in Covid-19 suitable deep cleaning.
- Consider increasing contactless at touch points.
- Train and support site staff to handle cases of suspected infection on site with a plan of how to close off and disinfect any area after a suspicious infection if needed.
- Cleaning staff should be as visible as possible to engender confidence with customers. Consider temporary change of uniform.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning for risk-prone areas and high-touch installations such as lift buttons, interactive displays, handrails etc.
- Consider providing hand-sanitizing opportunities in common areas for use by visitors.
- Make reasonable provision for protecting staff from infection e.g. Plexiglas sheets for the reception desks, meeting areas separate from the site management office to avoid cross-contamination.
- Consider engaging a single company for disinfecting common areas and retail units to optimise quality and coordination.
- Covid-19 infections connected with the site must be reported as a RIDDOR in certain circumstances.
- By way of example, measures adopted internationally have included staff at entrances checking visitors' health and scanning codes for confirmation and requiring customer ID and contact information registration being required.





Health & Safety.

Always obtain professional advice and refer to the local authority and insurers for H&S reopening requirements.

The steps below are in outline only and should not be relied on to be exhaustive. The H&S preparations will be bespoke to a particular site and will depend upon particular circumstances e.g. how long a site has been out of operation, the complexity of installations to the site, the amount and quality of maintenance sustained in that time, etc.

Fire Detection and Alarm Systems

- Test and inspect the fire detection and alarm systems.
- Review the system for any fault logging.
- Ensure all tenant and plant interfaces are active.
- Run a fire test to ensure the functionality of automatic door releases, evacuation sounds/ speakers, shutters, plant interfaces and the like.
- Test systems for uninterruptible power supply.
- Check the functionality of life safety communications equipment such as fire telephones, disabled refuge intercoms, central radio systems and the like.

CCTV

- Inspect tanked sprinkler and wet riser systems.
- Test sprinkler flow switchers where appropriate, particularly interfaces to occupiers.
- Test run fire pump and check secondary supplies.

Escape Routes

- Verify all emergency exits and escape routes are free from obstruction.
- Check all emergency exit doors to ensure the functionality.
- Run a fire test to ensure the functionality of automatic door releases, speakers etc.
- Conduct a full property walk prior to reopening.

Secondary Power

- Test secondary power supplies such as generators and change over switches.
- Test systems with uninterruptible power supplies for operability.

Security Systems.

CCTV

- Review the system for any fault logging.
- Check the systems for full functionality.
- Check sight lines have not become obstructed.
- Consider the repurposing of set viewing positions to present visibility of key Covid-19 gathering points.

Security Alarms

- Review the system for any fault logging.
- Test all security system alarms.
- Test all distress alarms.
- Review any amendments required in the security systems configuration resulting from Covid-19 measures to see that the automatic security systems align with any alternative arrangements e.g. providing security monitoring to normally open entrances.

Access Control Systems

- Review the system for any fault logging.
- Check that secure doors remain operational.
- Review any amendments to required access permissions to reflect and amendments required as a result of the Covid-19 measures.

Emergency plans will need to be reviewed so that they are relevant to the new environment and do not compromise social distancing principles in common areas.

Building Systems.

Building systems may have been static for an extended period of time and care should be taken in bringing them back online to ensure they are operating safely, particularly where occupiers are reliant upon owners' service provision.

Generally, it is advisable that primary plant items are restarted on a reduced load. Reduce operating thermostats on boilers and chillers then gradually adjust daily to normal set points. Pumps and fans with inverters should be restarted at a low speed and gradually increased over a 24 hour period.

After start up, monitor modern building systems alarms and check system temperatures, system pressures and differential pressures are stable and within pre-set limits.

Extensive guidance is available for facilities managers to refer to in relation to best practice in the safe operation of engineering services which should be adhered to as systems are re-energised and occupiers reoccupy. Modern building systems present opportunities for facilities managers to run and prove systems remotely. In general:

- Check the functionality of any centralised building management system.
- Review the system for any fault logging.
- Consider any reprogramming and amendments which may benefit building systems operations under Covid-19 reduced/controlled access conditions.

Foul Drainage Systems

- Check general functionality.
- Where systems have been laid dormant for extended periods settlement and congestion may have occurred.

- Inspect and clean grease traps, seeing that tenants also do the same.
- Where any pumped systems are employed, see that systems are clean and operational.

Gas Systems

- Check general functionality.
- Ensure systems remain fully pressurised.
- Where systems were purged pre-shut down, employ an appropriately qualified specialist to reenergise the network.
- Check all automatic and manual shut down facilities.

Air handling systems

- Check general functionality.
- Consider anticipated occupation densities and review any potential operational efficiencies possible in air systems operations.
- Ensure that all air entry/exit position are free of obstruction including wildlife intrusions, nesting birds for example, which may have occurred during shut down.
- Inspect filters and replace as necessary.
- Prior to restart check fan and impeller have full freedom of movement.
- Check the operation of systems dampers, they have not become stuck and can be operated by local motor drive.
- Ensure all fire/smoke dampers are open .
- Check to ensure that electric motors are cleaned and that ventilation parts are unobstructed.

Heating and chilled water systems

- Check general functionality and check for leaks in plant rooms and monitor system pressure for 48-72 hours following start up.
- Check that all system drain valves are closed.
- Inspect the circulation pumps frequently during the first few hours of operation to ensure that the motors are not excessively hot, or that no overdue noise is observed. If either is noticed change over to the standby pump motor.
- After a few hours check the flow and return temperatures at various points of the system.
- Check environmental conditions are being achieved throughout the property.
- Within 48 hours of restart remove and clean all strainer baskets.

Domestic cold water services

- Check general functionality.
- Check that all system drain valves are closed.
- Check that storage tank is full of water and that the ball valves operate correctly.

Domestic hot water supply

- Check general functionality.
- Ensure any mains and tank water systems are operational.



Water quality

- Check general functionality.
- See that systems have been properly maintained, flushed weekly.
- Check quality of potable water, particularly where providing services to tenants and public use areas.
- Flush all outlets in accordance with ACOP L8.
- Where sites have been laid dormant for extended periods, flush and check the water system thoroughly. There may be a requirement to re-chlorinate the whole system and have a qualified contractor sample for Legionella and TVCs (Total Viable Count).
- If positive in terms of Legionella, **do not use the system**. Seek expert advice.

Lifts & Escalators

- Check the functionality of lifts and escalators.
- Test emergency stop systems, lift alarms and interfaces to fire systems.
- Test the lift communications systems.
- Reconsider maximum numbers assuming 2m-circumference pp social distancing.
- Check the functionality of lifts and escalators.
- If escalators are able, consider redirecting so that they are one direction in order to minimise social contact.
- Add footprints on escalator steps to demarcate 2m gaps.

Electrical Systems

- Check the general functionality of electrical installations.
- Particularly check the functionality of automatic electrical systems, particularly life safety. change over systems and emergency systems operability.
- Inspect and test emergency lighting systems.
- Test any central battery systems.

Maintenance

- Consider any enhanced maintenance requirements to engineering services resulting from an extended lock down period, potentially bringing forward any planned maintenance.
- Survey sites which have been closed for extended periods to identify requirements for enhanced repairs.

Insurance.

Establish the requirements of the site insurers.

Cost management.

Use the communication strategy to initiate discussions between owners and occupiers and agents in relation to the cost implications of Covid-19 management and the uplift in service charges, notwithstanding a reduction in footfall as a result of social distancing.

Government Guidance.

Please see below for Government guidance on social distancing at the time of publication.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>

Please see below for Public Health England materials

[gov.uk https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/](https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/)

For businesses that are open, overall guidance for businesses on how to operate in England is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

Key elements of this guidance include:

- Employers and employees should discuss their working arrangements, and employers should take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.
- Sometimes this will not be possible, as not everyone can work from home. Certain jobs require people to travel to, from and for their work – for instance if they operate machinery, work in construction or manufacturing, or are delivering front line services.
- Employers who have people in their offices or onsite should ensure that employees are able to follow Public Health England guidelines including that: – spaces are optimised to allow social distancing to occur, wherever possible.
- Signs are visible in the workplace reminding employees not to attend work if they have a fever or cough and to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Employees are provided with hand sanitiser for frequent use and regular breaks to allow them to wash their hands for 20 seconds.
- At all times, workers should follow the guidance on self-isolation if they or anyone in their household shows symptoms.
- PHE does not advise masks in public places and for those working in supermarkets, waste collection, schools and similar settings. (This means that the use of PPE will generally only be needed for the work activities that had already been identified by an employer's own risk assessments pre-COVID).
- Members of staff who are vulnerable (including pregnant workers) or extremely vulnerable, as well as individuals whom they live with, should be supported as they follow the recommendations set out in guidance on social distancing and shielding, respectively.



Health and safety standards in this sector are enforced by the local authority (LA). Larger retailers may have entered into a Primary Authority agreement with a single LA, which allows them to agree access to a single consistent source of guidance.

Where they identify employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant PHE guidance to control public health risks, e.g. employers not taking appropriate action to socially distance, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks, including the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements with the PHE guidance. HSE are working closely with industry and trade unions to facilitate safe working and a smooth transition to regular working practices.

Government has also published specific guidance on retail work and for supermarkets, which has also been considered in preparing this Framework. That includes:

Crowd control:

- To protect staff and customers, businesses should manage entry into the store, only allowing a limited number of people into your store at any given time.
- Businesses should put up signage to ask customers with symptoms not to enter the store, and to remind both staff and customers to always keep 2 metres from other people, wherever possible.

Hygiene:

- Businesses should regularly encourage staff to wash their hands with soap and water as often as possible and for 20 seconds every time.
- For the protection of staff and delivery drivers, stock rooms, goods-in areas and onsite warehousing should be arranged where possible to maintain social distancing.
- If feasible, businesses should also put up Plexiglass barriers at all points of regular interaction to further reduce the risk of infection for all parties involved, cleaning the barriers regularly.
- Business should encourage the use of contactless payments where possible, without disadvantaging older or vulnerable customers.
- Rider-operated lift trucks should only be operated by a suitable, competent person that has received appropriate training. Lockdown may have made it difficult for lift truck operators to renew/maintain their training certificates. If requalification training cannot take place for reasons associated directly with coronavirus, it may be reasonable and practicable to extend the validity of current certificates by up to 3 months.
- To protect staff, businesses should remind colleagues daily to only come into work if they are well and no one in their household is self-isolating.

Government is considering additional guidance for specific circumstances such as:

- Specific areas of guidance that would apply for sub-sectors that are not currently open (for example, trying on clothes in clothing shops).
- Suggestions on how to reach different types of businesses with guidance (or other support on safer working), particularly smaller businesses.
- Help identifying issues that need further clarification in the guidance or where you would foresee challenges in interpreting the guidance and assessing risk as you seek to turn the guidance into SOP.
- Helping identify the issues that are likely to prove most difficult to decide on in practice and how these could be better addressed - for example, the point at which work of a particular type should stop, when mitigating actions have been difficult to apply.



In preparing this framework, reference has been made to information produced by Safe Shopping Centres, British Retail Consortium and British Council for Offices.

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revocommunity.org

Orion House, 5 Upper St Martins Lane,
London, WC2H 9EA
+44 (0)207 222 1122 hello@revocommunity.org