



Coronavirus Response

Post-coronavirus start-up guidance: Retail

Many retail businesses will be permitted to reopen their premises as part of the lockdown exit strategy. In many cases, business owners and staff will be returning to work and their premises for the first time in weeks since the Covid-19 partial or full shutdown came into force on 23rd March.

Reopening the business for trading and activating building services, plant and machinery needs to be planned, to resume activities in a controlled and safe manner, whilst protecting both staff and customers and observing social distancing guidelines.

There is considerable diversity within the retail sector, with businesses and outlets ranging widely in terms of their complexity, size, layout, customer footfall, staffing and training needs. Each business will need to undertake their own individual risk assessment to establish their specific needs to suit their own circumstances.

The guidance provided in this document covers some of the main areas to consider.

These guidelines do not override any existing policy conditions.

The fact that a business is deemed essential, or is permitted to operate, does not mean its legal obligations are in any way relaxed or reduced. Indeed, in the present climate the duties owed to employees and others are enhanced. All activities must only be undertaken in line with the current guidance issued by HM Government.

All applicable health & safety legislation and regulations remain fully in force, including but not limited to:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992.
- Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order.

First and foremost, customer and employee safety are paramount.





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Risk management measures

Activities: Activities: It is important that a review of your working activities is undertaken before restarting any work, as this will form part of your Covid-19 Compliance risk assessment. You must carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment; this means looking at working areas and activities to enable your employees to successfully distance themselves from customers and colleagues and work safely. It may not be appropriate to carry out certain activities as you normally would, and / or you may need to consider supplying PPE equipment to certain employees. Please see the latest Government and HSE advice for updates on appropriate precautions. Government and HSE advice for updates on appropriate precautions.

Please remember that if some activities cannot be carried out safely, they should not be undertaken at all.

Risk Assessments

You must reinduct your employees to ensure that they understand new restrictions, new rules and altered arrangements for using welfare facilities and you may need to operate out of hours and/or, introduce shift patterns in order to manage safely the social distancing elements of the Covid-19 guidelines.

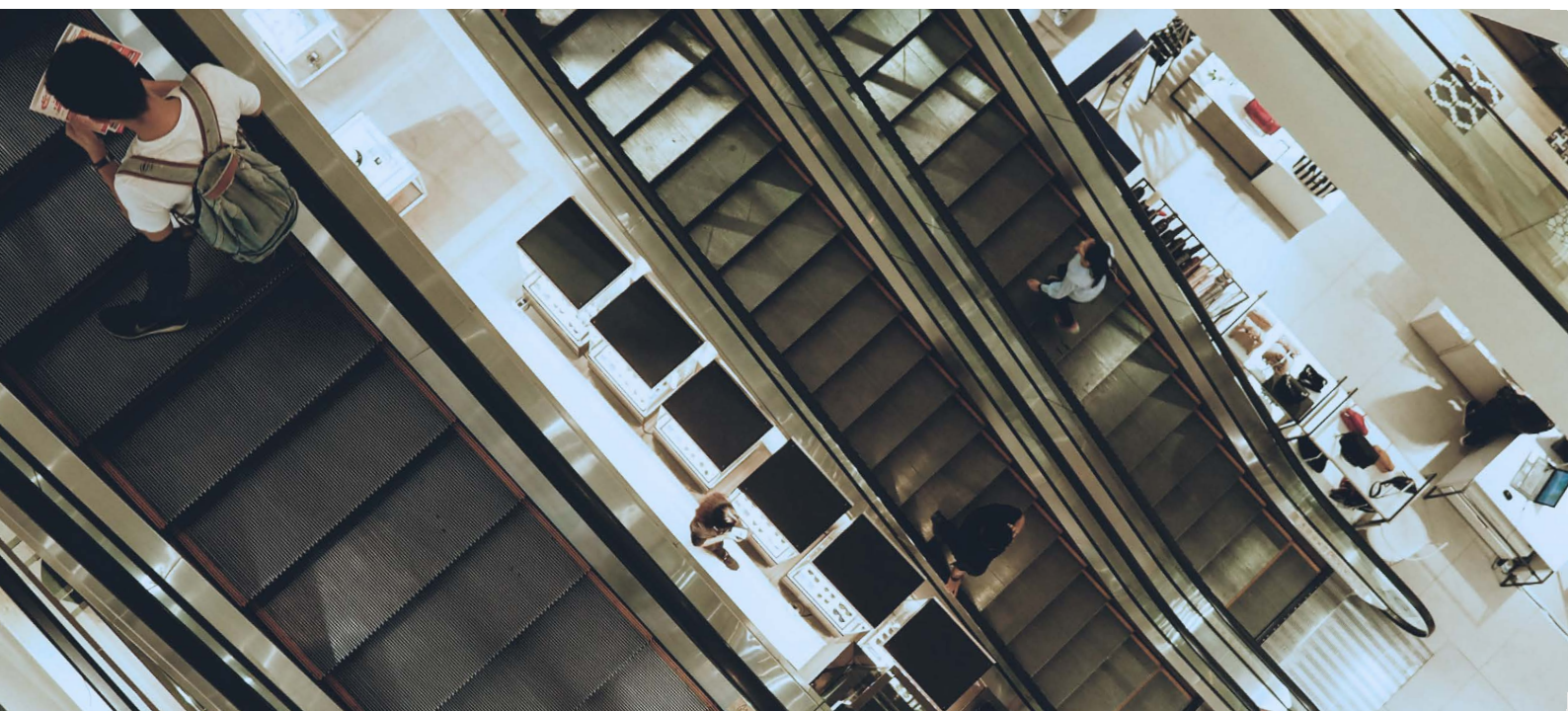
Please click on the headings below for links to further information:

[HSE Coronavirus information](#)

[HSE Social Distancing Guidelines](#)

[Working safely during Coronavirus](#)

[HSE Working safely during Coronavirus](#)





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Consultation

Employers should consult with employees and trade unions about the return to the workplace. In the meantime vulnerable staff should continue to work from home if they can.

Employers should keep up-to-date with the latest government guidance to help them plan ahead.

When planning to return to the premises, employers must:

- Consult with staff and employee representatives, including any trade union representatives and health and safety officials.
- Consider the risks of anyone being harmed in the workplace and carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- Make the workplace as safe as possible for staff, customers and other visitors.
 - » Introducing staggered opening times may help spread customer footfall, ensuring the maintenance of the social distancing guidelines.
 - » If you need to provide transport to and from the workplace, social distancing must be observed. This may involve the use of more or larger vehicles, in either case with fewer passengers. Ensure all legal requirements are met.
 - » Providing additional staff car parking and/or cycle storage for employees using their own transport will reduce the need to use public transport.

Managing Covid-19 Anxiety

Without doubt many employees may feel anxious about travelling and returning to work considering the Covid-19 outbreak, and the issues associated with this will be around for some time to come.

It is important that employers take due consideration of this, as it could impact the successful operation of your business.

There is further [guidance from the NHS on anxiety around Covid-19 issues](#).

Some employees may be anxious about their safety when returning to the workplace. Employers and employees should talk about any concerns and try to resolve them together. It can also help to signpost staff to any health and wellbeing support that is available, for example occupational health or mental health services.





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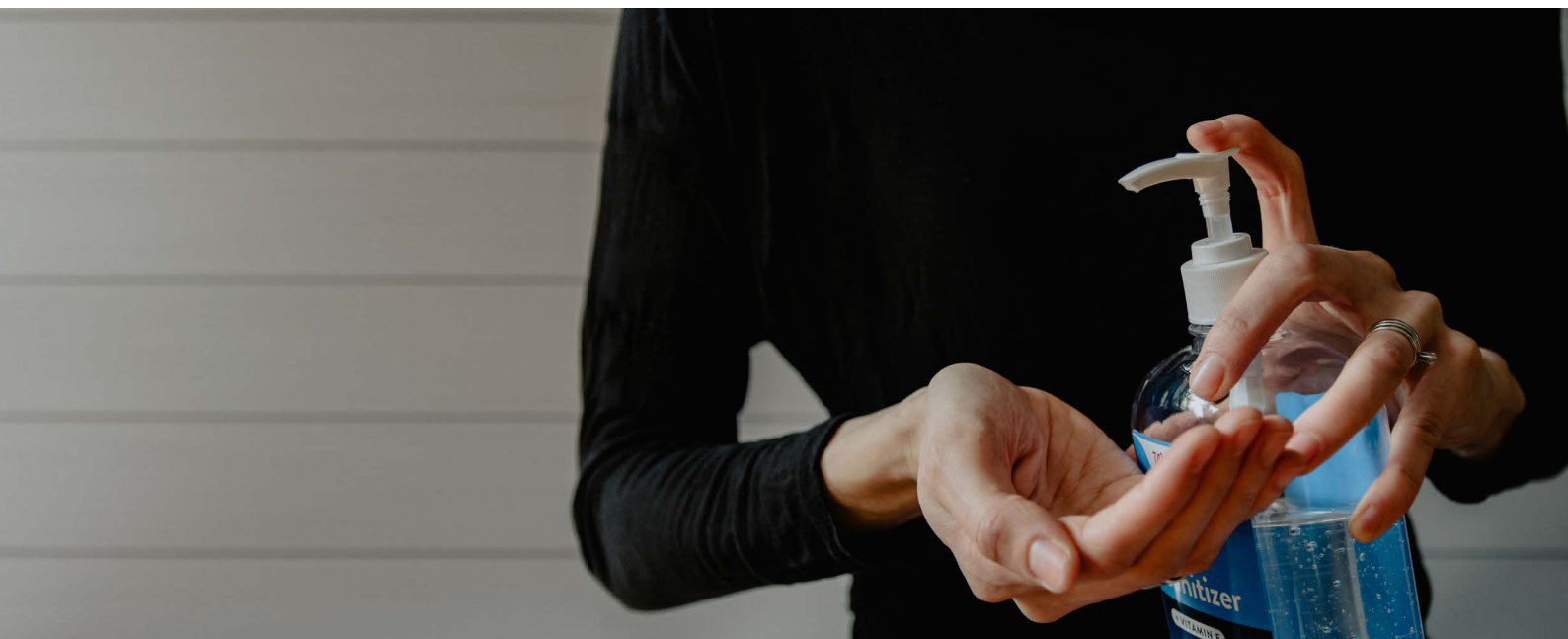
Cleaning – general guidance applicable to all locations

- Think about your building and the layout of your premises. You should only consider cleaning surfaces yourself if you have the correct protective equipment and materials to hand, or these are readily available.
- We also understand that you may wish to use a service delivery option to do this work ahead of opening.

Common and shared areas need to be managed, but it is important that you consult with other parties regarding cleaning and sanitising of these areas.

Prepare a schedule of cleaning steps covering the following schedule of cleaning steps covering the following:

- Access and egress routes – what could anyone have touched?
- Always work from clean to dirty areas, to avoid spreading any contamination.
- Door handles, letterboxes, keys, vehicles, finger plates, keypads, glass surfaces and floors – these are just a few areas but may well differ from premises to premises.
- Washrooms, shower rooms and WCs should be subjected to a deep clean and increased frequency of cleaning, especially if they are available for public use.
- Phones, PC's, keyboards, desks, vending machines and PIN pads.
- Kitchen areas, taps, fridges.
- Wear protective gloves and thoroughly sanitise door handles, key pads and hard surfaces glass panels mirrors etc that people may have touched.
- Although the Covid-19 virus cannot survive long on hard surfaces it is advised that these should be cleaned/sanitised thoroughly.
- Use a proprietary sanitiser/wipes where possible to clean before you open to employees and/or the general public.





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Water systems checks

Legionella checks - this is important because standing water can generate Legionella bacteria growth.

Generally, the advice is that temperature control is the traditional strategy for reducing the risk of legionella in hot and cold-water systems:

- Cold water systems should be maintained, where possible, at a temperature below 20°C.
- Hot water should be stored at least at 60°C and distributed so that it reaches a temperature of 50°C (55°C in healthcare premises) within one minute at the outlets.

However, much will depend on the type of water systems, so please check using the below link to the HSE website or seek expert advice from water treatment companies specializing in this area.

- Check with your water treatment provider, if your systems are under contract or you have an FM management company in place.
- Run all water systems, hot and cold, for at least 15 minutes to clear any standing water in the systems.
- Include showers, if this is relevant to your premises.
- More detailed advice is available from the HSE Website via the following link <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/hot-and-cold.htm>

Covid-19 Premises management

A competent person must update and re-align your risk assessments to take account of the Covid-19 related activities and exposures.

It is important that you have suitable notices posted at the entrance and on your website clearly informing customers what your arrangements are for managing Covid-19, and that they may need to queue externally 2 metres apart.

- You must train all your employees in the new procedures and share information with them regarding the risk assessment before the premises reopen.
- Make sure that they understand fully how to manage the social distancing guidelines and the maximum number of customers allowed inside at any one time based on your assessment to maintain social distancing.
- Employees and managers should be trained in the steps that may need to be taken in the event of customers not following the rules devised to maintain social distancing.





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- Liaise with adjacent premises, your landlord or, if you are in a shopping centre, the centre management team, to agree a strategy regarding queue management to maintain social distancing. Consider temporary barriers or floor marking to assist.
 - » High street retailers may need to liaise with their immediate neighbours to agree a joint approach to safe queueing to maintain social distancing principles.
- You will need to have adequate door control to explain the procedures to customers and ensure that numbers being admitted are manageable. Where possible consider having separate entry and exit doors to control customer movements. Consider if extra security personnel, measures are required?
- Where possible consider introducing a one-way system throughout the store to help manage customer flow maintaining social distancing.
- Ensure staff are wearing protective gloves and that any shopping trolleys and baskets are wiped down after every use.
- Revised First Aid arrangements are required, particularly think about how you would deal with casualties as social distancing cannot be achieved so additional PPE and training will be required for First Aiders.
- Door handles and any touch surfaces need to be regularly wiped down.
- Reducing the number of tills available may be necessary to meet the 2-metre social distancing requirement. Where possible erect clear plastic / perspex barriers at check-out tills which remain in use.
- Payment should be by chip and PIN to avoid where possible handling cash, remember to clean key pads.
- Alarm keypads should be sanitised daily after every deactivation.
- Consider whether your fire safety and evacuation arrangements are adequate. Given social distancing guidelines it may not be possible to undertake trial evacuations of premises so you may need to impose a temporary change of fire policy. If an emergency arises requiring fire evacuation, you need to be aware that the priority is life safety and should act accordingly, more information is available via the following link: [Fire Safety Advice to Business](#)
- Combustible rubbish and waste need to be removed regularly throughout the day.





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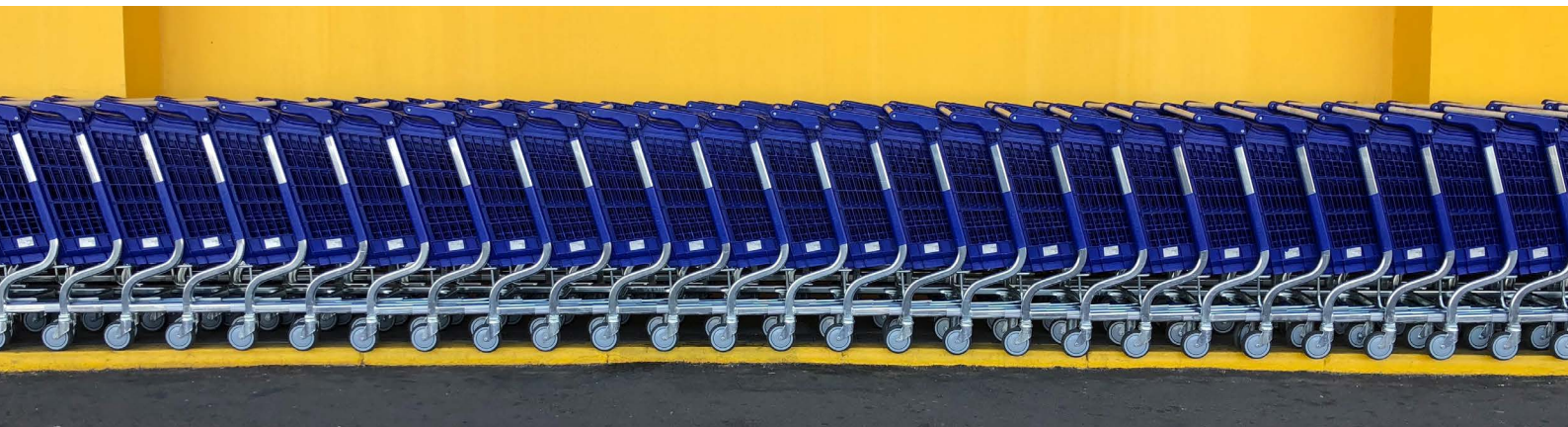
Deliveries and 'Click & Collect'

Think about products/goods deliveries, and how you limit your employee exposure. Ideally these need to be managed so that social distancing can be exercised between storemen, delivery drivers.

- Delivery drivers must only open the rear of vehicles the return to cab.
- Storemen should remove goods either by pallet truck or roll cages.
- If more than one storeman is involved social distancing should be achieved by staggering offloading. This will be longer but keeps your employees safe.
- Where a 'click & collect' service is operating, you should consider the layout and access to the designated collection point to ensure adherence to strict social distance guidelines. An outside collection point may be an option to consider. To manage footfall, an e-mail, SMS or call-back service should be put into place letting the customer know when their item is ready for collection.

Car parks (where they are under your control)

- Ensure that social distancing in car parks can be achieved by introducing a one-way traffic flow system, if not already in place.
- Ensure there are adequate directions and prominent signage.
- Use alternate parking bays.
- Reduce speed in car parks to 5 mph to protect pedestrians.
- Employees involved in directing car parking operations must wear high visibility clothing.
- Make sure that access and egress to car parks is managed in such a way as to maintain social distancing requirements.
- In line with the Government advice, be aware that increased cycle use is likely for both employees and members of the public. You must ensure that traffic management arrangements take account of this.
- You must train all your employees in the new procedures and share information with them regarding the risk assessment before the premises reopen.
- Make sure that they understand fully how to manage the social distancing guidelines.





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Premises Opening

On reopening a business following temporary full or partial shutdown, the following precautionary measures will assist in mitigating potential losses and further disruption:

- Undertake a thorough inspection of the perimeter security including fences, gates, doors, windows, shutters etc., to ensure they are undamaged and locking devices are serviceable.
- Inspect the building for any signs of damage or deterioration and arrange for remedial repairs as necessary.
- Fire alarm systems, access control, CCTV systems, intruder alarms, fire doors (including self-closers), fire extinguishers, fire dampers, emergency lighting/signage and emergency exits should be checked and/or tested to, ensure they are fully operational and, where required, arrange for a service or emergency visit to rectify faults.
- Review the alarm keyholders to ensure adequate coverage is provided and ensure the intruder and fire alarm system Alarm Receiving Centres are informed of any changes.
- Fixed automatic fire suppression systems, such as wet chemical systems to commercial cooking ranges, should be checked to ensure they are serviceable, and when in doubt arrange a service visit by the installer.
- Where automatic fire sprinklers systems are installed, please refer to the separate detailed guidance note.
- Reinstating building services where they had been shut down (heating, air conditioning, power supplies etc) and restarting processes, plant and machinery should follow the OEM procedures by suitably trained and competent staff to ensure this is undertaken safely to minimise hazards and avoid damage or injury.
- Where the incoming water supplies have been isolated at the stopcock and systems drained, reinstating and refilling should be conducted in a slow controlled manner, checking for any leaks and to avoid water hammer which can cause damage to pipes, connections and fittings.
- Waste storage and removal should be carefully managed as part of general housekeeping on site. Frequency of waste collections may be less than necessary until normal services are fully resumed. Where additional arrangements are made to remove waste build-up, ensure you only use registered companies to avoid the potential risk of 'fly-tipping'.
- To check that a company is registered, go to the following website: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>
- Taking shortcuts when reinstating utility services or starting-up machinery that have been idle should be avoided, as this could lead to costly further disruption.

