

COVID-19: RE-STARTING FOR WHOLESALE AND LOGISTICS BUSINESSES



Re-starting your business after a temporary shutdown or reduction in operations can present specific hazards, which if not planned or managed properly, may result in damage, injury, legal action and further disruption to your business.

HERE'S WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Where activities are either scaled up or scaled down compared to the pre-shutdown period, there can be increased risk of:

- fire / explosion
- machinery / plant damage or breakdown
- injury.

These may be caused by a variety of factors including delayed maintenance cycles, frequent start up and shut down procedures, changes in procurement and human factors.

Your business operations and activities may need to adapt where different raw materials are used due to supply chain challenges, producing different products, keeping an increased level of stock,

introducing different processes or procedures, changes in shift patterns and staffing etc. Where these changes introduce new hazards or exposures, risk management measures, should all be re-assessed and adapted. This may include:

- safe systems of work / working procedures
- training
- cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
- fire and security protection system.

If you've furloughed staff, you'll need to consider the timeframe agreed for returning to the workplace, so allow for this in planning arrangements.

If you're unable to create a safe working environment on site, those operations should be postponed until corrective measures can be put in place.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following provides a checklist of key considerations to safely recommence operations:

- **Observe and enforce COVID-19 workplace restrictions** in line with government regulations and guidance, including those relevant to:
 - travel to work
 - driving at work
 - welfare provision
 - cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
 - social distancing
 - floor markings
 - digital rather than paper use
 - personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - staggered working hours and breaks.

Where the regulations and guidance can't be met, work activities should either be revised to achieve them or stopped altogether. Guidance is available from:

- **UK Government**, including **COVID Secure guidance** specific to Construction and other outdoor work
- **Public Health England**
- **Health Protection Scotland**
- **Public Health Wales**
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE).**



- **Review existing risk assessments and actions** including safe systems of work / working procedures to check they're relevant to your business' operation and that you're taking all the appropriate measures to ensure a safe working environment. Where your business operations and activities are required to change, plans should be updated and careful consideration given to whether:

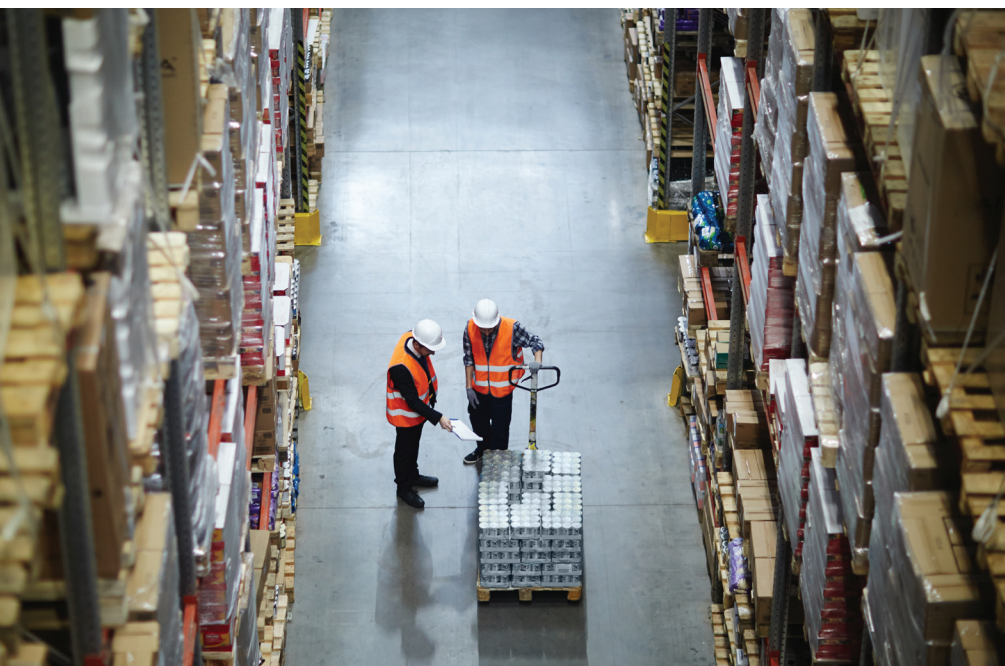
- o new risk assessments should be completed and the results and consequent actions shared with your employees, (including any temporary and agency personnel) and any visitors, contractors and other occupants or users where premises are shared
- o fire, security and COVID-19 specific precautions are in your review, implementing changes and / or enhancements where necessary to maintain an appropriate level of protection.

Specific considerations may include:

- o the scope of fire and intruder alarm detection, CCTV coverage and guarding
- o opening / closing procedures
- o arrangements for social / physical distancing may include:
 - thorough work planning to avoid close working
 - managing breaks and welfare provision
 - use of vehicles and plant / machinery / equipment
 - careful management of site meetings and training delivery
 - improved signage
 - physical barriers
 - PPE provision and use, for example.
- o removal / restriction of touch points where practical i.e. vending machines and other canteen equipment for general employee use



- o establishing procedures and safe systems of work for machinery interventions such as cleaning, servicing, maintenance and repair
- o providing cleaning stations at entrance / exit points and other strategic locations with signage to remind customers and employees of the importance of washing hands and hygiene
- o identification and regular cleaning of touch points including door handles, lift buttons, keypads and stair handrails etc.
- o defining process alternatives for entry and exit points where appropriate, for example, deactivating pass readers at turnstiles in favour of showing a pass to security personnel at a distance
- o determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, carrying out services at night
- o methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example, by ordering larger quantities less often or larger stock deliveries in / out of storage premises
- o consider the adequacy of sprinkler and other fire protection if increased levels of storage occur
- o where possible and safe, having single workers load or unload vehicles, or using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed
- o encouraging visits via remote connection or remote working for visitors where this is an option.
- o limiting the number of visitors at any one time
- o establishing host responsibilities relating to COVID-19, providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.
- o providing clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene, such as for inbound delivery drivers or safety critical visitors, on arrival, (e.g. signage, visual aids) and before arrival, (e.g. by phone, on your website or email)
- o reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips within buildings and sites; for example, restricting access to some areas, encouraging use of radios or telephones, where permitted and cleaning between use
- o encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this doesn't compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways



- o considering the potential for non-contact goods deliveries
- o coordinating and cooperating with other occupiers if working in shared facilities
- o IT and cyber security
- o continued support (practical and wellbeing) for any employees who continue to work from home.

Further support can be found on our [health & safety risk assessment](#), [safe systems of work](#), [fire risk assessment](#) and [cyber security](#) pages.

- **Develop and carry out enhanced workplace cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation programmes** both pre and post re-opening. Pay particular attention to communal areas and touchpoints such as washing facilities, toilet flushes and seats, door handles and push plates, hand rails, office equipment, machinery controls, food preparation areas and company vehicles, forklift trucks, pallet trucks etc. Record cleaning and outline ongoing expectations / requirements. If you're introducing alcohol-based hand sanitisers, remember they're flammable. Update your fire risk assessment, to keep your premises and people safe, ensure storage and use is clear of ignition sources (for example, electrical equipment, hot surfaces, smoking areas etc.) and ideally store within purpose designed flammable liquid cabinets, or otherwise, steel cabinets. Further support can be found on our [storage and use of flammable / explosive materials](#) page.

- **Undertake a thorough inspection of your site** including:
 - o all buildings (interior and exterior)
 - o boundary fences
 - o gates
 - o utility services including water systems and other potential sources of Legionella
 - o machinery / plant
 - o stock
 - o any hazardous operations, emergency backup systems and safety equipment to establish and correct any unsafe or abnormal conditions, such as damage, maintenance issues, leaks, faulty safety and emergency systems, improper housekeeping or storage, signs of vandalism or theft etc.

Our [equipment checklist](#) may assist you.

- **Review emergency response procedures** to verify:
 - o they're up-to-date
 - o adequate coverage for assigned positions on all shifts, including first aiders and fire marshals for example.

Further support can be found on our [emergency procedures](#) page.

- **Plan sufficient time to recommission previously shutdown machinery / plant and processes** in line with all standard operating procedures (SOPs) and manufacturers' guidelines.
- **Complete and reinstate any inspection, testing and maintenance procedures** including those of a statutory nature that may have lapsed

since the shutdown. This could include utility services, machinery / plant such as machinery guarding and interventions, adequacy / safety of storage racking, emissions control equipment, noise control equipment, process related safety equipment (relating to prevention of fire / explosion for instance), pollutants control, other waste management plant, control equipment for hazardous substances etc.

Competent persons should verify that all protection / detection systems, including fire sprinkler / suppression systems, fire pumps, water supplies, fire alarm systems, intruder alarm systems, CCTV, access control etc. are in service and functioning correctly.

Further support can be found in our [equipment checklist](#), [general-manufacturing](#) and [forklift truck pre-use checks](#) pages and external guidance provided by the [HSE](#).

- **Ensure work competence and capability of employees** for the activities to be carried out checking all:
 - o possess the necessary and appropriate skills
 - o have received appropriate information, instruction and training, and hold the correct and up-to-date certificates and licenses, where required.

Additional training programmes and / or certification, instruction, information and supervision may be required where there is an insufficient number of competent personnel with regard to your return-to-work-policy (where in place). This can help provide structure and a framework to ensure your personnel are fit for work and consider issues such as mental health, well-being and physical fitness.

In reviewing the training arrangements and competency requirements, specific consideration should be given to the following:

- **Availability and responsibilities of key personnel**
 - o senior managers
 - o Human Resources and Health, Safety & Environmental personnel
 - o department managers / supervisors
 - o appropriately qualified technicians and plant / machinery operators
 - o maintenance personnel
 - o first aiders
 - o fire marshals.



- **Formal induction / re-induction**

- o specific expectations and controls relating to COVID-19 and any amendment to rules
- o consider the specific requirements of any vulnerable workers (young persons, new and expectant mothers, any groups identified as being at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19).

- **Other training needs**

- o expired tickets, certificates and interim measures - a number of trade organisations have sites indicating interim arrangements where training may have expired
- o familiarisation (site and plant for example) to be specifically considered, with returning furloughed employees and operatives potentially not having operated plant or been in a site environment for a significant period of time.

- **Training delivery**

- o requirements for social and physical distancing for example, are likely to impact the practicalities of training delivery, including induction and toolbox talks. This should be considered as part of the risk assessment process, including available facilities, numbers that can be safely accommodated, duration, potential barriers to communication etc.

Further support can be found on our [training](#) page.



- **Consider how and when to**

communicate to employees regarding re-opening and re-starting procedures and associated expectations, including proposed site rules:

- o can electronic / remote platforms be used to release initial communications before re-opening?
- o use the first days of re-opening to communicate expectations, integrate employees back into their job role and activities, and assess any immediate training needs or other support that may be appropriate. Consider the potential impacts of a significant period of time away from work, with some employees likely to benefit from a gradual / phased reintroduction.

- **Review your business continuity plan including:**

- o supply chain resilience (stock, machinery and equipment parts and components, including software where relevant)
- o implementation and mitigation measures, to reflect any changes to your business operation and lessons learned from the temporary shutdown.

- **Further information and support is available:**

- o Allianz UK's [risk management portal](#) and [Coronavirus resource hub](#).