



Post-coronavirus start-up guidance: Hotels - accommodation only

Most hotels and businesses providing accommodation for holidays, or business travellers, will have been closed since the Covid-19 restrictions came into force on 23rd March.

Some hotels will however have remained operational to some degree, catering for key workers, vulnerable groups or to provide emergency accommodation as a permitted exclusion. Planning to resume operations for the first time in weeks since the Covid-19 restrictions, or opening more fully if partially closed, can be challenging and needs to be planned to resume activities and building services in a controlled and safe manner.

This guidance excludes extended functions such as spas, gymnasiums, swimming pools, conference and wedding facilities – until official government advice changes, these areas should remain closed with no access allowed.

Promote your new Covid-19 arrangements to guests and employees – this will assist in confidence; ask for feedback frequently and update policies and procedures as required. Remember to communicate any changes to guests and staff, including any additional training that may be required as a result.

Due to the diversity of this industry, each hotel will need to be individually risk assessed to establish specific needs, and the guidance given below 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 2005.

First and foremost, guest and employee safety are paramount.





Coronavirus Response

Risk management measures

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 includes looking at working areas and activities to enable your employees to successfully distance themselves from guests and colleagues and work safely, as well as enabling guests to socially distance from each other. 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.

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

You must reinduct all 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 amended working patterns to manage safely the social distancing elements of the Covid-19 guidelines.

You will also need to liaise with your suppliers and services providers, for example food deliveries and linen providers, to ensure that they know your revised Covid-19 procedures and can effectively manage their normal activities when making deliveries to your premises. Ask to see their risk assessments and method statements and check they are satisfactory.

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

[HSE Coronavirus information](#)

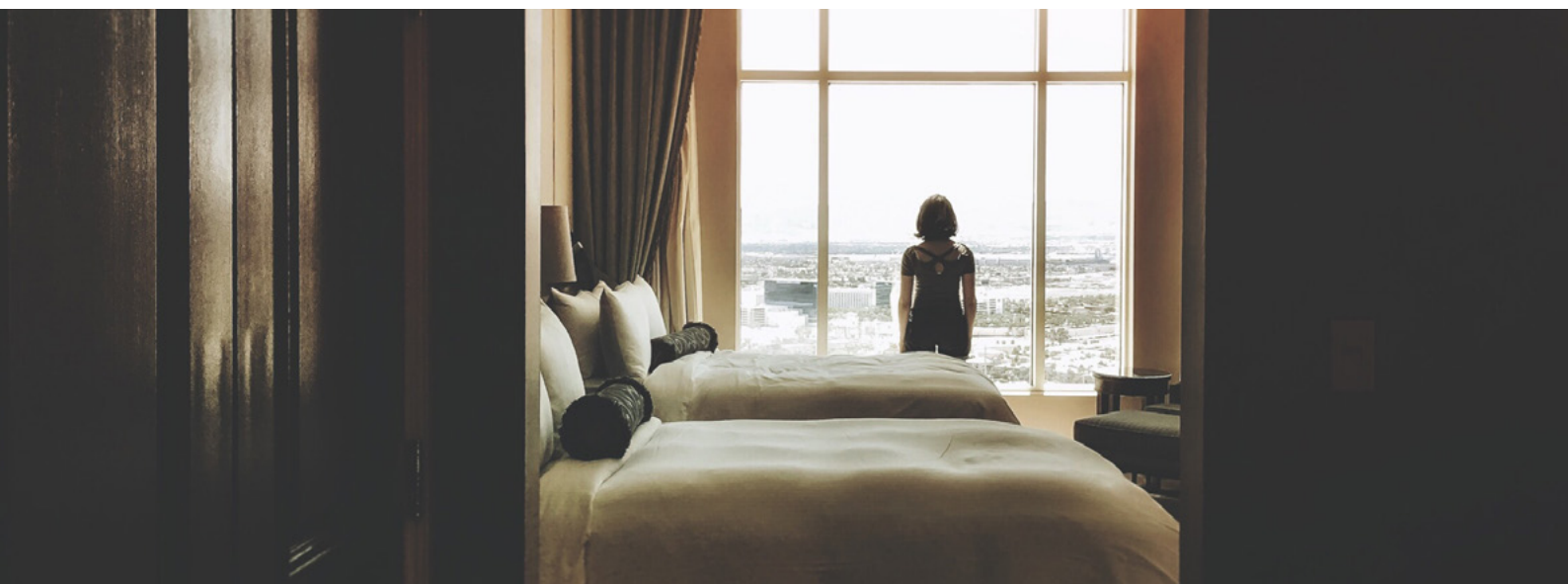
[HSE Social Distancing Guidelines](#)

[Working safely during Coronavirus](#)

[HSE Working safely during Coronavirus](#)

[Guidance on social distancing in public spaces](#)

[Sector specific business and trade association guidance](#)





Coronavirus Response

Reopening premises following temporary partial or full shutdown

Resuming occupation of a premises after temporary partial or full shutdown, performing inspections and reinstating the utilities and services needs to be carefully planned to ensure they are brought back into operation in a controlled and safe manner.

Reinstating power, gas supplies, HVAC, water supplies and other services should be performed by trained and competent personnel familiar with the facility, equipment and the relevant OEM guidelines.

The objective is to resume occupation and operations in a controlled and safe manner, whilst minimising the risk of further disruption at this sensitive time.

Consultation

Employers should:

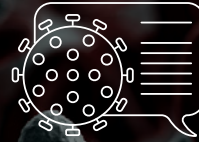
- Consult with employees and trade unions about the return to the workplace. In the meantime, vulnerable staff should continue to work from home if they can.
- Keep up to date with the latest government guidance to help them plan.

When planning to return to the premises, employers must:

- Consult with staff and employee representatives, including any trade union representatives and health & 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.

Some organisations may be anxious about their safety when returning to the premises, and all tenants/managing agents 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.

- » Hand sanitiser provided to guests, employees and visible in all public access areas.
- » 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.
- » Lifts – ensure that you can manage social distancing effectively. Where practical fitter able-bodied persons should take the stairs.
- » Cleaning of lifts should take place around the clock and be visible to guests and staff.
- » Hand sanitiser stations should be located at the vestibule and each floor.



Coronavirus Response

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.

Risk management

The items that need to be considered will vary depending on the site layout, specific equipment and processes involved, so should be assessed carefully in the planning stage. The following general considerations should be reviewed and considered as part of this process.

You must consider and manage the following:

- Update risk assessments and working procedures in respect of the Covid-19 amendment.
- Develop and communicate a strategy to maintain social distancing in communal areas, especially where there is large footfall, including use of elevators, access and egress routes, plus surrounding open or enclosed spaces under your responsibility.
- 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 employees understand fully how to manage the social distancing guidelines for guests within common areas.
- Employees and managers should be trained in the steps that may need to be taken in the event of guests not following the rules devised to maintain social distancing.
- Confirm that you have, and can supply & provide, the correct PPE where this is required for work-related activities.
- Ensure that all your employees are symptom-free and have not been in contact within the last 14 days with someone who has had, or is suspected to have had, Covid-19, or someone who has been required to self-isolate with suspected Covid-19.
- Guests booking on-line need to make a declaration that they are symptom-free and have not been in contact within the last 14 days with someone who has had, or is suspected to have had Covid-19, or someone who has been required to self-isolate with suspected Covid-19.
- Put in place a process to ensure that staff are asked daily to declare that they remain symptom free – this check should be recorded.
- In addition, anyone who is classed as a vulnerable person, through age, ill health condition, pregnancy, or who is a carer for someone who is vulnerable, should remain away from work.



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- First Aid and First Responder Training – how do you manage close contact? Full PPE may be required, and it is suggested that you investigate [further advice from St John Ambulance](#).
- Automated External Defibrillators must be checked by the manufacturer to ensure that they still function correctly. If used in an emergency they need to be sanitised after use.
- Ensure that appropriate signs and notices are visible, reminding guests and staff to clean and sanitise hands regularly.
- Any external seating areas, including for smoking and vaping, must be clearly segregated from each other to maintain social distancing. These areas should be included in the cleaning and sanitising programme.
- Consider removing ancillary room facilities such as contents of minibars, tea and coffee making facilities.
- If breakfast or other meals are served buffet style, consider whether this can be done safely and if not revert to table service.
- Inform your insurer that you are operational, and following specific guidance issued by HM Government and the HSE in respect of Covid-19.
- Confirm that all relevant insurance policies areas still in force and the limits of indemnity remain as before the crisis.





Coronavirus Response

Car parks

- Ensure that social distancing in staff and hotel 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 alternative parking bays to ensure social distancing.
- Valet Parking – all guest vehicles need to be cleaned and sanitised. This must include wiping down internal/external surfaces, door handles, steering wheels, a cleaning schedule needs to be devised and followed with clear instructions and training provided to all staff.
- 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.

Front of house and customer services

As well as social distancing this will include the “effective management” of welfare arrangements in common areas such as reception lobbies, plant rooms, lifts, changing areas, locker rooms, shower/washrooms and toilet facilities, welfare etc.

Ensure that locker rooms and changing rooms are cleaned and sanitised regularly to protect staff.

There are now additional rules, inductions and communication with respect to Covid-19 arrangements and you must ensure that your staff and guests co-operate fully regarding these.

- Provide hand sanitiser throughout the common areas of the premises, particularly at entrances, exits and lift lobbies etc.
- You will need to have adequate door control to explain the procedures to guests and ensure that numbers being admitted are manageable. Where possible consider having separate entry and exit doors to control customer movements.
- Display notices and posters reminding staff and guests to wash their hands regularly.
- Where possible erect clear plastic / perspex barriers at check-in/check-out and concierge desks.
- 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](#)



Coronavirus Response

Back of house

Kitchen Areas and Housekeeping

Although staff working in kitchens are working in a clean and sterile environment, consider what additional steps are needed in respect of the Covid-19 controls.

- Kitchen staff to wear PPE.
- Ensure adequate ventilation is operational throughout the kitchen.
- Make sure no third parties can enter the kitchen and ensure deliveries are managed on to the premises.
- Sanitise all chopping boards and food preparation areas.
- Update your HACCP procedure to ensure it takes account of the Covid-19 issues.
- Train all staff in new procedures.

Housekeeping

Undoubtedly housekeeping staff will have to deal with a variety of new processes and procedures during the Covid-19 situation. You must train and ensure that your staff are aware of these, and that they are following the new guidelines. This will need to cover enhanced cleaning and sanitising of guest rooms, and public areas, over and above the usual standard.

This is as follows, but not limited to:

- Staff to wear PPE.
- Sanitising and cleaning of towels, beds and bed linen.
- Sanitising of pillows and all touch surfaces.
- Sanitising and cleaning of bathrooms (including fixed soap dispensers), carpets, coverings etc.
- Handling of dirty laundry.
- Ensure all old toiletries are removed and discarded – these should not be replaced in rooms.
- Ensure there is no cross over points i.e. clean linen should only be placed in a room once it has been sanitised and cleaned.
- Ironing boards and irons need to be sanitised after each guest.



Coronavirus Response

Document the following:

- **Assess:** review all areas of work activity, look for contact points between employees, guests and others, possibly any members of the public or delivery drivers and consider / re-assess if these can be managed within the current social distancing guidelines. Update your risk assessments to reflect any changes. Signage detailing access/egress, one-way routes, social distancing etc to be provided both front of house and back of house.
- **Train and inform:** communicate with your employees and guests about what the new changes may mean, ensuring that they fully understand and above all document and record all training and information going forward.
- **Clean:** review welfare arrangements and facilities provided – can social distancing be achieved in washrooms and canteen facilities? You may need to stagger the use of these facilities and supervise or control access and egress.
- If you have an external catering provider, they must be able to demonstrate that they can effectively maintain social distancing in kitchen preparation areas, servery and seating areas.
- The provider must also consult with you regarding cleaning and sanitisation of all areas under their control, as well as sharing their revised Covid-19 risk assessments.
- All actions, systems and procedures must be documented – you may be required to produce evidence of compliance to a regulator.

Cleaning – general guidance applicable to all locations

- Think about the layout of your premises, prior to opening for business. 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.

Prepare a schedule of cleaning steps covering the following:

- All staff must be re-trained in the updated cleaning and sanitising procedures.
- Ensure that cleaning and sanitisation is carried out regularly throughout the day, frequency will be dictated by your Covid-19 risk assessment and obvious footfall patterns linked to the working day.
- 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, room access cards, vehicles, finger plates, keypads, glass surfaces and floors – these are just a few areas but may well differ from premises to premises, and internally across departments.
- Washrooms should be subjected to a deep clean
- Guest rooms – room cleaning between guests should be given high priority, ensuring it is undertaken thoroughly, including light switches, TV remote control, door furniture, room thermostats, coat hangers, suitcase racks, irons, ironing boards, safes, mini bar, coffee/tea making facilities, hair dryers etc.
- Laundry – bed linen, towels etc should be bagged within the guest room before removed to cleaning service.
- Phones, PC's, keyboards, desks, vending machines and PIN pads.
- Although the Covid-19 virus cannot survive long on hard surfaces it is advised that these should be cleaned/sanitised thoroughly.



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- Use a proprietary de-sanitiser/wipes where possible to clean before you open to employees and/or the general public.
- Kitchen extract hoods, canopies, plenums, filters/baffles, grease traps and ducting should be cleaned as deposits of fats, oils and grease (FOG) are both a hygiene and fire hazard. Mould or fungus may have accumulated necessitating a full clean – see further guidance in the ‘Premises Opening’ section below.

Ventilation extraction

Building ventilation systems may have been left running for essential humidity and temperature control within the structure. In this instance it is not necessary to do anything with these systems, as any microbes/contaminants will have been carried through the ventilation system and removed from circulation.

The Federation of European Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Associations (REHVA) has carried out research and published a paper (17th March 2020) based on the current experience and knowledge of Covid-19. This can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.rehva.eu/activities/covid-19-guidance>

The overall management of Covid-19 risk should be achieved through good hygiene and cleaning procedures as defined with the current HM Government guidelines. Further advice can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

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>



Coronavirus Response

Building Inspection

The following general checks should be made of the general building condition and the fire & security protection:

- 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 should be checked to ensure they are serviceable, and when in doubt arrange a service visit by the installer. Examples of systems include, but are not limited to:
 - » Wet chemical systems to commercial cooking ranges.
 - » Gaseous fire suppression systems, protecting critical plant & equipment.
 - » Water mist systems.
- Prior to start up and use, kitchen extract hoods, canopies, plenums, filters/baffles, grease traps and ducting should be cleaned, as deposits of fats, oils and grease (FOG) can ignite resulting in severe fires. The cleaning can be undertaken by trained personnel, apart from the entire internal length of extract ducting, extraction motor and fan, which should be undertaken by a specialist contractor in accordance with TR19® Grease. Specialist contractors to undertake this work can be sourced from the Building Engineering Services Association (BESA) website: www.thebesa.com
- Where automatic fire sprinklers systems are installed, please refer to the separate detailed guidance note.
- Reinstating building services where they had been shut down (elevators, escalators, heating, air conditioning, power and gas supplies etc) should follow the OEM procedures, through 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.