

CORONAVIRUS COVID 19



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Easing the COVID-19 restrictions 18 May (Phase 1)

We have now arrived at phase 1 where there will be some easing of restrictions. This phase will see increased movement of people as some more businesses return to work and people are being given a little more personal freedom (*up to 4 people who don't live together can meet outdoors while keeping at least 2 metres apart*). Providing employees with information on phase 1 may also be prudent at this time. For phase 1 changes see [link](#)

On 8th May 2020, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, in conjunction with the Department of Health, the Health and Safety Authority, and the Health Service Executive (HSE), published the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#). As the feed industry is already at work and have systems set up, all of this document may not be relevant, however it is a very useful resource to check, to ensure you are working in line with recommended best practice.

As outlined in the protocol document, physical distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene measures are still the key line of defence in reducing the spread of covid19. The current recommendation on physical distancing is for people to maintain a 2-metre distance from others. Employers need to ensure that physical distancing is being maintained in the workplace.

The protocol suggests a number of ways in which this may be achieved, including organising teams to consistently work and break together, reorganising work and break areas, staggering break times and implementing a no-handshake policy.

If physical distancing is not possible, other measures such as physical barriers, minimisation of direct contact, provision of hygiene facilities and face masks should be considered. Remote working should be used where possible, and particularly in the case of vulnerable workers. The Protocol also recommends that only essential business trips are undertaken and that employers make the most of the available technology to negate the need for face-to-face contact.

In conclusion, looking at the controls you have currently and assessing if you need include any additional ones would also be prudent at this time. Some of European colleagues have advised us they take temperature checks as employee enters the work place.

Useful links

- ISME COVID-19 Risk Assessment template [HERE](#)
- ISME Employee Declaration template [HERE](#)
- The National protocols on returning to work, [HERE](#)
- NSAI guidance on workplace improvement and protection, [HERE](#).