



# COVID-19 Protocols - Guidelines for implementing

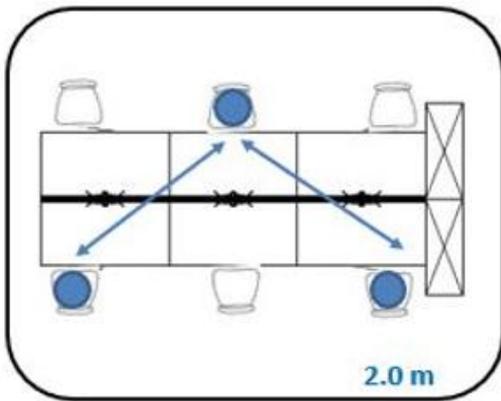
Essential services must put in place alternative ways of working to keep employees safe. We know there is a lot of information circulating around the internet and social media – some if it is credible but there is a lot that is questionable. To be consistent, the following guidelines will assist you put practices in place that reduce the risk of contamination at sites and minimise the impact on you.

## Physical distancing

You must maintain a two metre distance from others so that others are not breathing in small liquid droplets when you talk, sneeze or cough. What you do affects everyone you work and live with.

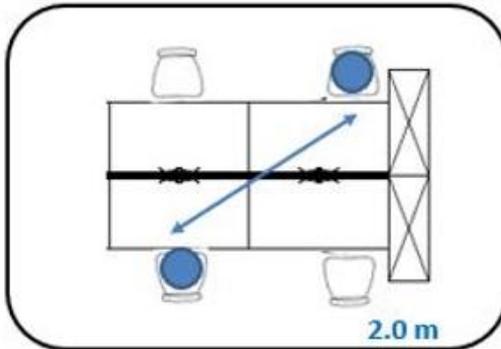
### **Please implement the following actions:**

- Managers to regularly reinforce that anyone must stay home if they are not feeling well – this includes mild symptoms such as headache, low grade fever (37.3 C or above) or a slight runny nose.
- A checklist is being developed for all staff and contractors to stop and check they are not showing any symptoms before entering any site. Please display this at all points of entry to sites.
- Avoid gathering in groups – if you must gather for an announcement or stand-up, use a space that can accommodate everyone standing two metres apart. Stretch arms out wide (without touching anyone) and if there is any overlap, move further away.
- Ensure no more than two staff are in a lift at any one time.
- If you are working from a new location, do not go between your old and new location.
- Take breaks at different times so the kitchen is not crowded. Wait two metres away until the person in front has finished, or use a one-out one-in approach. Placing tape on the floor to indicate this may be helpful.
- If trainers or Managers need to assist staff, ensure you maintain the two metre distance at all times. Look for alternative ways of coaching and assisting staff.
- Managers need to ensure staff sit at desks/work stations which place people two metres apart. Managers will direct the locations of teams and assign separate workstations. Use stickers or signs to indicate which desks should be used/not used. Use the following as a guide:



**Pod desks in 6**

- Desks have 1600 mm width and 800 mm depth
- Sit on opposite sides and on the diagonal
- Move chair, PC and screens arms to the edge of the desks to provide a 2.0m distance



**Pod desks in 4**

- Desks have 1600 mm width and 800 mm depth
- Sit on opposite sides and on the diagonal
- Move chair, PC and screens arms to the edge of the desks to provide a 2.0m distance

Where you are unable to achieve physical distancing of two metres by re-allocating existing desks, use one or a combination of the following options:

- Locate teams or smaller groups of staff on separate floors or in designated separate floor spaces where possible so there are distinct work groups on the site. Limit movement between these pods.
- Consider splitting your workforce into two (or more) shifts to minimise the risk of the whole site becoming infected and enabling sufficient rostered time off if you are working a six or seven day week. If you implement shifts, observe the following:
  - Don't have an overlap where both shifts are in the office at the same time
  - Ensure a break between shifts to allow staff to leave the site before others arrive
  - Split Manager capability across both shifts
  - Ensure each shift sits at desks which are two metres apart – place something on the desk to indicate which desks should not be used
  - Staff to use the same desk every day
  - Don't use the same trainer or Manager across both shifts – it raises the risk of the whole site being exposed if one person falls sick
  - Staff have to wipe down their desk at the beginning and end of their shifts.
  - Do not carry out hand-overs between shifts in person.
  - Where you are operating shifts, make sure the same shift works together all the time and has the same days off. If different people are coming in and out of your work bubble at different times, the risk of cross contamination across the whole site is higher.
- If you need to explore relocating staff into another building or space, please contact Property and Facilities (Vaughan Crouch/Okiwa Short) for advice first.

## Limit touching surfaces

When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance which will settle on surrounding surfaces. When others touch these surfaces or objects, then touch their mouth, nose or eyes they may get infected. The virus can remain on plastic and stainless-steel surfaces for up to about three days and less than that for other types of surfaces.

### **Implement these practices to reduce the chance of becoming infected:**

- The best protection is still to wash your hands before starting work and at every opportunity during the day.
- Practice good cough / sneeze etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues and wash hands). Put any used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately. Then wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
- Sit at the same desk each day – make sure you thoroughly wipe down your desk, keyboard, mouse and phone at the start and end of your work day/shift.
- Ensure you touch only the items you are going to use – cups should be placed into the dishwasher for cleaning after use. Wash your hands after touching drawers and containers.
- People may choose to bring their own cups to work and take responsibility for cleaning these themselves.
- Minimise touching things like door handles, fridge doors, handrails, and lift buttons where possible – when you do, ensure you wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds before touching your face, eating food, or using your keyboard/mouse when you are back at your desk.
- Use paper towels to touch MFD buttons and door handles then throw them away after use
- The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low, but it is good practice to make sure you wash your hands after unpacking goods received.
- Do not have shared morning teas or lunches and only eat food your own hands have prepared
- Bring your own water bottle to work to drink from
- We have extended existing daily cleaning (for a deeper clean) and commenced an additional clean during the day for the majority of sites, of high touch areas eg door handles, kitchen, handrails etc. Note: cleaning products are now stronger than the normal eco-friendly cleaners ie more chemicals.
- There have been a few sites where the additional daily clean has not commenced due to difficulty organising cleaners or, in some cases, the sites have turned the cleaners away.

## Limiting movement

Where possible, staff should work from home. This restricts the potential for the virus to be carried from one place to another.

Those that have to work in an office should be aware of the potential impacts of their movement.

### **Please reinforce the following actions frequently:**

- Don't socialise or wander about the office unnecessarily.
- Don't move between office floors unnecessarily – use the phone to communicate to others.

- Do not meet face to face if possible. If you absolutely need to, make sure you sit two metres away from other people. Keep any meetings as short as possible and preferably not in a closed room.
- Security guards will maintain a presence at most sites for your safety and security. They will be stationed at the front and back doors, and will maintain a two metre distance from other staff. Whenever possible, the same guards will be deployed to the same sites.

## Introducing new staff

We are under pressure to manage the volume of work and deliver new services to those needing assistance. This means we need to continue to recruit and grow our workforce. This is critical as the situation evolves and potentially more people will become unwell and be unable to work. It also means we may be anxious about introducing new people to the site or work group bubble.

### **The following steps have been put in place to minimise the effect of introducing new recruits to your site:**

- The following screening questions will be incorporated into the onboarding process once a new staff member has been offered employment:
  - Have you travelled in the last 48 hours?
  - Do you have flu like symptoms?
    - If so, have you been in contact with anyone with COVID-19 or are you or anyone you have been in close contact with being tested for COVID-19?
      - If the person has not been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19, wait for 48 hours or until they are completely well before going into an MSD site.
      - If the person is awaiting a test or test result, wait until they receive a negative result before going into an MSD site.
    - Where anyone answers "Yes" to any of these questions further questions will be asked to ensure the safety of people on site.
- In some sites, where possible, a group of new recruits may be able to start together on the same day as a discrete unit, which is located in their own pod away from an existing work pod i.e. separately on another floor or in another building. Where this is the case, a trainer/Manager should be located with them for the duration of the lockdown and must not move between locations or work groups as this will increase the risk of cross contamination between sites.
- New recruit work groups must stay in one location for the duration of the lockdown – they must not be moved after training has been completed.
- If a separate pod is formed, a mechanism should be put in place to include new recruits into the wider team virtually, such as teleconferencing or buddy them up with an experienced staff member who can keep in phone contact with them during the day. It is important for new staff to feel they are part of a team and that they are welcomed into the Ministry.
- Managers or trainers who are inducting and training new staff need to pay particular attention to the new recruits' wellbeing and sense of belonging.

## **Health and safety on site during COVID-19 Lockdown**

While the country is in the COVID-19 Lockdown, some of the people who would usually be in the office to assist during emergencies, such as Wardens, First Aiders and Health and Safety Reps, may not be around. If your Health and Safety Rep is not working on site, and you have any health and safety concerns, please discuss them with your manager.

If you're working in the office please familiarise yourself with your floor/the building and the emergency procedures and equipment so you know what to do in an emergency. Please look for your nearest emergency exit and check out your assembly points. Emergency procedures are available on the ActSAFE noticeboard which is on every floor in multi-storey buildings. If you need personal assistance to evacuate the building, make sure you have a plan in place.

If your regular first aid person is not working on site, then dial 111 for urgent medical assistance.

If there is a security incident on site, follow normal procedures and move quickly to the staff secure area and ring 111 for Police assistance.

## **Suspected or confirmed exposure to COVID-19**

Please let your manager know as soon as possible if you feel unwell, are being tested or know you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If Managers have a staff member who has had suspected exposure to COVID-19, is being tested, or has received confirmation they have COVID-19, please call the Managers Hotline on 42427 / DDI 04 914 2427 to notify for reporting purposes and for further information/guidance on the next steps to take.