

Returning to the Workplace



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Contents

- 01 Risk Assessments of returning to the workplace
- 02 Preparing the office and staff for a return to the workplace
- 03 Case Study – Watkins & Gunn
- 04 The future of work & operating post COVID-19
- 05 Planning for how the ‘new normal’ looks for the firm

Risk Assessments of returning to the workplace



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Returning to the Office

Returning to the office or indeed returning to work will be a welcome relief for some



But for others it might come as a shock.



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Do we have to do a COVID-19 Risk Assessment?

- All employers, irrespective of whether they feel they need to re-open their office at this time, must conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment
- < than five workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down
- Five or more workers, the assessment must be documented in writing.
- >50 employees, the government "expects" the employer to publish the results in this way, but again, it does not say if this will be enforced.
- The assessment is intended to be an overall assessment of the risks to staff and other people from your current arrangements and, importantly, any change to working arrangements, such as a return to office working.
- The assessment process must be conducted and any control and protective measures implemented *before* the office re-opens.



'Before I say "Yes" I'd like to carry out a risk assessment'

How do we conduct the COVID-19 Risk Assessment?

- Identify and evaluate the risks to health and safety from COVID-19 in the workplace and in other locations where employees, homeworkers or others may operate from or visit in the cause of the business
- Analyse what the firm is already doing to control those risks, and
- Consider other possible measures to reduce, avoid or transfer the risks.



"We better pick this up before somebody slips."

CartoonStock.com

How do we conduct the COVID-19 Risk Assessment?

- Once you have formulated a list of the risks, undertake an impact / likelihood analysis for each risk
- Consider whether the impact and likelihood would be high, medium or low
- Consider the steps which need to be put in place to mitigate each risk
- Put in place the appropriate measures before they are needed.



How do we document our COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Source: [template risk assessment](#)

What is the risk or hazard identified?	Who might be harmed and how?	What is the potential impact? (High / Medium / Low)	What is the likelihood of the risk occurring? (High / Medium / Low)	What is the overall risk level? (High / Medium / Low)	What is the firm already doing to control the risks?	What steps should be put in place to avoid or mitigate the risks?	By whom?	By when?
Spread of COVID-19 to Staff from working at their workstations	Staff likely to be affected?	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low		This may necessitate a number of different measures		
Spread of COVID-19 to staff from use of toilets	Who will likely be affected?	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low				
Spread of COVID-19 to staff from use of kitchen space	Who will likely be affected?	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low				
Spread of COVID-19 to staff from gaining access to workstation (communal areas / reception etc)	Who will likely be affected?	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low				

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Spread of COVID-19 to Visitors to your premises	Who will likely be affected?	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low				
Spread of COVID-19 to Cleaners	Who will likely be affected?	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low				
Spread of COVID-19 to contractors		High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low				
Spread of COVID-19 to Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, and those with existing underlying health conditions		High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low	High / Medium / Low				

How do we document our COVID-19 Risk Assessment

COVID-19 Health & Safety Action List (in order of priority):

[As a result of its risk assessment, a firm may consider that it needs to prioritise some more urgent actions and these could be documented here]

The following priority actions are planned commencing [DATE]:

Action	By whom	Start date	Review Date

Preparing the office and staff for a return to the workplace

What practical measures must we implement when we re-open the office?

- This will be determined by your risk assessment
- You will need to access the office & determine what measures can be implemented
- Factor in the time it will take to implement, for example:
 - Who will reconfigure the desks and when?
 - Do you need to purchase PPE and floor tape?

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What practical measures must we implement when we re-open the office?

You are at liberty to determine the measures you regard as suitable but the Government do have some minimum requirements which are:

- Maintain two metres' social distancing, wherever possible
- Where people cannot be two metres apart, manage transmission risk
- Reinforce cleaning processes
- Publish compliance



Are there any other issues to think about?

There may be employment law related issues to consider. You may need to:

- Contact those staff members who you are proposing should start working again from your office
- Amend the terms of an existing arrangement, such as in relation to current home working, or even to terminate an existing furlough agreement. These staff members will need to be given an appropriate notice period (such as one defined in any existing agreement), so this period and engagement process must be factored into your planning
- If you have any other concerns, you may wish to discuss them with an employment lawyer





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