

COVID-19: Your reopening action plan

A free guide from Marsh Commercial



Your reopening action plan

Businesses across the country have been eagerly awaiting the chance to reopen their doors as part of the Government's four-part roadmap out of lockdown, announced by Boris Johnson back in February.

Here's the top five points for you to think about to make sure you're COVID-compliant and ready to open your doors.





Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment and put the necessary controls in place to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus

All businesses, regardless of size, have to legally carry out a COVID-19-specific risk assessment, to establish what safety measures you need to put in place before your people start returning to the workplace.

The guidance also states “if possible, employers should publish the results of their risk assessments on their website and **we expect all businesses with over 50 employees to do so**”.¹

Here are some considerations you need to make when it comes to properly risk assessing your premises.

Checklist

- Are you confident that you can conduct a robust risk assessment yourself?
- Does your risk assessment help you decide if you need to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/ Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) in the workplace?
- Can you confidently select the right PPE/RPE for your people to use?
- Is your risk assessment easy to understand by all your employees?
- How will you train your employees in the content of the risk assessment?
- Are you able to update your website with your COVID-19-specific risk assessment?
- Have you completed your COVID-secure certificate and displayed it?

¹ [gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes#homes-1-2](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes#homes-1-2)



Maintain two metres social distancing, wherever possible, and if not possible, manage transmission risk

When it's time for you to reopen your doors and start to introduce people back into the workplace, your workplace will need to maintain the required two metre social distancing. If you can't maintain two metre distancing, it's down to you as an employer to put in place measures to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Checklist

- Do you need to remodel your workspace?
Can you create one-way walkthroughs to ensure people are two metres apart?
- Can you open more entrances and exits to avoid a bottle neck of people?
- Can you change seating or desk layouts to keep people apart? Is staggering start and finish times a way to manage social distancing?
- If your people can't be two metres apart, can you put barriers in shared spaces?
Create workplace shift patterns or fixed teams to manage risk of transmission?
- Where people have to work closely, can they face away from each other and still fulfil their duties?



Reinforcing cleaning processes

Safe hygiene practices are going to be key for a long time to come in the workplace and will be vital in managing transmission of the COVID-19 virus among your people.

Do you already have core hygiene practices in place? Here are some of our top tips for upping your hygiene practices when you're back in the workplace.

Checklist

- Additional cleaning materials around the offices and in kitchens/toilets will be needed (along with a COSHH assessment for these cleaning materials). This should include disinfectant spray known to kill coronavirus and antibacterial wipes.
- Encourage staff to clean equipment (phones, keyboards, tools etc.) before use and at the end of the working day.
- Bins must be provided (ideally near the exits) for safe disposal of face coverings.
- Any communal equipment (cutlery, crockery etc.) should be taken out of use and people should be encouraged to use their own.
- Social distancing should be maintained during break and lunch hours. If this can't be done, then breaks and lunchtimes should be staggered.





Fire processes/procedures

Despite the major changes that the fight against COVID-19 has introduced, the Government has not relaxed fire safety requirements for business owners.

Whether your business is currently closed, or you're still operating during lockdown, it's likely that your fire risk will change. Here's some key points:

Checklist

- Is your fire risk assessment up-to-date? If your workplace has been closed, or if your way of working has significantly changed, that can change your fire risk.
- Are your escape routes still viable?
- Are your fire marshals coming back to work or are they furloughed? Can you train anyone else up in the meantime?
- Are you confident that your fire alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, and fire doors are still up to scratch?
- Will they need to be retested by a professional before you reopen?



Common issues identified by inspectors

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has been conducting unannounced spot-checks on a variety of businesses that have continued to operate over lockdown.

It will certainly be ramping up its inspection programme as more businesses start to open.²

The following are some of the most common mistakes found by HSE and local authority inspectors. Make sure you don't get caught out with a fine of up to £10,000 by paying particular attention to the following areas!



Cleaning regimes in place don't address major risks – you may have a risk assessment, but if you're not following through with the cleaning regime this will be picked up on in an inspection.

Ignoring the regulator – if a local authority inspector, a HSE inspector or an environmental health officer arrives to inspect the premises, you must give them access! You must not prevent them from inspecting documentation and taking photographs or statements where required.

Social distancing not being observed – this can be one of the most difficult issues to address, because it's not in our nature as humans to keep a big distance with people we work with. This is an essential step though, so encourage anyone who is finding it difficult to raise the issue with you.

Not engaging with your people to make sure they're aware of controls - education and compliance are hugely important.



² [hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/regulating-health-and-safety/spot-inspections.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/regulating-health-and-safety/spot-inspections.htm)



A note on homeworking

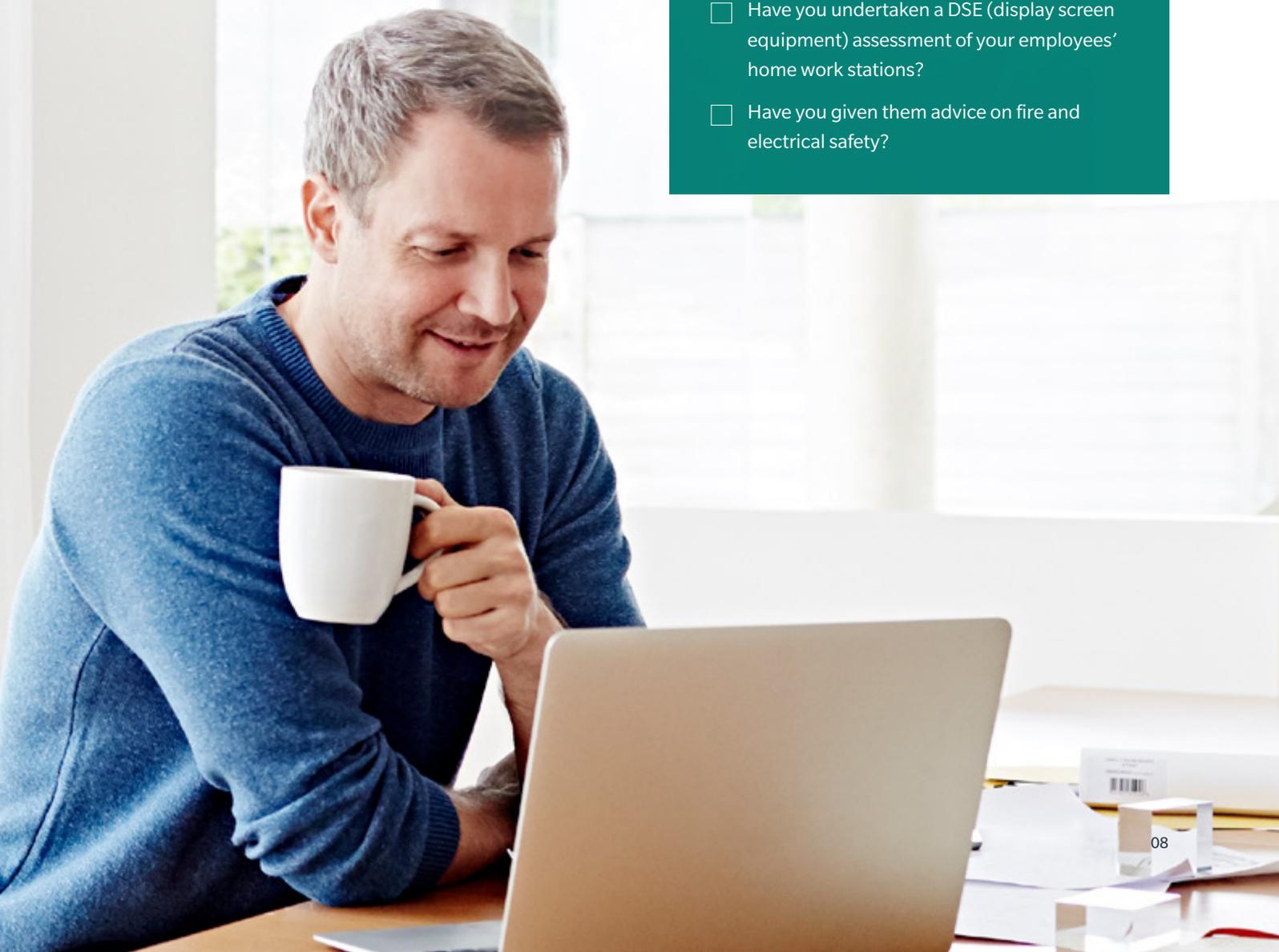
While the “stay at home” rule ended on 29 March, many restrictions have remained in place. The Government continues to advise that people should continue to work from home where they can and minimise the number of journeys they make where possible, avoiding travel at the busiest times and routes.

Homeworking can be tricky - or not possible at all - in certain industries, such as many in retail or hospitality.

However, if you do have some positions which have been able to successfully work from home, and you're considering making this a more long-term arrangement, here's some starting points to consider.

Checklist

- Is homeworking a benefit for your business?
Can you reduce overheads on office space by allowing more of it?
- If full-time homeworking wouldn't work, could staff do part office/part home working?
- Do you have a homeworking policy?
- Flexible working applications – what has been your approach before. What is your view now? Discuss the advantages of a proactive approach.
- Do you need to review your data protection policy where confidential and sensitive information is being taken home etc.?
- Have you considered how best to keep in regular contact with your people, maintaining their wellbeing, and managing anxiety around returning to work?
- Have you undertaken a DSE (display screen equipment) assessment of your employees' home work stations?
- Have you given them advice on fire and electrical safety?



For more information, or to discuss a bespoke package, please contact:

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