



COVID-19 instructions for institutions for the safe organisation of work

- COVID-19 is an infectious viral disease which spreads from person to person by means of the projection of aerosols, mainly though coming into close contact with infectious persons.
- If conditions are favourable, the virus can survive on contaminated surfaces for up to three days, but it can be destroyed through cleaning and disinfection.
- The risk of the spread of COVID-19 is at its highest in enclosed, crowded, and poorly ventilated rooms.
- Following these instructions will help to ensure the better and more efficient prevention and control of infectious diseases within institutions and in society as a whole.

The cleanliness of the premises and proper ventilation

- It must be ensured that air that is mechanically supplied and removed in the form of a ventilation system can be supplied through a system that is fully functional and which has been switched on. The requirements of regulation No 8 by the Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure of 2 April 2020 on [further requirements for the ventilation and aeration of a social welfare institution building or a non-residential building during the state of emergency](#) must be followed.
- The premises must be regularly cleaned by using the usual methods and cleaning materials. Frequently touched surfaces (door handles, handles, keyboards, touch screens, etc) must be cleaned every two to four hours.
- [The advice of the Health Board in terms of cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed.
- As of 24 November 2020, COVID-19, officially referred to as SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2), is included in hazard group 3 of biological hazards. In the case of any work which is accompanied by a risk of coming into contact with biological hazards, the employer must determine the type, extent, and duration of the risk to the employee in terms of their becoming infected during the course of carrying out the working environment risk analysis and, based on this, assess the risk to the employee's health and implement any necessary precautionary measures. [The precautions are introduced on the Labour Inspectorate's 'Tööelu' website.](#)
- Collective means of protection and personal protective equipment must be issued to employees based on the results of the risk analysis for the working environment, and training must be organised to show the proper and safe use of such equipment. [Instructions can be found on the Health Board's website.](#)

Employees and organising work duties

- Employees must be able to wash their hands regularly. The [instructions](#) that have been provided for washing hands must be followed.
- The main movement pathways must be equipped with hand sanitisers. The [instructions](#) that have been provided for sanitising hands must be followed.
- Social distancing for employees must be ensured within the working environment (employees must be able to remain two metres apart at their workstations, as well as in shared spaces. Workarounds such as working in shifts, using additional premises, or other such practices which encourage social distancing could be considered). The use of flexible work schedules should also be considered. For example, the beginning of the working day could be moved to a later time to make it easier for employees to avoid coming into close contact when on public transport or in other public spaces when travelling to work.
- Teleworking (partial, maximum possible, full-time) must be organised based on the general public guidelines which have been issued by the Health Board.



- Layouts for shared spaces must be designed based on the principle of social distancing (employees must be able to remain two metres apart at their workstations, as well as in shared spaces), and reminders about those measures that are required to prevent the spread of the virus (social distancing, hand-washing, and staying home when ill) must be displayed in visible locations.
- Any elderly employees, employees with chronic health conditions, and employees with immunodeficiency-related conditions must be allowed to work remotely, if possible, based on the nature of their duties. This also applies to those employees who have at-risk individuals in their households.
- Employees who have fallen ill or who have come into close contact with a COVID-19 case must stay at home and should contact their family physician who will issue them with a certificate of incapacity for work. If the employee's symptoms are very mild or if they are asymptomatic, they may work remotely (instead of taking sick leave).
- Employees should be advised to use the [Hoia](#) app.
- Work-related trips abroad should only be organised if they are unavoidable. Before travelling abroad, employees must familiarise themselves with the rules which have been established for their destination. They must also check on which specific restrictions they will be subjected to after returning from their trip, and agree with the employer on the organisation of their work after they have returned from abroad in the case of their having to travel for work-related duties to a high-risk country. Further information can be found on the [website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).
- Any individuals who are returning from higher-risk countries must observe requirements that cover restrictions to their freedom of movement, but may continue to work remotely if possible. If it is unavoidable for the employee to be at their workplace in order for them to be able to fulfil their duties, they must get themselves tested for SARS-CoV-2 immediately after their arrival and, in the case of a negative test result being returned, they may return to work based on the agreement of their employer, all the while ensuring that they minimise contact with other employees (such as by visiting the office at a time at which it is not being used by others, or using a separate room, and by wearing a face mask in meetings and in shared spaces), and that they take all precautions to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Any meetings with external guests should be held via communications equipment if possible. If this is not possible:
 - hand hygiene products must be provided to all participants in the meeting;
 - the meeting should be held in a room which allows for social distancing (the room's maximum permitted capacity should never be exceeded);
 - the room must be properly ventilated and regularly aired;
 - after the meeting, all surfaces in the room (tabletops, handles, etc), as well as any shared equipment (microphones, pointers, etc) must be cleaned, and a sufficient supply of those products that are required for cleaning must be ensured. [The advice of the Health Board in terms of cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed.
 - Participants in meetings must wear face masks or should cover their noses and mouths.
 - If possible, meeting rooms should be supplied with masks, as well as with instructions for their proper use, removal, and disposal.
- Instructions for the proper use of face masks are available [here](#).
- Used face masks must be disposed of in a waste container with the appropriate labelling or placed in a sealable bag and disposed of as mixed domestic waste. More information about the disposal of used masks can be found [here](#).
- Conferences and other larger gatherings should only be organised physically if it is unavoidable. Holding events via communications platforms should be the preferred choice. In the case of organising a physical conference:
 - Participants in meetings must wear face masks or cover their noses and mouths.
 - The number of people in the conference room must not exceed 50% of the room's official capacity.
 - Social distancing must be ensured in the room (such as ensuring one or two empty seats between two people, or maintaining a two-metre distance between speakers and the audience). The same considerations should be kept in mind in other places in which people may gather, such as cloakrooms, reception desk areas, catering facilities, toilets, and other situations and places.
 - Hand hygiene facilities or products must be made available for the participants in different rooms.



- The conference room must be properly ventilated and regularly aired.
- All participants must be reminded that they may not take part in the conference if they have fallen ill or have come into close contact with a COVID-19 case.
- Shared equipment that is used for speaking and presentations (such as microphones, pointers, etc) must be cleaned after each use.
- The premises must be cleaned thoroughly after the event.
- If possible, foreign guests from high-risk countries should not be invited to the event. If foreign guests are invited, they must be notified of the self-isolation rules which will be applicable to them. Further information can be found on the [website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#). Please note that anyone who is responsible for inviting guests from abroad must ensure that those guests have been tested before they are due to speak at or participate in an event if such a course of action is necessary.
- Instructions for organising events and the related FAQs can be found on the [website of the Ministry of Culture](#).

If an employee falls ill with a respiratory disease
(fever, cough, lack of energy, and other symptoms)

- Any employee who falls ill outside of working hours must stay at home.
- Any employee who falls ill at work must leave immediately.
- The employee must contact their family physician who will determine whether or not that person should be diagnosed with COVID-19, plus their need to be tested, and the need for a certificate to be signed to show their incapacity for work.
- From the perspective of slowing down the spread of COVID-19, it is important for any employee who has fallen ill to notify their employer of their COVID-19 diagnosis being confirmed. The employer must be notified in a manner which has been agreed between the employee and the employer.
- Having been notified of an employee's COVID-19 diagnosis, the employer must cooperate with the regional department of the Health Board to identify the employee's work-related close contacts and to provide them instructions for further organisation of work.
- Any premises which may have been contaminated with the virus must be closed to third parties and should be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected, and ventilated before reopening.
- [The advice of the Health Board in terms of cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed.
- If a diagnosis of COVID-19 is confirmed, the employer must identify all persons who have come into close contact with the employee who has fallen ill at their place of work within the period after the employee has become symptomatic or up until two days before they became symptomatic.* The employer must cooperate with the relevant Health Board regional department in order to determine close contacts.
- Close contacts must stay at home for a period of fourteen days and should monitor their health condition carefully. The duration of the required period of self-isolation can be reduced by testing negative for SARS-CoV-2 at least ten days after having come into close contact with an individual who has been infected.
- Remaining employees may continue to carry out their daily duties, but should also keep an eye on their health.
- If the COVID-19 diagnosis is not confirmed for an employee who has fallen ill, all other employees may continue to carry out their duties, but must monitor their health over the following fourteen days.

**HANDS MUST BE WASHED:**

- before commencing work
- before handling heat-treated or ready-made food before shaking hands;
- after handling or preparing food which was not heat-treated
- after handling waste
- after carrying out cleaning operations
- after using the toilet
- after blowing one's nose, sneezing, or coughing
- after eating, drinking, or smoking
- after handling cash

***CLOSE CONTACT IS CLASSED AS BEING:**

- direct physical contact with an individual who has been infected with COVID-19 (such as shaking hands)
- direct contact without any protection with secretions from the respiratory tract of a person who has been infected with COVID19 (such as being coughed on)
- being within a distance of up to two metres of a person who has been infected with COVID-19 for at least fifteen minutes

Guidelines and advice are available at:

[The Health Board's COVID-19-related publications and instructions](#)

[The coronavirus crisis website of the Government of the Republic](#)

[The Labour Inspectorate's advice to the employer and employee](#)