

First **4** Safety

Risk Assessment - Making Businesses COVID secure

Tuesday, 26 May 2020

Risk Rating Scores

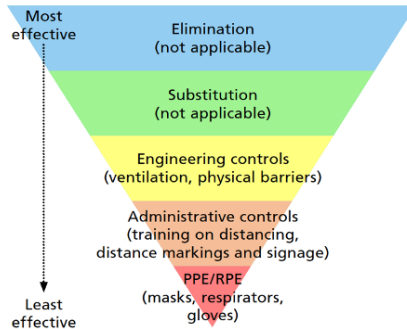
Consequence	Likelihood	Remote	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	Certain
		1	2	3	4	5
Trivial	1	1	2	3	4	5
Minor	2	2	4	6	8	10
Moderate (Up to 3 Days Off)	3	3	6	9	12	15
Major (Riddor 7+ Days Off)	4	4	8	12	16	20
Fatal	5	5	10	15	20	25

COVID-19 - The Hazard

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Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as MERS-CoV and SARS (Cov). The official name for this new disease, not previously seen in humans, is COVID-19. On 11 March, the World Health Organization (WHO) categorised it as a 'pandemic' which, in WHO terms, is 'the worldwide spread of a disease'. The risk assessment must recognise the virus as a hazard. It should also reflect that the virus is spread in minute water droplets that are expelled from the body through sneezing, coughing, talking and breathing. The virus can be transferred to the hands and from there to surfaces. It can survive on surfaces for a period after transfer (depending on such things as the surface type, its moisture content and temperature). The risk assessment should conclude that if it is passed from one person to another, while many survive infection, some may die from the disease. It should be regarded as a high hazard having already killed over 34,000 people in the UK.

Hierarchy Of Control



Hierarchy of controls are an essential element within the risk assessment process, and is a feature in several pieces of legislation around risk assessment. In particular for COVID 19 the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) and particular to biological hazards the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH). The significance of this process is that employers need to follow a line of controls, which choose the most effective and efficient method to prevent exposure and infection from COVID 19. Risks should be reduced by taking preventative measures in order of priority, employers should not just jump to the easiest control measure to put in place. In other words, there may be elements of management systems design to think about. Decisions about what may be done must be realistic and reasonably practicable: achievable given the resources available.

Elimination

Elimination is the best form of control. We can only eliminate the virus through vaccination, so there is little that can be done by organisations. Inoculation when available, or immunity could be a way of eliminating harm from COVID 19, however it is not clear whether either would offer life time immunity. Some virus are known to only accommodate several years' immunity, and most viruses can mutate.

Social distancing and staying at home are not forms of elimination, but an administrative control. Social distancing is an age old control, in the case of this particular virus which is transmitted in droplets which fall to the ground after a metre, maintaining a distance of 2 metres apart will eliminate becoming infected through this transmission route. This control needs to be implemented stringently in order to be effective, together with good hygiene practices, both personal and in the workplace.

Substitution

Next in descending order is substitution: replacing the virus for something less harmful is not possible.

Engineering Controls

Physical Barriers: Engineering controls place a physical barrier between the person and the hazard, or provide mechanical reduction of the hazard. Placing screens between people will interrupt the flow of air from one person to another and therefore provide protection. Place a physical barrier such as a Perspex screen, flexible polyethylene sheet, welding blanket for example could be deployed to mitigate the potential for droplets reaching personnel working in proximity. These can be temporary or permanent, some screens can be deployed by pulling down from a roller, or clipped on. The use of screens would need to consider factors including (but not limited to) fixing points, weight, wind direction, portability, access, fire risk and chemical incompatibilities. Any controls need to be risk assessed for the specific application.

Ventilation Providing ventilation is also an option. Recent IOSH research has shown that downward ventilation onto a patient's bed considerably reduces the exposure of healthcare workers to infected droplets suspended in the air. Care must be taken if ventilation is to be considered. Ventilation is a good control if it takes infected air away from people and transfers it to somewhere where the virus will not do harm.

Administrative Controls: Systems Of Work And Procedures

Administrative controls provide the best options for most organisations. The risk assessment must consider how you will keep the workplace and equipment clean, adjust your working practices and ensure people are safe. These measures will need to be applied collectively, together with engineering controls when needed and PPE provision.

Some examples of administrative controls:

- Limit time in close proximity to other personnel to limit the potential risk, this will be to ensure PPE is not worn for extensive periods
- Redesign the workplace to maintain social distancing
- Tasks which require close proximity for multiple episodes of sustained time in a shift, consider a different pair/team for each episode which reduces contact.
- Personnel could be paired or buddied to compartmentalise potential infection within the work teams.
- Consider segregating teams to maintain operational capacity if personnel become infected or enter into self-isolation. In the event that one person becomes symptomatic, placing their team-mate or pair into isolation will be good practice for any responsible employer.
- Cleaning Undertake enhanced cleaning in line with guidance such as touchpoints in the work area. Ensure that cleaning chemicals do not introduce a product safety hazard. Deep clean the workplace prior to ramping up production or reopening
- Provide more hand washing or sterilization facilities around the workplace
- Identify the places where most people commonly touch (e.g. equipment control panels, handles, handrails, kettles, hot desk surfaces)
- Explain the process you have for employees to report possible infection or exposure and keep employees up to date with advice on the virus.
- Brief managers on the critical key safe behaviours that need to be explained to staff and then have a system to monitor these behaviours

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is acknowledged as being at the bottom of the hierarchy due to its inherent limitations. It is considered the weakest control because it relies on people using it correctly. It introduces many possibilities for error: being the right specification, its cleanliness, its storage, its replacement and availability. Some key points to remember:

- If gloves are provided, the virus can still be transferred to the surface. If the wearer then touches their face, they could contract the disease. Perhaps frequent hand washing or sterilisation is a better option.
- The wearing of a paper face mask may reduce the virus being spread from the wearer to others, but its effectiveness of protecting the wearer is debatable. In any case the longer it is worn, the greater the potential viral loading on its surface. Touching the mask and then the face may increase exposure if masks are not changed regularly. If they are taken off and left lying around, potentially this increases exposure to others who may come into contact with it, e.g. cleaners.

Behaviour - Develop List Of Critical Key Safe Behaviours

Objective to monitor and observe employee behaviours and to ensure a set of critical safe behaviours is understood and adhered to. Some examples

- Wear PPE as supplied
- Observe 2m social distancing.
- Hygiene wash your hands often - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you feel unwell, stay at home, do not attend work or school
- Always carry tissues with you to cover your cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in a bin. See Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.

F4S		Risk Assessment - Making Businesses COVID Secure						May-20		
Identified Hazard / Activity and Who might be harmed	How might the people be harmed?	Existing or no Measures in Place (State objective)	Risk ratings with no controls in place			Risk ratings with controls in place			Action monitored by whom	Action monitored by when
			Likelihood (L)	Consequence (C)	Risk Rating (RR)	Likelihood (L)	Consequence (C)	Risk Rating (RR)		
Hazard / Activity: There is a direct threat to staff health and wellbeing from transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus while at work. An analysis of your business is required to determine if possible to follow the social distancing guidelines. Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death. People can catch the virus from others who are infected in the following ways: 1. Virus moves from person-to-person in droplets from the nose or mouth spread when a person with the virus coughs or sneezes. 2. The virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces which people have coughed on, etc. 3. People can pick up the virus by breathing in the droplets or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes or mouth.	Objective: In line with Public Health England (PHE) guidelines, where it is not possible to follow the social distancing guidelines in full in relation to a particular activity, you should consider whether the activity needs to continue for the site to continue to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Before reopening your facility. Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: To make sure that any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Protecting people who are at higher risk. Some staff may have pre-existing medical conditions which render them more vulnerable to the dangers of coronavirus infection. Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death. Examples of people which greater risk are: 1. Older / pregnant / have a lung condition such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis (not severe) 2. People with heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or liver disease (such as hepatitis) / are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids) / are very obese	Objective: To protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home. Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness for example, people with some pre-existing conditions / have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.	5	5	25	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Unable to maintain 2m social distancing whenever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites, Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on virus to others. Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.	5	5	25	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Travelling to Work- Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on Virus to others Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Where possible Workers should travel alone, where this is not possible, Journeys should be shared with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time. Good ventilation (i.e. keeping the windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission. The vehicle should be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products, with particular emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Driving at Work Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on Virus to others Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Where possible Workers should travel alone, where this is not possible, Journeys should be shared with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time. Good ventilation (i.e. keeping the windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission. The vehicle should be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products, with particular emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Site Access & Egress Points- Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on Virus to others Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Stop all non-essential visitors. Consider introducing staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times. Plan site access and egress points to enable social distancing - you may need to change the number of access points, either increase to reduce congestion or decrease to enable monitoring, including in the case of emergencies. Allow plenty of space between people waiting to enter site use signage: Remind workers not to attend if they have symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and to follow guidelines. Remove or disable entry systems that require skin contact (e.g. fingerprint scanners) unless they are cleaned between each individual use. Require all workers to wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water when entering and leaving the site. Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, access control and delivery areas e.g. scanners, turnstiles, screens, telephone handsets and desks, particularly during peak flow times. Reduce the number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors wherever possible.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Hand Washing Facilities Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on Virus to others Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Allow regular breaks to wash hands. Provide additional hand washing facilities (e.g. pop up) to the usual welfare facilities, particularly on a large spread out site or where there are significant numbers of personnel on site, including plant operators.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Toilet Facilities Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on Virus to others Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time (e.g. use a welfare attendant).	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Canteen and Rest Areas Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on Virus to others Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Where possible, workers should be encouraged to bring their own food. They should also be required to stay on site once they have entered it and avoid using local shops. Where there are no practical alternatives, workplace canteens may remain open to provide food to staff with appropriate adjustments for social distancing. Canteens should provide a takeaway service providing pre-prepared and wrapped food only.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections
Hazard / Activity: Changing Facilities, Showers and Drying Rooms Contracting COVID-19 Virus Passing on Virus to others Who might be harmed: All employees especially Clinically vulnerable people / Contractors and visitors to site /Public	Mild/Severe illness and in severe case death.	Objective: Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available on site if possible. Based on the size of each facility, determine how many people can use it at any one time to maintain a distance of two metres. Restrict the number of people using these facilities at any one time e.g. use a welfare attendant.	4	5	20	2	5	10	Assign names to action controls	Decide on dates to action and frequencies for inspections



Disclaimer

Disclaimer: This risk assessment has been issued as a guideline only and should not be considered as an exhaustive list. It is your responsibility to assess and manage risk according to your own particular setting. Government advice is changing all the time. The particular hazards relating to your organisation, work activities and environment may differ significantly from those suggested here. Users of this risk assessment are therefore advised to evaluate its contents thoroughly and adapt the risk assessment to suit the requirements of each individual situation. Check local policies, arrangements and guidance from relevant trade and professional bodies.