



RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE – A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

You may have been requested by your employer to return to your workplace. Perhaps you have been on furlough and are now being asked to return back to your usual place of work, or you may have been working from home during the lockdown period.

It is perfectly normal to feel some apprehension or anxiety around the prospect of returning to your workplace. This guide has been created to help explain some of the standard infection control measures and responsibilities of both employers and employees during this time.

Before returning, you should familiarise yourself with the specific guidelines that will affect you by contacting your supervisor or line manager.

You may notice that your workplace looks different or unfamiliar – floor markings may be used, along with plastic screens and wall signage. Some employers may also temperature test staff on arrival. Please do not be alarmed if this happens, as these measures are in place to keep everyone safe.

Social Distancing – General Principles

In order for business' to re-open safely and to protect staff from infection, it is vitally important that effective social distancing rules are adhered to.



Travel on public transport should be avoided where possible and your manager may adjust your start time to avoid an influx of staff to the building. Masks must be worn on public transport.



You must adhere to the social distancing rules set at your workplace. Your employer may have re-arranged spaces in your workplace to ensure this is possible.



You should wash your hands frequently throughout the day using soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds. Always use the WHO handwashing method, which you can [find here](#).



Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a tissue that is then immediately disposed of. Hands should then be washed as above.



Where handwashing is not possible, hand sanitiser should be used liberally. You must ensure you cover your whole hands, wrists and thumbs with sanitiser and allow it to evaporate fully.

Should I wear a face mask in the workplace?

As an airborne disease that is primarily transferred through exhaled air that is subsequently inhaled by another, face coverings are a logical precaution to its spread. Face coverings are mandatory in enclosed public spaces including shops, supermarkets, shopping centres and transport hubs and hospitals. You will be required to wear a face mask at all times in the College.



Please refer to your own workplace/practice guidelines for further clarification for your employers protocol regarding face masks.

You may wish to research which face coverings are most effective. You can find more information on the college's VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) under the section COVID-19 return to Work/Placement/College' [here](#).

Do I need to wear disposable gloves?

Disposable gloves can be used to prevent the transference of the virus on the hands. They are particularly useful when touching contaminated areas of the body or surfaces.

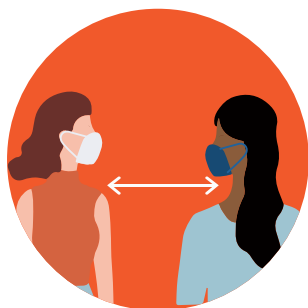
It should be noted that once the gloves come into contact with the contaminant, the gloves become a source of contamination and should not come into contact with anything else.

Removing the contaminated gloves should be done carefully to avoid transfer to hands or other areas of the body. Hands should be thoroughly washed on removal of the gloves, regardless of whether you think you have contaminated your hands or not.



What are my personal responsibilities?

Just as your employer has a responsibility to keep you safe whilst in the workplace, you also have a responsibility to keep yourself and your colleagues safe and protected from infection. You must follow the guidelines and procedures specific to your workplace, as set out by your employer. If you have any questions, worries or concerns over your personal safety, these should be communicated to your manager or supervisor.



Maintain social distance



Use hand sanitiser frequently



Wash your hands regularly



Avoid contact with others

We must all be mindful of our actions in order to stop the spread of COVID-19.

- Stay as far away as practically possible from others
- If closer than 2m, apply PPE measures such as face coverings
- Cover the mouth when clearing throat, coughing or sneezing
- Consider air transfer when exercising, speaking, etc. and turn face away if practical
- Wash hands frequently, particularly after touching face or potentially contaminated surfaces