



## FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

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May 7, 2020

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# COVID-19 Guidance for the Workplace

**Advice around the Falkland Islands Government's COVID-19 response can change – please be alert to further statements, including on the web page [fig.gov.fk/covid-19](https://fig.gov.fk/covid-19) and other channels**

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### **COVID-19 Guidance for the Workplace**

The Falkland Islands Government on May 1, 2020, announced it was appropriate to ease some restrictions put in place in late March in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. These restrictions will be eased effective May 11.

The lifting of restrictions is being done in the light of an absence of known active COVID-19 cases in the Falkland Islands, and the arrival of equipment to allow on-island testing for the virus.

This new guidance, which takes effect May 11, may be changed if the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Falkland Islands changes. If this happens the Government will consider reintroducing the previous restrictions and issuing new guidance.

This easing includes allowing greater social interaction, and letting the majority of businesses who had been asked to cease non-essential work to now resume activity.

These are positive steps for our community but it is highly important to keep observing public health measures around COVID-19.

This guidance outlines to businesses what they need to think about and plan for to resume activities and provide a safe environment for staff, and those using their services.

### **COVID-19 Workplace Plan**

It is important to have a plan to help keep people who work there, or use its services safe.

By completing a plan now, businesses will be able to

- reflect on what they have learned during the past weeks
- implement any changes needed
- ensure that they are familiar with the most up-to-date guidance, and
- revise their plans for working safely

The risk to our communities and workplaces, has been identified and assessed by public health authorities and some key controls that have been identified as being necessary to minimise the risk of passing on the COVID-19 virus at work are:

- supporting people with flu-like symptoms to self-isolate
- ensuring people can stay physically distant, 2 metres where possible
- cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, particularly those that are high contact
- maintaining good hygiene, particularly hand hygiene and good cough/sneeze etiquette
- keeping records to facilitate contact tracing

### **In the plan**

We're not prescribing how you set out a plan, but there is key information that should be included for it to be effective and this is included in the template. To help ensure you are minimising the COVID-19 risks you need to consider the following questions. Your plan is a record of how you will achieve this.

- Are there any risks arising from restarting your business or a business activity that has been shut down over the past few weeks and how will you manage these?

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- How will you ensure all workers know how and are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?
- How will you ensure that they are safe and well to work?
- How will you operate your business in a way that keeps workers and others safe from exposure to COVID-19?
- How will you manage an exposure or suspected exposure to COVID-19?
- How will you evaluate, and continuously review, whether your work processes or risk controls are effective?
- How do any changes impact on the risks of the work you do?

### **Restarting the business**

You need to think through what the risks might be from restarting your business. The risks will vary from business to business. You need to think about risks associated with your workers, the facilities you operate, and any machinery or equipment that is used.

Key things to consider include:

- Will you have the right people, with the right skills to operate safely? This could be impacted, for example, by some workers not being available to work or the need to use different team rostering arrangements.
- Will you need to clean or ensure appropriate hygiene arrangements before occupying work spaces?
- Will there be maintenance required for machinery and tools that haven't been used during the recent shut down?
- Good ventilation is particularly important.
- What else needs to be done at work before you can safely recommence work?

You may not identify anything that needs to be addressed but it's important your workers can see that you've thought this through. Talk about it with them – they may think of something you've overlooked.

### **Staying safe**

You need to ensure your workers have access to the right information about keeping themselves well during the pandemic. This will mean they're able to maintain good work and hygiene practices in line with your plan. Don't assume your workers will just know how to do this. Make sure they have or know where to get the correct, official information.

You may also like to consider:

- accessing official resources such as FIG website [www.fig.gov.fk/COVID-19](http://www.fig.gov.fk/COVID-19) and information from the World Health Organization
- discussing physical distancing and hygiene in team meetings regularly (keeping in mind the need to continue physical distancing where possible)
- reviewing FIG guidance regularly and updating your internal advice as needed
- refreshing information regularly to keep safe practices front of mind.

Your workers will be able to suggest effective ways to share information with them. This is particularly important if you have workers for whom English isn't their first language.

### **Health and Wellbeing at work**

It's vital that workers who are unwell or suffering symptoms consistent with COVID-19 call KEMH on 28000 for advice, and self-isolate immediately if told to do so by KEMH.

The symptoms are:

- a new or worsening cough
- a high temperature (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- sneezing and runny nose
- temporary loss of taste smell.

There are a range of reasons why workers may come to work despite being told that they should stay home if unwell. This won't necessarily be wilful behaviour. It's important to have open communication with workers to understand why they want to be at work.

You may also like to consider:

- setting up flexible leave arrangements to ensure workers stay at home and are not financially pressured to come to work when they are unwell.
- how you'll follow-up to ensure workers only return if they have recovered or they have been tested and cleared of COVID-19.

### Reducing risks of exposure

For people to return to work we recommend that you:

- support people with flu-like symptoms who have been advised by KEMH to stay home. Your business may be eligible for financial assistance under the terms of FIG's Private Sector Employment Support Scheme that will enable you to pay your employee's wages while they are self-isolating.
- ensure physical distancing, 2 metres if possible
- disinfect surfaces
- maintain good hygiene, including hand hygiene and good cough/sneeze etiquette
- keep records to facilitate contact tracing.

In most work situations personal protective equipment (PPE) other than that routinely required for the work isn't recommended.

It is important that workers who are working remotely can do so safely. When businesses first closed they had to do the best they could in the circumstances and with the time available. Now that time is available to plan, businesses should ensure all workers working remotely have access to appropriate equipment and support.

We recommend that the plan should describe the following:

- Which workers will need to come into the workplace
- How physical distancing will be achieved.
- What process will be in place for cleaning surfaces.
- What processes and practices have been introduced to enable good hygiene, in particular, hand hygiene.
- How you will work with other business or people who you interact with to ensure appropriate practices are followed by both their workers and yours.
- What you have arranged to ensure the supply of essential equipment and products for cleaning and hygiene.
- How you'll inform and if necessary train workers on new processes, including how you check that workers have understood the training.
- When, if at all, PPE will be used and why. If PPE is to be used, how workers will be trained to use it correctly.
- How you will engage with your remote workers to ensure they have the right equipment and support to work safely.

**Note that for physical distancing, businesses should aim for two metres between desks or work stations. If this is not possible, think about other ways to reduce infection risks e.g. turning desks to face the wall. One metre of separation between people at work is the minimum and greater separation should be in place where it is practicable to do so.**

Between one and two metres can be **acceptable** for workplaces if the environment is controlled. With your workers ensure that you are controlling your work environment. To achieve this, we recommend that you have in place arrangements for:

- Checking the wellness of workers
- Disinfecting surfaces
- Practising good hand hygiene
- Contact tracing arrangements

You should also consider:

- Using barriers if separation can't easily be controlled or maintained
- Reducing the time spent in close proximity to others
- Arranging work areas to reduce occupancy and avoid face-to-face positioning.
- Using work zones to minimise the number of people working close to each other.

It will take time for people to get used to the new processes to bed-in so don't expect to meet pre-COVID-19 delivery targets immediately.

Changing work practices can bring new risks and add to existing risks at a time when your workers may already be stressed. You must engage with your colleagues to help minimise new risks created by the changes you implement.

### **Actual or suspected exposure to COVID-19**

Despite all your best efforts, it's possible a worker or other person at work may start to show symptoms consistent with COVID-19. This could happen either while they are at work or after they interacted with you or your workers. There will be a time delay between symptoms developing, testing, and getting test results.

Unless advised otherwise continue to operate, but your plan needs to ensure that:

- Workers who are unwell with respiratory symptoms immediately go home, and call KEMH on 28000 and follow the advice provided to them.
- Workers with respiratory symptoms who have tested negative for COVID 19 are able to stay home until they've been symptom-free for 24 hours.
- If a worker has tested positive, and you are contacted by KEMH, provide clear information regarding the worker's contacts at work. They will provide advice about any further actions you are required to take. Consider who at your workplace is best to liaise with the hospital if they call.
- The work area of the unwell worker is disinfected in accordance with the cleaning procedures that you have implemented.
- That you have information about who the worker was in contact with in the workplace from when the worker is suspected to have contracted COVID-19 (because this will assist with contact tracing)
- You have a system for keeping in contact with unwell workers and tracking their progress.

You must plan how to identify people at work who have been in close proximity to someone suspected or confirmed as having COVID-19. The best way to do this is to keep a register of people entering or leaving the premises or work space.

The minimum information you'll need is:

- full name (not nickname), contact telephone number
- address (for workers) or the name of the visitor's business
- reason for visit and duration.

You may like to consider:

- how you'll make sure the register is being used and maintained correctly
- where the register will be located and who is best to make the entries
- whether you divide your work space into zones and limit movement between the zones
- whether you'll supervise visitors who aren't at your site regularly.

Minimising contact between people and providing good information about contacts may lessen the impact on your business.

### **Evaluation and review**

Operating a business under these conditions will mean different ways of working and things may not always go to plan. You and your workers will need to be prepared to learn and adapt to find the best ways to incorporate physical distancing, and good hygiene and cleaning practices.

To make sure you can learn and adapt quickly, engage with your workers to find ways for them to let you know about what's working, what's not, and how things could be improved. You need to have good processes in place, which encourage workers to engage in work health and safety matters. Ask your workers – don't just assume they will tell you.

Many businesses will already have effective incident reporting approaches that can be adapted to assessing how well their COVID-19 plans are operating. If you don't have an incident reporting approach, or your usual practices aren't right for these circumstances, you'll need a way to find out if your plan is working.

You might like to consider:

- the best way to engage with colleagues – ask them how they would like to engage on decisions and provide feedback, and remember it may not be possible for them to complete forms or attend meetings outside of work
- scheduling regular times to review your plan and its effectiveness
- how you'll communicate changes to processes and make sure all workers know about the changes and are trained to implement them
- how often you'll update and share new versions of your plan
- how you might evaluate the plan's implementation
- whether you have sufficient worker representation to support the implementation of the plan.

### **Understanding how changes impact on existing risks**

Changes to work procedures or practices may affect the way you've routinely managed the risks that arise from your work. For example, you may have controlled the risk of lifting heavy items by having two people involved and now only one person can do the task.

It's also possible the new procedures you put in place may bring new risks or challenges you've not had to think about before. For example, if you are planning to introduce shift rotations, you'll need to work out how to manage the associated risks.

For the purpose of your plan, focus on your critical risks – the things that could kill, seriously injure or result in serious illness. Remember to think about impacts on your remote workers as well.

These are the key steps that you and your workers need to take:

- List your critical risks.
- Describe the process you follow to review the risk controls.
- Identify who was involved in identifying the risks and working out how to manage them - you must involve workers or worker representatives.
- Describe any changes you have made regarding how you will control risks. Note: this can be a high level description if the plan identifies where the detailed information can be found.
- Carry out a risk assessment for new processes and think about whether they might create new work-related risks.
- List the risks you've identified and describe where you've recorded the list's controls - you don't have to include all of the detail in this plan.
- Identify who was involved in the risk assessment - you must involve workers or workers representatives.

If your plan introduces shift work or splits teams that would normally work together, describe what steps you'll take to:

- manage the impacts of shift work, including fatigue, transport, and childcare and the potential dilution of skills available within a split team or rostered workgroup, including health and safety representation
- ensure each work group or team has access to the right skills and support to be able to work safely, including access to a health and safety representation
- engage with workers and worker representatives to agree changed arrangements in good faith.

### **Useful Contacts**

For medical enquires   KEMH   Telephone 28000

For latest updates and guidance visit [www.fig.gov.fk/COVID-19](http://www.fig.gov.fk/COVID-19)

if you still require advice after consulting the website, please contact Falkland Islands Public Health by emailing Carol Morrison ( [cmorrison@sec.gov.fk](mailto:cmorrison@sec.gov.fk) ) with your enquiry

COVID-19 Guidance for the Workplace

**Workplace Plan**

**Company Details**

Business Name	
Business Location	
Plan author	
Date distributed	
Revision date	

<b>Why</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>
What will be done to manage risks caused by restarting business after this period of closure?	<p>Consider: Changed workforce, changed rosters, hygiene requirements (surfaces, separation, toilet), maintenance, ventilation systems.</p> <p><i>Example: Restart the line - carry out restart procedure and sterilise all touch surfaces</i></p>	

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<p>How will you ensure all your workers know how to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?</p>	<p>Consider: Providing guidance, meetings to discuss distancing and hygiene, regular review. <i>Example: Ensure our procedures are up to date by a daily review of local guidance.</i></p>	
<p>How will you gather information on the wellness of your staff to ensure they are safe to work?</p>	<p>Consider: Daily health screening check, discussing options with workers, follow-up procedures for ill workers, contact tracing information. <i>Example: To find out if workers are well when they come to work, we will ask each worker basic questions about their physical and mental health.</i></p>	
<p>How will you operate your business in a way that keeps workers and others safe from exposure to COVID-19?</p>	<p>Consider: Who needs to be in the workplace, worker input into different ways of working, what other people or businesses you'll have to interact with, ensuring separation distances, disinfecting surfaces, shared equipment, equipment for remote workers, training requirements, physical separation or PPE requirements. <i>Example: We will review guidance on the FIG website and to be sure we are cleaning surfaces the right way with the right disinfectant.</i></p>	

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<p>How will you manage an exposure or suspected exposure to COVID-19?</p>	<p>Consider: Isolation procedures, gathering and using workplace contact tracing information, clean down procedures, contacting KEMH.</p> <p><i>Example: Arrange safe transport home immediately and provide all workers with advice on contacting KEMH.</i></p>	
<p>How will you evaluate whether your work processes or risk controls are effective?</p>	<p>Consider: Adapting plans as you find better/easier ways to do things, how to ensure workers are raising concerns or solutions, conducting regular reviews of your plan, communicating changes.</p> <p><i>Example: We need workers' feedback and some speak little English, so we will team up workers with buddies who are more fluent in English at team meetings.</i></p>	
<p>How do these changes impact on the risks of the work that you do?</p>	<p>Consider: With workers, review existing critical risks and whether work practice changes will affect current risk management, are any new critical risks introduced due to changes in worker numbers, work practices, what new risk controls are required?</p> <p><i>Example: Regular check-ins with workers about how they're coping with the change to shift work.</i></p>	