

Important Information



PREVENTION OF COVID-19 AT WORK THE ESSENTIALS IN BRIEF

For IG Metall it is clear: during the coronavirus crisis, the health of our employees is a top priority. Effective measures must therefore be taken at all workplaces to minimise the risk of infection.

COVID-19 demands increased health protection measures

The danger is clear, and we don't need to waste further time studying it: the risk of being infected with COVID-19 is omnipresent, and this includes in the workplace. Under pandemic conditions, the central goal of the company's prevention policy is to slow the spread of infections and to protect employees. There is no question: **working during the pandemic requires an even higher level of health protection than under normal circumstances.** And further special precautions must be taken for employees who belong to a risk group (i.e. employees with cancer or cardiovascular disease).

Developing a prevention strategy and assigning responsibilities

Companies need to develop and implement an effective strategy for COVID-19 prevention as quickly as possible. Since the coronavirus is transmitted in particular through droplets and physical contact, protective measures to minimise the risk of infection need to focus on ensuring a sufficient safe distance between employees, as well as on hygiene measures. **Here employers have a duty: they are legally responsible for protecting their employees' health.** Employers are responsible for organising working practices and implementing technical measures in such a way that distancing and hygiene requirements can be met.

However the works council also has important responsibilities. It must be involved in the evaluation and implementation of the necessary measures. The works council is aware of the tools available for the prevention policy, and these tools are also suitable for these new circumstances: namely co-determination and risk assessment. Important here: in the case of COVID-19, the often complex step of assessing the risk is not required. The high risk of infection is not in doubt. All plants must therefore immediately check to see if distancing and hygiene requirements are being observed in all areas, thus identifying problem areas where requirements are not being met and preventive measures are necessary.

Implementing measures in accordance with the “TOP principle” (technical/organisational/personnel measures)

Companies must achieve the required occupational safety standards through a range of technical, organisational and personnel protective measures. Each individual company must establish the existing hazards in order to determine the necessary precautions. One thing is clear, however: **the TOP principle applies**. The German Occupational Health and Safety Act (Arbeitsschutzgesetz) provides for technical measures before organisational ones. Personnel measures are subordinate to both. Protection against infection can only be properly effective if several measures are combined.

Training as the key to success

Even the best measures will not have the desired effect if employees have not been sufficiently involved. Systematic and adequate training is the key to successful prevention. But employees also need to take responsibility: they need to pay attention to the implementation of distancing and hygiene requirements, and help ensure that all necessary measures are supported by everyone.

Measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Selected technical measures

- ▶ Minimum distances must be marked on the floor at time-punching terminal and turnstiles
- ▶ Transparent partitions must be installed
- ▶ More halls must be used
- ▶ Ventilation technology must be adapted to enable regular ventilation
- ▶ Additional tools must be provided

Selected organisational measures

- ▶ Minimum distances must be implemented in changing rooms, washrooms, break rooms and canteens
- ▶ Internal traffic routes must be regulated
- ▶ Production workflows must be redesigned to ensure that employees can adhere to minimum distance requirements
- ▶ Office work processes must be adapted and alternating work-from-home arrangements agreed
- ▶ Shifts and breaks must be offset

Selected personnel measures

- ▶ Employees must ensure that they are symptom-free before going to work
- ▶ When travelling to and from work, avoid crowds of people on public transport; travel by car or bike where possible, or use the company bus (in which distancing rules are observed)
- ▶ Wear a face mask to cover your nose and mouth or personal protective equipment if necessary
- ▶ Pay attention to hand hygiene



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www.igmetall.de/im-betrieb/gesundheits-und-arbeitsschutz/corona-praevention-beschaefigte-im-betrieb-schuetzen