

## Great Britain: “COVID-19 secure” guidance for ensuring health and safety at work

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, the British Prime Minister announced the “COVID-19 secure” guidance on keeping workers safe at the workplace after the ease of the lockdown. This guidance was developed with the assistance of unions and employers.

Employers will have to carry out a “COVID-19 risk assessment” in line with Health and Safety Executive rules (HSE-UK *government agency responsible for occupational risks*) and in consultation with employees’ and trade union representatives, in order to decide on the specific health and safety measures. ‘COVID-19 risk assessments’ will be compulsory for all companies with at least 50 employees and all employers will have to publicly display within the premises an attestation that the workplace complies with the 5-point ‘Covid-19 secure’ guidance.

The government’s guidance is detailed in [8 sector-specific guides](#) covering a range of different types of work including: construction and outdoor work; factories; home-based work; laboratories and research; offices; takeaway/delivery catering; and people working in vehicles and shops. Additional sector-specific guides will be presented soon. Moreover, the government announced plans to raise the HSE budget by 10% (£14 million nearly €16 million) in a bid to boost its call center capacity and increase the number of labor inspectors.

The guidance contains the following main points:

- Working from home remains the norm.
- Reorganisation of spaces to ensure a physical distance of 2 meters between each worker
- Work schedules must be staggered. Schedules can be rotated, and employers can resort to small, fixed shifts or ensure that people are never face-to-face.
- Companies will have to establish more exits and entrances to workplaces in order to allow one-way traffic and they will also have to rearrange break rooms.
- Where 2-meter distancing is not possible, physical separation measures must be put in place.
- All companies should ensure employees can wash their hands, and hand sanitizers are to be placed at entrances and exits.
- Workplaces must be disinfected more frequently; with extra attention paid to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and computer keyboards.
- Wearing masks has not yet been made a recommendation.

Unite the Union [welcomed](#) the government’s guidance which reflects trade unions’ concerns, especially its strong signal that employers should work with union specialists to ensure adequate health and safety measures at work. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that workers’ health and safety is guaranteed, especially also on the daily commute since the transport system cannot yet ensure social distancing.

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