



March 2020

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Protocol

This protocol sets out the Company's procedures for the reporting and management of employee health and absences in relation to the **Covid-19 (Coronavirus)**.

This protocol is designed to protect against employees contracting the **Covid-19 (Coronavirus)** and to address situations where the **Covid-19 (Coronavirus)** may result in an employee not being able to attend the workplace.

Who is covered by the protocol?

This protocol covers all employees at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, trainees, home workers, contractors, part-time and fixed-term employees.

What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This is a new respiratory illness. It has not previously been seen in humans.

Symptoms

It can take up to 14 days for the symptoms of coronavirus to appear.

These symptoms may include:

- a cough
- shortness of breath
- breathing difficulties
- fever (high temperature)

Coronavirus can also cause more severe illness including:

- pneumonia
- severe acute respiratory syndrome
- kidney failure

When do you need to call the Doctor/HSE?

For most people who have these symptoms now, it is more likely to be an infection that is not coronavirus.

You should phone a doctor or **HSE Live 1850 25 1850** if you have symptoms and any of the following apply to you:

- they are the type of symptoms you would usually contact a GP about
- you have [travelled from an affected area](#)
- you are a close contact of a confirmed case in Ireland - if you are, the Department of Public Health will contact you

Affected Areas

- A full list of affected areas is available on: www.hse.ie

Close contact

This is only a guide but close contact can mean:

- spending more than 15 minutes face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person
- living in the same house or shared accommodation as an infected person

Workplace Reporting Procedure

If you cannot attend the workplace due to a reason as set out above, in addition to contacting the above number, you should inform your manager by phone in line with normal absence procedures;

- of any affected area you were in,
- if you have been in contact with a person who has coronavirus,
- of your symptoms and
- what your HSE/GP has advised.

An employee should keep their employer informed of any developments in their health status.

Unauthorised absence

Absence that has not been notified according to the above reporting procedure will be treated as unauthorised absence.

If you do not report for work and have not telephoned your manager to explain the reason for your absence, your line manager may contact you, by telephone and in writing if necessary. This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting absence.

Return to Work

If you have been absent from work because of the above, you should not return to work until the required period has lapsed, in accordance with your HSE/ GP advice.

In advance of returning to work, you will be expected to provide a fit to work certificate and to contact your Manager by phone who will conduct a return to work interview with you in advance of your return.

Working from home arrangements

In pursuance of limiting access in the workplace you may be required to work from home, where possible, or from an alternative place of work, if available. Your manager will advise you of any such requirement and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Sickness absence

If you are unable to attend the workplace due to the **Covid-19 (Coronavirus)**, this will be treated as sickness absence.

Forced Closure/ Reduced Activity

Should the business be forced to close/ reduce activity, temporarily, employees may be placed on lay off or short time working. There is no entitlement to payment for periods of lay off and where short time working applies, employees will be paid only for any hours worked.

In the above circumstances the Company may agree one of the following options with you:

- Take the time/days from your annual leave entitlement;
- Take the time/days as a period of unpaid leave;
- The time/days can be worked back

Additional Preventative Measures

In order to prevent the spread of the COVID- 19 virus, employees are recommended to;

- Avoid close contact with people who are already sick or have the Virus.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Overseas Travel

It is strongly advised that all non-essential travel to affected areas is avoided where possible. Employees are responsible for making themselves fully aware of the implications should they decide to proceed with these arrangements. Travel advice is available on the DFA website at <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/>

All employees should understand that where a person travels overseas, they may be requested by the HSE/GP or the company to enter into 14-day isolation on their return if the area is an affected area or there is a concern about a location. In such circumstances the company will not be able to accept responsibility for payment during this time.

Please contact your manager the day before your planned return from annual leave in order to conduct a Return to Work Interview over the phone. If any concerns are raised, you are expected to contact your GP/HSE Live 1850 25 1850 and a fit to work cert may be required prior to your return to work.

If any employee has any questions, they must raise these with their manager.