

COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

As the number of COVID-19 medical cases have diminished industries, business and services are keen to return to some semblance of normality (perhaps a 'temporary new norm').

However, we need to carefully manage the return to work to avoid major subsequent surges that could overwhelm our health and care services and/or lead to further major lockdowns. There needs to be a comprehensive, systematic application of whatever controls can be identified to prevent workers, visitors and customers bringing the virus to the workplace and /or picking it up at the workplace, and/or taking it home and into community – within reason.

Businesses are expected to conduct Risk Assessments to ensure their business is COVID Secure. Risk Assessment for COVID-19 specifically is a little different from the more generic Risk Assessments that have been a legal requirement and in place for years.

'Simplicity' and 'fit for purpose' have been key phrases and the mainstay of CW International's support for its Clients in the past and remains so for for COVID-19 Assessments and Plans. We would suggest an effective COVID-19 Risk Assessment and Management Process involves:

Application of COVID Specific Controls in Government Guidelines: A basic first step is to document how the controls described in the Government Guidance are being applied e.g. with a simple tabulation of how each control is being applied, any challenges or deviations, alternatives ..

- Across the Establishment – with sections for different areas of the building and grounds
- Across Activities – with sections for groups of different types of activity
- Across Groups of people – including vulnerable groups, and maintaining equality



Other COVID-19 Controls – Then the Management and Workforce must open their minds and brainstorm, determine other controls that may be put in place either to enhance standard controls from Govt Guidance or to replace Govt Guidance where that cannot be applied. Sources and tools may include:

- Walk Arounds
- Sector Specific Guidance
- Good Practice from others
- HAZID / HAZOP Style Workshops
- Other Sector Guidance
- Media coverage of other businesses

Review of Previous Risk Assessments for Impact of COVID-19 on those – Re-validating or refining the controls and residual risks for all hazards to take account of changes due to COVID-19 again indicating challenges and solutions including across

- Manual Handling
- Work at Height
- Confined Space Entry
- Contractor HSE Management
- Transport Operations
- Chemical Handling
- First aid Provision
- Emergency Management etc. etc.

Management Summary and Sign Off: The Risk and Management Plan should be summarised with the key points and the Senior Management should sign sign-off on this.

Sharing Results: The Risk Assessment and Management Plan must be developed with and shared with the Workforce to ensure effective implementation. The HSE also expects businesses to post the results of their Risk Assessment on their website.



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