



COVID-19

Risk Assessment For Safe Office Working

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This risk assessment has been created in accordance with the HM Government Working Safely During COVID-19 in offices guidance.

1. – All employers should carry out a risk assessment

Employers have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. MAPS has thought about the risks staff face and will do everything practicable to minimise them, recognising that we cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

MAPS will consult with our staff on health and safety as well as with the chosen health and safety representatives.

If you have any health and safety concerns, you can contact the following:-

- The employee representatives – Ilcen Sezer and/or Sarah Davey
- Your trade union
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm>
- HSE by phone on 0300 003 1647

1.1 – MAPS has reduced risk to the lowest reasonable practicable level by taking these preventative measures in order of priority.

- **Important - Employees should not attend the office if they have symptoms of the virus or if they live with somebody who has tested positive for the virus.**
- Increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning. We have anti-bacterial soap in the kitchen, paper towels and anti-bacterial wipes for surface cleaning.
- Enabling all staff to work from home. When staff do need to attend the office we have made every effort to comply with social distancing guidelines.
- There are no tasks that MAPS staff need to complete where social distancing guidelines cannot be followed.

- Active desks have been marked and enable staff to comply with social distancing.
- Active desks have been selected so that staff do not sit face-to-face.
- The same group of people should attend in any one week and use the same desk throughout that week.
- We will individually consider any staff who fall into the vulnerable category. Staff should speak to HR if they have any concerns.

1.2 – Sharing the results of our risk assessment

We will share the results of our risk assessment with our entire workforce as well as publishing the results on our website.

2. – Everyone should work from home unless they cannot work from home

- The majority of MAPS staff will work from home most of the time. Some job roles cannot be performed from home and for those people, they will attend the office on a rota basis.
- The office rota will be compiled so that as few members of staff as possible attend each week.
- There are 15 active desks but only a minimal number of staff will attend in order to complete the tasks that cannot be done from home.
- Any member of staff who can complete their entire role from home should continue to do so until advised otherwise.
- Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of team members who are working from home and ensure they stay connected to the rest of the workforce via Microsoft Teams.
- Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for keeping in touch with staff who are working from home regarding their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security.

- MAPS will provide equipment for people to work at home safely and effectively. Such things include – a laptop, remote access to the system, separate keyboard, separate mouse, laptop holder, backrest.

2.1 – Protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.

- Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (these people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group) should work from home where at all possible. Anyone who falls into this category should speak to HR.
- Clinically vulnerable individuals (people over 70 or who have some underlying health issues) should take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home where possible. Anyone who falls into this category should speak to HR.
- We will take into account specific duties for those with protected characteristics including expectant mothers as well as those who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. Anyone who falls into this category should speak to HR.
- All employees have access to the Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme offering 24 hour confidential advice and counselling.

Protecting individuals from BAME backgrounds

We believe that we have taken every possible step to ensure that the health of safety of all staff, including those from BAME backgrounds are protected from risks. If anybody has any specific concerns around this area then they should contact HR.

2.2 – Ensure individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do so. This includes those who experience symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live with somebody who has symptoms.

- Any staff member who is self-isolating should work from home.
- We will follow the current guidance on statutory sick pay in relation to COVID-19

2.2 – Treat everyone in the workplace equally

- We will understand and consider the particular circumstances of those with protected characteristics. If anybody has any concerns then contact HR.
- We will communicate appropriately with those workers to ensure they are safe.
- We will consider any reasonable adjustments that may need to be put in place.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at any disadvantage and assess the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
- We will ensure that the steps we take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others e.g. those with caring responsibilities or religious commitments.

3 – Maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible

- Staff should maintain 2m social distancing. This applies to all parts of the business and not just where people spend most of their time.
 - Main entrance/exit – this is a revolving door which you access through individual divided sections. It activates automatically without the need to touch anything and is monitored by the main receptionist.
 - Stairs – use the stairs instead of the lift whenever possible ensuring you keep 2m away from others and avoid touching surfaces. Follow the directional arrows that have been placed on the stairwells.
 - Lifts – A maximum of 2 people should use the lift at any one time and you should avoid standing face-to-face with anyone else. Avoid using your fingertip to press buttons and instead use the back of your knuckle. Appropriate signage is displayed and the lift will be monitored by the main receptionist.

- MAPS entrance/exit – we will have a one-way system in place whereby staff will enter the office through the main door and exit the office through the post-room door. Avoid touching door handles where possible. Appropriate signage is displayed.
- Toilets – certain cubicles and sinks will not be available for use in order to maintain social distancing. Signs will be displayed.
- Lunchroom – seats which can be used have been marked out. No more than 5 people seated and 1 person making a drink at any one time. Check how many people are in there before entering to make a drink. Staff should eat at their desks where possible.
- Post-room – a maximum of 3 people will be permitted to enter the post-room at any one time. When in the post-room, ensure that social distancing guidelines are adhered to.

3.1 – Maintain social distancing on arrival and departure and wash hands on arrival.

- Large groups should not enter or leave the building together. Hold back so that social distancing can be observed at all times.
- Staff should avoid using public transport if at all possible. If public transport is unavoidable then only use it outside of rush hour. Managers will need to consider individual team member's travel arrangements.
- We will reduce congestion at entry points by using a one-way system.
- We will use markings on desks to ensure each active workstation is 2m apart as well as a one-way system for entry and exit.
- We have anti-bacterial handwash in the kitchen area as well as 70% alcohol sanitiser, in refillable bottles, by entry and exit points.
- Each active desk has its own hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial spray, anti-bacterial wipes and a box of tissues.

3.2 – Maintain social distancing wherever possible while people travel through and around the workplace

- Staff should only move around the office when it is absolutely necessary. Staff should use email/text/phone to contact team members where

possible. Staff should regularly clean their equipment after use with antibacterial wipes.

- Check who is in a certain area before proceeding to enter. If you cannot maintain social distancing in that area then do not enter until you can.
- Follow the directional signage that has been placed throughout the building.
- Make sure that priority is given to people with disabilities to access to the lifts.
- Staff need to be aware of who is around them before traveling through the office and building. Ensure you observe social distancing at all times.

3.3 – To maintain social distancing between individuals when they are at their workstations.

- We have reviewed the layout to allow people to work at least 2m apart.
- We have used floor tape to mark a one way system
- Staff are able to work side-by-side and/or back-to-back rather than face-to-face.
- We have considered using screens to separate staff but deem this to be unnecessary as we are able to keep workstations 2m apart.
- We will manage occupancy levels to enable social distancing by only having a maximum of 15 people in the office at any one time.
- In order to reduce the risk of transmission, the office will have a deep clean at the end of each week including disinfecting desk areas and equipment.

3.4 – To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings

- Where possible, meetings should take place remotely and face-to-face meetings should be avoided.
- Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoid sharing pens or other objects during meetings.
- Bottles of hand sanitizer are provided in each meeting room.

- Where possible, meetings should be held outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms.

3.5 – To maintain social distancing while using common areas

- Clear signs will be placed in common areas to allow staff to maintain social distancing.
- Managers/team leaders will decide whether lunch hours need to be staggered so that no more than 5 people need access to the lunchroom at once.
- Staff should eat at their desk where possible.
- Staff should bring their own food in where possible.
- Staff should not sit face-to-face when in the lunchroom.
- Where possible, staff should remain on site but always ensure social distancing is maintained when off site.
- Staff are advised to avoid using the shower rooms.

3.6 – To prioritise safety during incidents

- In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.
- When assisting others, fire marshals and first aiders should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately after.

4 – Managing customers, visitors and contractors

4.1 – To minimise the number of unnecessary visits to offices

- Visits should be done remotely where possible.
- Where a site visit is required, guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival. All visitors need to wash their hands.
- Avoid any physical contact such as handshakes.
- We need to limit the number of visitors at any one time.

- Limit visiting to a specific time window and restrict access to required visitors only.
- Maintenance and contractor visits should be arranged out of hours where possible.
- Visitors will no longer sign in and Reception is to keep an electronic record of all visitors.

4.2 – To make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety

- Clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene will be visible at reception as well as on our website.
- Whoever has arranged the visit will be responsible for the visitor and ensuring they understand and adhere to the guidelines.
- Visitors and contractors should observe the one way system for entry and exiting the office and ensure they keep 2m away from other people at all times.

5 – Cleaning the workplace

- Contract cleaning services have been increased. Toilets and communal areas are cleaned more frequently than before and the cleaning routine is to a higher specification.
- MAPS have also increased the number of cleaning hours, requesting that particular attention is paid to the active desks, as well as arranging for a deep clean to be carried out at the end of each week.

5.1 – To make sure that the office is clean and ready to restart including an assessment and providing hand sanitiser.

- The office will be thoroughly cleaned prior to staff attending the office.
- Each active desk has a sanitation pack.
- The air conditioning system has been checked and is maintained in accordance with both HSE and Government guidelines in terms of HVAC.

See Appendix 1 for more details. If anybody has any concerns, they should speak to HR.

- The lunchroom door should remain open at all times to avoid the need for staff to touch the door handle.
- Tea and coffee will be placed on the windowsill to minimise the need to touch cupboards.

5.2 – To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces

- Anti-bacterial wipes will be placed around the office and should be used to regularly clean work areas and equipment, particularly shared equipment such as the photocopiers/printers after use.
- You should thoroughly wipe down the kitchen area after use.
- Door handles and keyboards should be cleaned regularly throughout the day with anti-bacterial wipes or spray. Any used wipes should be placed in the bin immediately.
- Ensure you leave your workspace clean and tidy, removing all waste and personal belongings, at the end of each shift.
- For shared items such as the photocopiers and scanners, ensure you wipe it down both prior to and after use. The cleaner will pay particular attention to these items as part of her daily clean also.
- There is specific guidance to be followed if the office needs to be cleaned after a known or suspected case COVID-19 and we will liaise with our cleaning company should this be the case.

5.3 – To help everyone keep good hygiene throughout the working day

- We have displayed signs and posters reminding staff to maintain good personal hygiene standards.
- Hand sanitiser has been provided to all staff.
- Signage will be displayed in the toilets regarding personal hygiene.
- Toilet seats should be in a closed position before flushing.
- The hand-dryer in the toilets can be activated automatically without touching.

- Any concerns about cleanliness in communal areas should be raised with HR who will in turn raise it with Utility Warehouse immediately.
- There are plenty of rubbish bins located throughout the office and waste bins are emptied daily.
- Soap, hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes are available. Paper towels are provided in the lunchroom to dry hands on.

5.4 – To minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers

- Staff are encouraged not to use these facilities for the time being.
- Enhanced cleaning of the facilities during and at the end of the day.

5.5 – To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace.

- Disposable gloves are provided and may be used by staff when dealing with post and/or deliveries.
- Staff who deal with post and/or deliveries should wash their hands and use hand sanitiser more regularly.
- Personal deliveries to work should be kept to an absolute minimum.

6 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

MAPS staff have never required any specific PPE to carry out any activities. COVID-19 needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams rather than through the use of PPE. We do not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

6.1 – Face coverings

Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you but may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

A face covering should be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible. It only needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as a

face mask and supplies of PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace.

The best way to manage the risk of infection in the office is by maintaining social distancing, good hygiene and increased surface and equipment cleaning.

Wearing a face covering is optional and not required by law. MAPS will support anyone who chooses to wear one as long as they adhere to the following:-

- ❖ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on and after removing it.
- ❖ When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- ❖ Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- ❖ Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- ❖ Change and wash your face covering regularly.
- ❖ If it is not washable then dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
- ❖ Practise social distancing whenever possible.

7 – Workforce management

7.1 – To change the way work is organised and reduce the number of contacts each employee has.

- No more than 15 people will attend the office at any one time.
- Only the marked desks will be used.
- Managers will liaise with HR to confirm who will be attending and when.
- Where possible, staff should not pass items directly to each other.
- Anybody who has any concerns about attending the office should discuss this with their manager.

7.2 – To avoid unnecessary work travel and keep people safe when they do need to travel between locations

- We will look to minimise non-essential travel and consider whether this task can be done remotely.
- Staff should not travel together in any one vehicle if possible and if not possible they should avoid sitting face-to-face and increase ventilation.

- Where workers are required to stay away from their home, ensure accommodation meets social distancing guidelines.

7.3 – To make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures

- We will regularly communicate with staff via email.
- We will engage with workers and worker representatives via email and/or Microsoft Teams to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
- We will communicate any new safety procedures to staff prior to their return to work.
- We will continuously monitor any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.
- We are aware of the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty and have designated mental health first aiders for staff.
- All guidelines will be clear and simple.
- We will publish our risk assessment on our website so that suppliers and customers can access it.

8 – To maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site

- Where deliveries are required, these should be done in larger quantities and less often where possible.

Appendix 1 – Air Conditioning System

Currently HSE advice is as follows:

General ventilation

Employers must, by law, ensure an adequate supply of fresh air in the workplace and this has not changed.

*Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus, so focus on improving general ventilation, preferably through fresh air or mechanical systems. **Note: we maintain good ventilation throughout***

*Where possible, consider ways to maintain and increase the supply of fresh air, for example, by opening windows and doors (unless fire doors). **Note: the building is not designed to have openable windows, hence fresh air provisioned mechanically***

*Also consider if you can improve the circulation of outside air and prevent pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces. You can do this by using ceiling fans or desk fans for example, provided good ventilation is maintained. **Note: not relevant to this building***

*The risk of transmission through the use of ceiling and desk fans is extremely low providing there is good ventilation in the area it is being used, preferably provided by fresh air. **Note: provisioned***

Air conditioning

*The risk of air conditioning spreading coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace is extremely low as long as there is an adequate supply of fresh air and ventilation. **Note: There is adequate provision***

*You can continue using most types of air conditioning system as normal. But, if you use a centralised ventilations system that removes and circulates air to different rooms it is recommended that you turn off recirculation and use a fresh air supply. **Note: not relevant to this building***

*You do not need to adjust air conditioning systems that mix some of the extracted air with fresh air and return it to the room as this increases the fresh air ventilation rate. Also, you do not need to adjust systems in individual rooms or portable units as these operate on 100% recirculation. You should still however maintain a good supply of fresh air ventilation in the room." **Note: There is adequate provision***

There is plenty of fresh air coming into the building and separately into each of the floors. No adjustments have needed to be made to the current setup in accordance with the guidelines.