



Chairman: Andrew Moss
Secretary: Will Smith
email: ws103@cam.ac.uk
Tel: 01223 334444

Cambridge University Branch 0775M

Working to protect staff in Cambridge University

Bulletin – 4th June 2020 – Covid-19 Update - Advice to Members returning to work

SAFELY RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

Your employer is obliged under the law to provide you with a safe place of work. The two main methods of preventing the spread of Covid-19 are hygiene measures and social distancing. If a workplace isn't safe, then members should not be asked to work in it. Unite is advocating a risk assessment approach and are advising no work should start without an up-to-date risk assessment in place. If you find yourself in a situation that you feel is unsafe, remove yourself to a safe place elsewhere in your department and contact your line manager to explain the reason for your action and then Unite (ws103@cam.ac.uk) for further advice. If you suffer a detriment/reprimand because you removed yourself from risk of serious or imminent danger then **UNITE WILL SUPPORT YOU**. Below is a brief summary of what should have been considered and be in place before workplaces re-open or work is ramped up:-

PRE START CHECK LIST (not exhaustive)

Identify those employees that can return to duty and deliver a COVID19 Social Distancing briefing to employees. Ensure workplaces have in place social distancing guidelines, infection control measures, and hygiene/PPE products. Ensure adequate work vehicles are available to maintain social distancing. Review safety principles & risk assessments with Trade Union Representatives. Check/discuss if returning employees have symptoms and whether they have a vulnerable person in the household. Ensure enhanced cleaning/maintenance programmes are in place to address the risk of cross contamination. Check all equipment and service to ensure in safe working order and ensure cleaning staff have new PPE daily. Ensure social distancing guidance and posters are in all locations and prominently displayed. Reps/managers/workers have regular site "walkabouts" to ensure employees comply with social distancing principles.

WORKPLACE ACCESS – here are some examples of controls employers should be implementing:

Visitors to sites should be curtailed unless essential and business critical. Monitor congestion to enable social distancing of 2 metres and introduce staggered start and finish times. Remove/disable entry systems requiring skin contact, promote good hygiene, wash or clean hands before entering or leaving premises and provide the necessary facilities to do this, warm water soap or hand sanitiser. Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, delivery areas. Drivers should remain in their vehicles if the load will allow and must wash/clean their hands before unloading goods and materials. Access to toilets and washing facilities needs to be given to delivery drivers.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Avoid public transport - only use if there is no choice and it is safe to do so. Travel alone in own transport if this is available to you and only car share if living in same household. Use a bicycle if this is feasible or walk if in walking distance. Every effort made to provide additional parking spaces for cars and bicycles.

ENHANCED CLEANING IN THE WORKPLACE

Enhanced and regular cleaning across all areas of the workplace utilising approved cleaning products includes all building touch points, escalators, taps and washing facilities, toilet flush and seats, door handles and push plates, handrails, lift and hoist controls, machinery and equipment controls, food preparation and eating surfaces, telephone equipment, keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment. Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

WORKING WITHIN 2 METERS

Unite's position is that social distancing should be applied at all times, however there may be a situation where the employer wants to put in place a system for working under 2 metres for certain tasks. Where this happens reps should insist that a risk assessment is undertaken specifically for those tasks using the following principles. Full consultation with union safety reps regards the assessment which should identify why the task needs to continue. If the employer advocates the task/job continues then Unite's hierarchy of control set out in Covid-19 risk assessment guidance be followed.

ABILITY TO STOP WORK ON HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUNDS: AGREEMENT

Union reps should seek to agree with their organisations an agreed procedure whereby the worker can stop work on health and safety grounds: 1. create a safety check list that the worker can fill out prior to start of a job/process; 2. part of the document to contain a stop work element that employee can sign off; 3. supervisor is informed and discusses resolution if not resolved supervisor signs off; 4. task/job is halted; 5. task is reviewed by management/union reps.