

Protect yourself and others – act like COVID is everywhere

What are the essential steps I should be taking?

You should maintain social distancing from colleagues and customers/residents/visitors at all times wherever possible. This means maintaining a two-metre gap from anybody who is not part of your household or support bubble. If you cannot maintain a two-metre distance, stay at least one metre apart from others with other precautions in place such as wearing PPE and increasing ventilation. Appropriate PPE must be worn at all times during work.

You should also continue to wash your hands regularly. Try to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds as often as you reasonably are able to. If you do not have access to soap and water, use a hand sanitiser gel instead.

You should always wear a face covering indoors. Specific guidance on the use of Personal Protective Equipment is available on the Government website.

Follow all safety measures as set out by your employer at all times. The only way your workplace can remain Covid-secure is if everybody complies with the measures in place.

What about during breaks?

It is essential that you always comply with the infection control measures, whether you are going about your work or taking a break. This includes maintaining social distancing with other colleagues on breaks and washing your hands as often as possible.

Staff areas should be regularly cleaned and used cups, plates and cutlery should be properly washed and stored away after each use. Do not leave used items in sinks where other people will be required to move them.

Avoid cross contamination of personal items such as coats, bags and phones. Store your belongings away where they will not come into contact with anybody else's possessions.

Covid carries a risk to people who smoke. It may be a time to consider giving up smoking – [you can access support here](#). If you smoke during breaks, do not share cigarettes, lighters and maintain your distance.

How can I safely travel to work?

It is advised that you walk or cycle to work when possible and when travelling by car to only travel with those in your household and/or support bubble.

Car sharing should be avoided if it is with people outside your household or support bubble as it risks spreading the virus and increasing the likelihood of further community transmission. People travelling in private vehicles together will be classed as 'close contacts' if one or more person in the vehicle develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, requiring everybody to self-isolate.

It is advised to only use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work. Face coverings must be worn on public transport unless you are exempt.

Outside of work

The standards set in the workplace must also be continued outside of work to reduce the likelihood of community transmissions.

You should make sure that you fully comply with restrictions and guidance in place, whether that's the national lockdown measures or regulations introduced under the three-tiered local Covid alert level system.

You should only interact with people outside the workplace in line with the regulations. Breaching the guidance could lead to staff members being identified as close contacts of positive cases resulting in self-isolation and a risk of essential services being depleted.

What is a close contact?

Remember, if you are within close contact of a positive case you may need to self-isolate for 14 days. Examples of close contact include:

- Close face-to-face contact (under one metre) with anyone for any length of time – including talking to them or coughing on them
- Being within one to two metres of someone for more than 15 minutes – including travelling in a small vehicle
- Spending time in somebody else's home

Wearing a face covering

It is compulsory to wear a face covering on public transport including in taxis and in public indoor settings, unless you have an exemption.

You may be fined if you do not wear a face covering where required. The police have powers to issue a £200 fine for a first offence (reduced to £100 if paid within 14 days. For repeat offences, the fine will double up to a maximum of £6,400. There is no early payment discount for repeat offence fines.

Those exempt from wearing a face covering include children under the age of 11, those unable to wear a face covering due to a disability or impairment, or you are communicating who relies on lip reading. For safety reasons, children under the age of three should not wear face coverings. For the full list of exemptions, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks used as part of personal protective equipment by healthcare and other workers. These need to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace such as health and care workers.

Face coverings must cover the mouth and nose and you should avoid touching your face covering while wearing it and store it away safely while it is not in use.

[Government guidance for specific workplaces is available here.](#)