

# COVID-19 Office Guidelines

Version 1.0 – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, all employers have a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of anyone who has contact with their business (employees, freelancers, contractors, members of the public etc). The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 sit beneath this law and provide detail on what a safety management system should look like (e.g. how your business identifies and assesses its risks, takes steps to control them, trains relevant staff, and monitors/reviews its safety processes to ensure they are being carried out correctly and remain effective). The HSE has produced detailed guidance on this. Failure to comply with a business' health and safety duties is a criminal offence.

The purpose of this document is to assist production companies and post production/edit houses in taking reasonable and practical steps in relation to COVID-19 to safeguard the health and safety of everyone returning to work in their office space or facility. Government advice is still to work from home where you can so this guidance is for people who have to work in the office facility now and to help you plan for when a general return to the office is permitted.

Your business should therefore already have a safety management procedure in place, usually explained in your business' health and safety policy. COVID-19 will be a significant risk which should be controlled in accordance with your business' existing safety management procedure. This will ensure that your business is complying with the law. The latest government guidance on how businesses should control COVID-19 risks, as well as these Guidelines, should be considered (and relevant parts implemented) as you work through your business' safety management procedure, particularly when carrying out your COVID-19 risk assessment.

In addition, everyone working at your office space and visiting it has responsibilities in respect of COVID-19. They can meet them by working in accordance with these Guidelines.

This document will be updated regularly in response to feedback on how it works in practice, new Government law and regulation, and the potential availability of practical on-set COVID-19 testing. It is very important that you review Government updates in law and guidance so that your risk assessment and procedures are updated to reflect these changes.

If in doubt as to which is most up-to-date copy of this document, [Click Here](#) to view the latest version.

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## GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

Commercials production (by which we mean production / VFX / editing / audio post / music) is not a sector which has been required to legally close as a result of COVID-19. On 11th May 2020, the government published new guidance entitled "[Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#)" which set out its roadmap to lift restrictions, including getting businesses which are allowed to be open back up and running safely. The guidance advises as follows:

*"For the foreseeable future, workers should continue to work from home rather than their normal physical workplace, wherever possible... All workers who cannot work from home should travel to work if their workplace is open. Sectors of the economy that are allowed to be open should be open... As soon as practicable, workplaces should follow the new 'COVID-19 Secure' guidelines".*

On the same date, the Government published its suite of "COVID-19 Secure guidelines". These comprise a general "[5 steps to working safely](#)" document plus eight, more detailed guidance notes focusing on specific work environments. The five steps to working safely are:

- Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment.
- Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures.
- Help people work from home.
- Maintain two metres social distancing, where possible.
- Where people cannot be two metres apart, manage transmission risks as per the Key Principles section below.

The more detailed guidance documents provide additional requirements for businesses' COVID-19 risk assessments and advise that companies must:

- share the results of their COVID-19 risk assessment with their workforce.
- consider publishing the results of their COVID-19 risk assessment on their company website (this is expected for employers with over 50 workers) - see template at Appendix 3 of this Guidance.
- display a downloadable "Staying Covid-19 Secure in 2020" notice in their workplace to show they have followed government guidance - downloadable from the HSE [here](#).

NB: These guidelines are applicable as at 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and based on the law and guidance for filming in England. If you are shooting in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, laws and guidance can vary so should be checked to ensure that you are complying - they are available on the [GOV.UK website](#).

## MEDICAL INFORMATION

Some medical context on COVID-19 (also read PHE's guidance [here](#)):

- The time between exposure to COVID-19 and the moment when symptoms start is commonly around five to six days but can range from one to 14 days.
- COVID-19 is transmitted from infected people's respiratory secretions (coughs/sneezes) reaching the nose, eyes or mouth.
- The most common symptoms are high temperature, continuous coughing and loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.
- Some people with COVID-19 suffer or show no apparent symptoms. Asymptomatic sufferers may still be infected and there is strong scientific evidence that they can transmit the virus too.
- COVID-19 can also survive on surfaces and be transmitted from them.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

The purpose of social distancing, increased cleaning of hands and surfaces and PPE is to break transmission of the virus and reduce the risk of infection.

We should operate on the basis that we all have the potential to be asymptomatic carriers and must adhere to the safety principles to minimise risk. Therefore the following essential rules are based on current UK Government guidelines, and must be adhered to:

- Maintain social distancing wherever possible - two metres apart.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or hand sanitiser (containing at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available, for at least 20 seconds as often as possible.
- Cough and sneeze in the crook of the arm or into a tissue and bin immediately.
- Report COVID-19 symptoms to employer.
- Work from home where possible.
- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, productions should take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission by:
  - > considering whether an activity needs to continue for the business to operate.
  - > keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.
  - > using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.
  - > using back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible.
  - > staggering arrival and departure times.
  - > reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'.

## APA BEST PRACTICES

These are recommendations as to how to structure the return to work in an office environment, over and above Government guidelines and, again, they will be constantly reviewed and updated.

Please be prepared to take steps within your office to make adjustments and preparations where needed, so your office is ready for the return to work for both staff and visitors.

Discourage visitors where possible. Anyone who can work from home should continue to work from home. Limit client and agency visits where possible.

We have organised our best practices as follows:

- Office - General
- Editing / Post-Production / Sound recording suites
- Cleaning
- Runner Services
- Catering
- Transport
- Health and Safety –General
- PPE and Sanitisation

## OFFICE - GENERAL

- Avoid printing and paper distribution where possible except for clear safety posters.  
Note: COVID-19 can last 24 hours on paper.
- Keep office space well ventilated with open windows and doors where possible.
- Use of lifts. Use stairs instead where possible. Social distancing must be maintained in lifts. If this is not possible go through series of controls to limit risk of transmission (facing back to back or side to side, limit time). Wash or sanitise hands before and after using lifting buttons or controls.
- Cleaning – regular cleaning of office space, communal areas and toilets must be done. Consider anti-viral fogging services for blanket cleaning of rooms if needed.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly on arrival and during the day at regular intervals. Alcohol-based sanitisers should be visible throughout location and soap and water provided wherever possible. Consider having hand-sanitizer at first entry point into the office.
- PPE: Consider having masks available at first point of entry into the office (see further PPE notes later in this document).
- Consider any space markers where possible.

## EDITING / POST-PRODUCTION / SOUND RECORDING SUITES

- Seated or standing social distancing must be adhered to at all time in all suites and machine rooms.
- Re-arrange your suites as necessary to prohibit any over-occupation which would compromise social distancing.
- Each suite must have hand-sanitiser.
- Where a facility has an occupancy limit on each suite, this must be adhered to.
- If people need to wait in communal areas before entering the suite, they must practice social distancing.
- Consider increasing video monitors in suites to avoid clusters of people.
- All staff & visitors to adhere to any safety guidelines or notices given on the day.

## CLEANING

- Cleaning regularly across the whole office/property is recommended.
- Anti-viral fogging can be considered for 'blanket' cleaning of suites or areas when appropriate.
- Topical cleaning of specific equipment must be undertaken regularly, especially if people have to share equipment. In particular microphones, door handles, music stands, technical computer keys, machine room equipment.
- Anti-viral cleaners should be used wherever possible, with alcohol-based cleaners containing 60%+ of alcohol. Only use products that will not damage sensitive editing and technical equipment.

## RUNNER SERVICES

- Work out efficient rota for runners if their usual duties mean working in constricted spaces like a kitchen or client services area. Advise clients of any reduced client services as a result.
- It is advisable for runners or any staff working in close quarters with other staff or clients to wear a mask at all times – see PPE section below.

## CATERING

- Staff and visitors will be advised to bring their own refreshments, utensils and drinking cups. Disposable, recyclable plates and cutlery to be provided if needed.
- Facilities should establish their own protocols around take-away food, but sharing of food and utensils is not advised and buffet style food settings should be avoided.
- Everyone must wash their hands before entering any catering/dining area.
- Dining space requirement to ensure increased distance while eating with at least two metres space to be observed between people.

## TRANSPORT & COURIERS

- If staff are required at the office they should be encouraged to avoid public transport where possible. Note: from 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 the Government requires all using public transport to wear face coverings.
- Ideally visitors to use their own preferred taxi accounts if they need private hire transport. No drivers to enter property.
- Companies to be clear on their own protocol regarding courier services from other companies. Create a safe drop-off zone.
- Consider other Government regulation, eg: anyone arriving into the UK after the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 must self-isolate for 14 days, so should not attend any set or place of business.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY – GENERAL

- Staff and anyone attending the office (except couriers) should complete the Health Declaration at Appendix 1.
- A general company Covid-19 compliance risk assessment for the office should be carried out by a competent individual with Covid-19 awareness and in accordance with the APA Guidelines. Companies will, furthermore, need to publish summaries of their office risk assessment on their website (using draft template at Appendix 3) and display a downloadable "Staying Covid-19 Secure in 2020" notice in their workplace to show they have followed government guidance - downloadable from the HSE [here](#).
- Read the list of COVID-19 compliance tasks in Appendix 2 and allocate a member (or members) of staff to be Covid Supervisor(s).
- Consider other Government regulation, eg: anyone arriving in the UK after the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 must self-isolate for 14 days, so should not attend any office.
- All staff and attendees to provide contacts for family/household in case of emergency.
- Individuals attending the facility should be contacted subsequently in the event that fellow workers/visitors are found to have contracted COVID-19.
- Reserve the right to carry out temperature checks on any staff or visitors.
- If staff or visitors feel ill they should make it known to a staff member.
- If COVID-19 symptoms occur while at home or in temporary accommodation, or the individual receives notification via the [NHS Track and Trace](#) system, the individual should isolate for 14 days without going to their workplace and notify their MD or Office Manager immediately, who in turn will need to identify colleagues and visitors who are deemed to have been in close contact and ask them to monitor their own symptoms.
- Avoid sharing items (mobile phones, pens, food utensils etc) – staff and visitors alike must be responsible for the safety and sanitisation of their own items.
- All employees have a responsibility to care for the welfare of others as they would themselves. As per [Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), "it is the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work."
- Each staff member and visitor is responsible for keeping their own area and equipment clean.
- Clear health etiquette to be on posters around the office (our shooting posters can be [downloaded here](#)).

**PPE AND SANITISATION**

- The current PHE guidance does not recommend face masks (i.e. those designed to protect the wearer from infection) other than in care settings. In the UK, current advice on face coverings (i.e. those designed to protect others from the wearer) is: *"If you can, wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas, for example, on public transport or in some shops."*

Our advice and recommendation for PPE-use in an office is different to that of a live action shoot, on the premise that it is much easier to maintain social distancing and hygiene in a more controlled environment such as an office or production facility.

Therefore, whilst companies should have supplies of masks and gloves available (Tier 1) there is no need to have supplies of Tier 2 (as described in the APA COVID-19 Shooting Guidelines). Tier 2 is only required for protracted activity which breaks social distancing. Unless you anticipate needing that, it is unlikely that you will need Tier 2.

Tier 1 – basic PPE masks and gloves can be available for the following reasons:

- > Any staff who should wear it whilst greeting people or preparing food/drinks.
  - > Any staff who feel more comfortable wearing a mask.
  - > If two or more staff members have to work closely together in any setting.
  - > Available for any staff or visitors who have to take public transport and will need a mask to do so on leaving the premises.
- Provide covered bins for safe disposal of tissues and PPE.
  - Clearly indicate plentiful supply of hand sanitiser and wipes in every room.
  - Each department is responsible for keeping their own area and equipment clean.



## APPENDIX 1

### COVID-19 HEALTH DECLARATION FORM FOR ALL COMPANY STAFF AND VISITORS

As part of our commitment to provide a safe working environment for all during the unprecedented, fast-changing COVID-19 situation, we need to ask you to confirm in writing, by signing below, that:

- You have no cause to believe that you have COVID-19 (an NHS symptom checker can be found [here](#)).
- You have been meeting the Government COVID-19 guidelines and social distancing when not at work as defined [here](#).
- As far as you are aware, you have not been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or anyone who is showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within the last 14 days. Furthermore, you have not been contacted under the NHS Track and Trace system and told to self isolate.
- You have not travelled to, nor to your knowledge had any contact with any individual travelling from any high COVID-19 risk countries (as deemed by [UK FCO](#)) in the 14 days prior to the shoot.
- You have not had a cough, or a temperature of 37.8 degrees centigrade or above in the last 14 days.
- If you develop a cough or a temperature of 37.8 degrees centigrade or above at any point before or during or within 14 days following the shoot you will immediately inform the production company engaging you.
- If you are over 70 years of age or have any pre-existing condition which would put yourself at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, as defined by the Government [here](#), you must inform production.
- You will notify us immediately should anything change as regards to the above confirmations.
- You have read, understood and agree to abide by the [APA COVID-19 Office Guidelines](#).
- For the purposes of GDPR you consent to our sharing and retaining your data to the extent that it is reasonably necessary for the safety of you and everybody on the production.

We also need you to provide us with contact details of spouse / partner / home-dweller in the case of emergency. Please provide those here.

Name of resident emergency contact: .....

Mobile of resident emergency contact: .....

Print your name: .....

Signed: .....

Job Title: .....

Date of birth: .....

Date: .....

Your contact details if we need to contact you in event that staff or visitors show symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of your last visit to the office / facility:

.....

## APPENDIX 2

TASKS TO BE ALLOCATED TO A MEMBER OR MEMBERS OF STAFF OR, DEPENDING ON THE NATURE AND SCALE OF THE TASKS AT HAND, BY A DEDICATED COVID SUPERVISOR ENGAGED TO PERFORM THEM:

- Ensure distance markers are on floor and remain clear throughout working day
- Make sure that hand-sanitising stations are set up correctly
- Make sure that PPE is easily accessible and in good supply.
- Carry out temperature checks.
- Make sure notices/posters are set up and visible.
- Make sure toilets are maintained.
- Monitor two-metre distancing.
- Check communal areas are clean and not over-crowded.
- Ensure a detailed COVID-19 risk assessment for your office / facility is carried out.
- Publish the summarized results of your COVID-19 risk assessment on your company website - see template at Appendix 3 of this Guidance.
- Ensure a downloadable "Staying Covid-19 Secure in 2020" notice is clearly visible in your workplace to show you have followed government guidance - downloadable from the HSE [here](#).

Note: this is a non-exhaustive list and companies should add additional tasks they require depending on the size, layout and purpose of the building and its various spaces.

## APPENDIX 3

**This draft notice is to enable you to comply with your obligations under the Government COVID-19 Guidelines which require you to put details of how you are managing COVID-19 risks on your website.**

**Important note: This is an example document and must be tailored to your business and the results of your business' COVID-19 company risk assessment.**

**DELETE THE RED TEXT ABOVE BEFORE POSTING ON YOUR WEBSITE.**

**[INSERT COMPANY LETTERHEAD]**

### HELPING OUR PEOPLE STAY SAFE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As we return to production after lockdown, the safety of our cast, crew and contributors is our highest priority. In order to ensure the health and safety of our people during the continued pandemic we have carefully assessed the risks of COVID-19 during production with reference to government and industry guidance.

In order to reduce those risks identified, as far as reasonably practicable, we will implement a package of control measures that will be in place during all stages of our productions.

#### **How we are keeping people safe.**

We are focusing on the following areas to ensure we can manage the risks of infection from COVID-19, carrying out specific assessments where necessary.

#### **IN OUR OFFICES:**

- **Minimising** - minimising the number of people in our offices at any time.
- **Communicating** - ensuring those who have symptoms or are ill know not to come into work and to return home immediately if they become ill at work.
- **Commuting** - considering the risks in commuting especially on public transport, introducing mitigations such as staggered start times.
- **Social Distancing** - making every effort to ensure social distancing is adhered to from space planning to signage.
- **Cleaning** - increasing the frequency of cleaning.
- **Face covering** - supporting our people in the safe wearing of face coverings on a commute and in scenarios where they choose to wear.

#### **DURING OUR PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES:**

- **Travel** - seeking to minimise travel requirements and follow social distancing principles within travel arrangements, wherever possible.
- **Location** - considering the physical capacity of space used, given the requirements of social distancing, as well as ensuring the provision of adequate hygiene facilities.
- **Work Activities** - considering the activities that people are going to need to undertake across roles in a production and if these can be adapted or changed to reduce risk.
- **Work Equipment** - managing the sharing of work equipment which is key to production from cameras and headsets to edit suites. Focusing on good hygiene and managing potential issues with touchpoints.
- **Work Patterns** - reviewing work patterns to encourage small groups (cohorts) of people who don't come into contact with other groups.
- **Catering and Rest Areas** - reconfiguring catering provision and planning breaks to ensure our people are as safe as possible.
- **First Aid and Emergency services** - planning activities to reduce the risk of requiring emergency services to be called as well as advice to first aiders on COVID-19 risk.
- **Masks, Gloves and Other PPE** - as per the APA COVID Shooting and Office Guidelines.
- **Mental Health** - the COVID-19 risk and the response has had a potential Mental Health impact for those working on productions which should be considered.
- **Monitoring** - compliance will be monitored and if required people will be reminded of the new COVID-19 working practices (such as social distancing).