RISK ASSESSING FOR CORONAVIRUS

Since the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) at the end of 2019, the newly discovered virus has now spread to more than 60 countries and infected tens of thousands of people, mainly in China but with a high number of cases in Iran, South Korea and Italy (at time of posting). So, what can you as a business owner do to minimise the risk to your employees, customers and visitors?

Although the risk of a major outbreak in the UK is still classed as moderate, it is important that you show due diligence in the case of the Coronavirus spreading further. You should complete one (or more) risk assessments, then put policies and procedures in place to protect your business and the people within it from contracting and spreading the virus.

**HOW TO CONDUCT A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR CORONAVIRUS**

Creating a risk assessment takes 5 simple steps. It’s important that a Competent Person covers all of these steps in detail to create a risk assessment that is compliant and protects your staff and members of the public. We’ve included some things you should consider relating specifically to controlling the spread of Coronavirus.1.

**Identify the hazards**

The first step in the process, and an important step to ensure you leave no stone unturned. Look around your premises – if an infected person were to enter your property, either a visitor or staff member, what hazards would be caused? How would this then affect the none-infected staff members of visitors?

Try to approach this in terms of what areas they would make contact with, which areas are high traffic. Consider what tasks staff are completing in certain areas, what equipment is being used and what PPE is currently provisioned. This should give you a good idea of the hazards posed by a potential Coronavirus infection.

**Decide who may be harmed and how**

Based on the information gathered in the previous step, which members of staff (this could likely be all of them but to differing levels) would be affected by the hazard of Coronavirus being present in your property? Create a clear picture of who could be harmed and how, including to what level – consider individuals who are at a higher risk due to the tasks they carry out or their health such as being immunocompromised or having pre-existing medical conditions.

**Assess the risks and control them**

A competent person should now go through each risk and assess how likely they are to occur and how potentially severe. Follow this up by establishing how to control each risks in a reasonable manner. Control measures should include cleaning procedures, use of PPE and measures such as allowing staff members to work from home if possible.

**Record your findings**

Create a method statement and share it with the workforce. Ensure it is seen and understood by every member of staff it affects. Keep a track of everyone that has acknowledged the documentation and if you have visitors or contractors who need to see them, share documents with them at the earliest point possible.

**Complete reviews**

Should the risk of Coronavirus change then procedures should also be reviewed and updated if necessary. For example, as more information is known about Coronavirus, the risks to your workforce may lessen or worsen and all risk assessments and method statements should reflect these changes. Depending on your business, choose an appropriate review period and be prepared to do ad-hoc reviews if required. Remember that if documents are updated they need to be re-distributed and acknowledged by all relevant employees.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are the Hazards, likelihood and severity** | **Who might be harmed and how?** | **Additional harm or impact** | **What are we already doing?** | **Do we need to do anything else?** | **Action by who?** | **Action by when?** | **Date complete** | **Review date** |
| Staff member getting coronavirus. Staff member having to self-isolate. Board member getting Coronavirus, Board member having to self-isolate. Likelihood – high, Severity – low risk to individuals without pre – existing medical conditions, medium to high – for this with pre-existing medical conditions. Medium – high risk to organisation failing to meet outcomes. | Staff, their family, close contacts, authorised visitors to the office. | Impact onto organisation achieving outcomes | Risk assessment carried out. Information email sent to all staff and board members with advice and links to accessing help. Scottish Government advised. | Yes, staff to be asked to declare and pre-existing medical conditions that may raise their risk level. | CEO | 12 March 2020 | 12 March 2020 | 16 March 2020 |

## **SCSN Coronavirus Risk Assessment 12/03/2020**