

GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING

Spas



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

ISA IRISH SPA
ASSOCIATION

Note:

This is a living document which means as Government restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new Government advice and changes to protocols when they emerge. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, the Work Safely Protocol and updated COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 – The Path Ahead, and based on the latest health guidance available from the Department of Health and the HSE. The links to latest guidelines will be included throughout the document.

The Tourism and Hospitality Sector Guidelines, aligned with the Work Safely Protocol, have been developed to assist businesses to apply guidance to their specific activities. The guidelines are regularly updated by Fáilte Ireland to reflect the imposition or lifting of restrictions as decided by the Government.

Disclaimer

The information contained within these operational re-opening guidelines can change from time to time, it should not by itself be relied upon in determining obligations or other decisions. Users of this document should independently verify any information on which they wish to rely. It is expected that all business owners and management will have familiarised themselves with the Work Safely Protocol prior to re-opening and implemented all relevant requirements.

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Fáilte Ireland Overview Guidelines to Re-opening

It is recommended that businesses also view the [Fáilte Ireland Overview Guidelines to Re-opening](#) in addition to this sector specific guideline document, as further information relating to COVID-19 control measures, Health & Safety measures, hygiene measures, etc. are outlined.

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

Revision History:

Version	Date Changes	Changes from previous version
6.0	11/05/2021	Update of information in line with Government Public Health advice.
5.4	01/03/2021	Update to the COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 – The Path Ahead.
5.3	25/01/2021	Update of information in line with Government Health advice and Ventilation (Appendix 1)
5.2	08/01/2021	Update of Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 for Level 5 and Guidance on International Travel.
5.1	04/01/2021	Update of Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 for Level 5
5.0	22/12/2020	Update of Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19
4.1	18/12/2020	Update in line with S.I 571 of 2020 (Face Coverings In Certain Premises And Businesses) and updates to Government Public Health and Safety advice.
4.0	02/12/2020	Updates in line with Work Safely Protocol. Update of Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 for Level 3 and update in line with S.I. 560 of 2020
3.2	17/11/2020	Update of information relating to International Travel.
3.1	09/11/2020	Update of information relating to Face Covering (HPSC).
3.0	22/10/2020	Update of Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 for Level 5.
2.0	06/10/2020	Update of Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19
1.5	25/09/2020	Update of Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 – clarification on restrictions for county Donegal.
1.4	22/09/2020	Further clarification on Organised Indoor & Outdoor gatherings.
1.3	21/09/2020	Updated in line with Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19
1.2	24/07/2020	Clarification for Contact Tracing requirements
1.1	20/07/2020	Document Published

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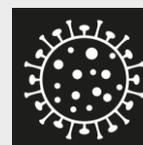


New Public Health Measures Announced: 29th April 2021

May 10th - New public health measures : The Path Ahead
References to June 2nd and 7th are subject to the public health situation at that time

Weddings	<p>From May 10th Max. 50 guests at service. Max. 6 guests at indoor reception or 15 outdoors</p> <p>From June 7th Max. 50 guests at service Max. 25 guests at wedding reception</p>
Paid Tourist Accommodation	<p>From May 10th Open only for those with non-social and non-tourist purposes.</p> <p>From June 2nd Accommodation services including hotels, B&Bs, self-catering, caravan & camping and hostels can reopen. Services including leisure facilities, indoor restaurant and bar services must be restricted to overnight guests and residents only.</p>
Gyms, Pools & Leisure Facilities	<p>From May 10th Closed</p> <p>From June 7th Open for individual training only</p>
Transport	<p>Capacity restricted to 50% Face coverings must be worn</p>
Domestic Travel	<p>Inter County travel permitted</p>
Cafés, Restaurants & Pubs <small>(Including Hotel Restaurants and Bars)</small>	<p>From May 10th Closed. Take away or delivery only. Hotels may provide food and beverage services to residents (those that require accommodation for essential purposes only)</p> <p>From June 7th Outdoor service only with groups limited to a maximum of 6 people</p>
Wet Pubs	<p>From May 10th Closed</p> <p>From June 7th Outdoor service only with groups limited to a maximum of 6 people</p>
Live Music & Performances	<p>No live or loud music permitted. No live performances are permitted.</p>
Closing Time	<p>Food & Beverage facility must be clear of all patrons by 11:30pm.</p>
Nightclubs	<p>Closed.</p>
Attractions	<p>Open with protective measures (for example, a maximum capacity to allow 2m distancing, one-way traffic within the venue). Maximum numbers linked to the capacity, taking account of Public Health Advice. Guided tours within indoor attractions are not permitted</p>
Activities	<p>Outdoor Activities Open with protective measures. Outdoor organised activities have a maximum capacity of 15 people.</p>
Outdoor Parks & Play Areas	<p>Open with protective measures.</p>
Organised Formal & Informal Indoor Events / Gatherings	<p>No organised indoor events or gatherings should take place.</p>
Organised Formal & Informal Outdoor Events / Gatherings	<p>Organised outdoor gatherings are permitted with a maximum attendance of 15 people</p>
Meetings	<p>Non-Social Meetings, Training and Educational programmes only permitted to take place when considered an essential service.</p>

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NOTE: If your business provides food, please refer to the re-opening guidelines for Restaurants & Cafés on www.failteireland.ie



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1. Introduction: Meeting & Overcoming the COVID-19 Challenge

COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge for the tourism sector.

Before re-opening, businesses will need to review how they work and introduce new practices and procedures to ensure everyone stays safe. As a result, Fáilte Ireland, in consultation with Sectoral Bodies, has developed operational guidelines in line with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

As part of this, Fáilte Ireland has created this set of specific guidelines in consultation with the Irish Spa Association (ISA) to help you re-open your Spa or Salon. You can be reassured that these recommendations are underpinned by advice made available from the HSA, HSE, World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant bodies.

Businesses must follow the [Work Safely Protocol](#) which has been developed under the aegis of the *Safety Health and Welfare Act 2005*. This protocol was first published in May 2020 and updated in November 2020. Businesses are now required to review their existing advice, guidance and protocols to ensure they are in line with these updates. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is the compliance body and has full powers as set out in this legislation designated in relation to the implementation of the Work Safely Protocol. Non-compliance can result in the closure of a business.

The guidelines were developed based on the following considerations:

- **Restructuring operations**
Tourism businesses of all types need to adapt their operations, review employee practices and consider the design of their business to provide a safe environment for guests and employees and ensure physical distancing and the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. Further information on reviewing employee practices can be found in the [Work Safely Protocol](#) e.g. consider any new additional measures for employees who are deemed high risk.
- **Putting dedicated resources in place**
Tourism businesses must ensure that they have dedicated personnel to implement and operate a robust system that prevents the spread of COVID-19. Equally importantly, they need to put processes in place that can deal with individual and multiple cases of the disease that may occur.
- **Adapting and enhancing hygiene practices**
Tourism businesses must adapt and implement enhanced procedures in general cleaning, storage and cleaning of equipment. In particular, they should introduce and implement touchless solutions where possible.
- **Ventilation**
The proven importance of ensuring adequate air circulation should be factored into operational practices. Further information regarding air conditioning and ventilation can be found in Section 5.d of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) as well as [Appendix 1](#)
- **Focusing on best practice in food and beverage service**
Tourism businesses must follow best practices in service and physical distancing to promote health of employees and guests.

If your business provides food, please review the re-opening guidelines for Restaurants & Cafés on www.failteireland.ie
- **Guidance on International Travel**
Current government advice is available [HERE](#).

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

2. Business Response/Action Plan

Creating an Action Plan will help to clarify what needs to be done to overcome the threat of COVID-19 and give your employees and guests confidence that they are safe.

In developing one, the first step the management team of a Spa must take is to familiarise themselves with the latest guidelines from the following sources:

- Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
- Irish Government Departments
- World Health Organisation (WHO).

Information from these sources will help to shape your plan of action. You must also:

- **Complete a risk assessment** to identify what operational, changes you need to make in your business, this should include an occupational health and safety risk assessment. Further information can be found [HERE](#).
- **Review of all standard operating procedures (SOPs)** to define and note what you are changing.
- **Create a communication plan** to inform employees and guests/clients of what you are changing, what you need them to do and how you expect everyone to act and behave.
- **The HSA provides** templates, checklists and advice on the Return to Work Safely Protocols. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

The plan must reassure employees and guests that safeguarding their health and safety is of the utmost importance. It must also ensure that your operations continue to run in an efficient and safe manner.

The Irish Spa Association (ISA) have developed a comprehensive list of templates, checklist and scripts which can be found [HERE](#).

You must review the plan regularly and amend it as new regulations, guidelines and procedures come into force. Experience and feedback will inform how appropriate and effective the plan is.

For further information on the development of your Action Plan, visit the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Business Supports Hub [HERE](#).

Monitoring & Supporting

A COVID-19 Response Team/Coordinator/Officer must be appointed to ensure new procedures are adhered to.

Adherence to this protocol will only be achieved if employers and workers have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this protocol in their place of work. A collaborative approach to the implementation of the protocol is essential to achieve success and maximum buy in.

Each workplace should appoint at least one lead worker representative charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their workplace. The person(s) undertaking the role must receive the necessary training and have a structured framework to follow within the organisation to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus. Further information and a short online course on the role of [Lead Worker Representative](#) can be found on the HSA website.

Employers should have regular and meaningful engagement with their worker representative, workers and/or their recognised Trade Union or other representative (including health and safety committee where it exists) about the measures being put in place to address the occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Employers should provide COVID-19 induction training for all workers on their return.

The number of worker representatives for COVID-19 appointed should, ideally, be proportionate to the number of workers in the workplace and this person(s) should be clearly identifiable in the workplace. Employers and worker representatives will work together to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Section 3 of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) sets out the steps for employers and workers to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

These provisions include:

- Consulting with the workplace representatives in the development of a COVID-19 response plan.
- Amending policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Developing, consulting, communicating and implementing workplace changes or policies. Specific reference is made to agreeing with workers any temporary restructuring of work patterns that may be required to implement the COVID-19 prevention measures in the workplace. There is also provision for the lead worker representative to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

For a more comprehensive list of symptoms of COVID-19, please click [HERE](#).

Policies & Processes

Spa owners and management need to review all business policies and standard operating procedures across each department to reflect operational changes. In particular, this means:

- Defining and documenting a clear plan of action in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 among the various types of guests i.e. hotel, day spa, salon guest, and/or employee. Information can be found in the [Work Safely Protocol](#).
- Develop a policy and process in line with the Work safely Protocol to prepare your business for management of a case or cases (outbreak) of COVID-19 in the workplace. [Ref. section 9 of the Work Safely Protocol](#).

- An outbreak of COVID-19 is when two or more cases of the disease are linked by time, place or person. The management of an outbreak is managed by the local Departments of Public Health to enable the outbreak to be brought under control as quickly as possible. It also requires close engagement and cooperation between the employer, the LWR, the staff, representatives and in particular with the worker(s) affected. Outbreaks in a single workplace, which are not managed and brought under control quickly, can rapidly spread to other workplaces and/or the wider community. Continuous and effective communication between all parties is essential
- Defining and documenting the correct and appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This must be in line with the Government's Public Health advice.
- Developing/updating current policy for the care of employee uniforms to ensure they are clear on the standards of appearance/dress expected while at work.
- Reviewing and updating cancellation and refund policies in line with business requirements.

Communication

You must share the plan with all employees, as well as changes to other policies, e.g. sick leave policies, prior to them returning to work. If it is updated at any time, you must make sure everyone knows what has changed.

Provide guidelines to employees on how they must communicate the Action Plan to guests will ensure everyone gives the same message and there is no inconsistency.

Make sure an up-to-date list of the contact information of all employees, including emergency telephone numbers, is always readily available.

Regularly review all COVID-19 related signage and notices throughout the premises to ensure they display the latest Public Health advice from Government. Signs must be placed in prominent and relevant positions, be legible and, where appropriate, be offered in [multiple languages](#).

Downloading and using the [HSE COVID-19 tracker app](#) is also an important measure that can be adopted. Employers should provide advice on the tracker and encourage workers to download. Workers should download as it can be used for contact tracing purposes in and out of the workplace.

Training

Spa owners and/or management must inform all employees of the measures being adopted to manage the threat of COVID-19. Use the most appropriate training channels to do this and ensure that employees are aware that they must not attend work if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 such as coughing or shortness of breath. Instead, they must seek medical attention.

There is an obligation on employers to ensure that employees are aware that they must not attend work if they have symptoms. This is essential to ensure that the virus does not spread.

You must organise information briefings to cover all the basic protective measures against COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease. In particular, make sure you cover:

- Cleaning/disinfection protocols
- Employee health and what to do if feeling unwell
- Unwell guest/dealing with suspected cases/liasing with authorities.
- Hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures
- Correct use of PPE

If training is needed for specific procedures or if your business has specific requirements, it must be included in the training programme.

First Aid Responders may require further training in light of COVID-19.

For a more comprehensive list of symptoms of COVID-19, please click [HERE](#).

Cleaning & Frequency

Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as counter tops, work equipment and door handles are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.

Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning and disinfecting must be performed at least twice per day.

Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals. Further information on cleaning in non-healthcare settings is available from the ECDC [HERE](#) or from the Government [HERE](#).

Ventilation / Air Conditioning

Where possible, windows and doors should be opened on a regular basis to allow for a flow of air throughout the property. When rooms are being cleaned, windows and/or doors where appropriate, should be opened. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure security and safety measures.

Further information regarding air conditioning and ventilation can be found in Section 5.d of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) as well as [Appendix 1](#).

Staffing Resources

Spa owners/management should review rotas in line with The Work Safely Protocol, subsection 3 which provides that full consultation on these matters is required to ensure sufficient employees are available to maintain physical distancing while completing the tasks to the required standards. Employee scheduling must ensure more time is allocated for cleaning and encourage employees to work alone if possible.

Further information can be found [HERE](#)

To achieve this, you should:

- Allocate specific treatment rooms to each employee where possible.
- Implement phased shifts, where possible.
- Schedule small teams.
- Keep the same team combinations where possible to limit employee interaction. This will assist should contact tracing be required.

You will also need to plan for the impact of employee absences; this may involve reallocating employees from non-essential tasks. Where appropriate, cross-training employees will help maintain staffing levels on your premises. Employees who have not had close contact with a confirmed case should continue taking the usual precautions and attend work as usual.

Further information on [close contacts](#), [casual contacts](#) and testing is available from the HSE website.

If you cannot ensure that employees stay 2 metres* apart at all times, you must apply the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

3. Employee & Guest Health

The health and safety of employees and guests is the number one priority for the owner of the business. The following steps will help ensure everyone remains fit and well:

Face Coverings / Masks

Following the HPSC Evidence Summary on the “Efficacy of visors compared with masks in the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 in non-healthcare settings”, Tourism and Hospitality businesses should consider the following recommendations:

- In public settings, expert opinion and international guidance generally favours cloth face coverings over visors or shields.
- There is a rationale and laboratory evidence favouring cloth face coverings over visors where the wearer is at a higher level (standing) than those potentially exposed at a lower level (sitting). This is extremely important for food and beverage service businesses.
- Visors reduce exposure to a certain extent when compared to no face covering and may be considered an alternative in certain circumstances where an individual is unable to wear a face mask. Click [HERE](#) for more information.
- If visors are used, they should cover the entire face (above the eyes to below the chin and wrap around from ear to ear) and be correctly applied.
- Further information on the handling and care of visors can be found [HERE](#)

Wearing a face covering/mask helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is strongly recommended to wear a face covering/mask in situations where physical distancing is difficult. Face masks are always **in addition** to, and never a substitute for, other Public Health measures including physical distancing, [hand hygiene](#) and practising appropriate respiratory etiquette.

Government Public Health advice states that face coverings/masks must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres* is not possible.

Under [current legislation](#), management and employees in customer facing roles, who engage in or carry out work relating to the preparation of, or service of, food or beverages for consumption on the premises must wear a face covering.

There are cases where people may be unable to wear a face covering and this is deemed as a reasonable excuse. For details on what constitutes a reasonable excuse see [HERE](#). Businesses must ensure that they are familiar with the various reasons why an employee or customer may not be required to wear a face covering/mask, further details can be found [HERE](#).

The [Work Safely Protocol](#) states that face coverings/masks are recommended in public areas in buildings, including receptions/foyers and also when moving throughout buildings/facilities.

As part of your business risk assessment, you should determine the requirement for face masks in all individual business activities. The [Work Safely Protocol](#) states that in settings where 2 metre employee separation cannot be ensured then face masks should be made available to employees in line with Public Health advice.

Ensure that guests are clearly informed of your own business policy and government regulations regarding face masks in advance of arrival. Employers and employees must keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice issued regarding face masks.

Guests must wear a face covering / mask when visiting the Nail or Hair salon areas of the spa or any retail area within the premises.

A face covering should cover your nose and mouth, go under your chin, fit snugly against the side of the face with no visible gaps and be secured with ties or ear loops. For more information on the safe use, storage and disposal of face coverings/masks, please click [HERE](#).

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing guidelines (in line with Government’s Public Health advice) must be incorporated into the Action Plan for each area of the business. Specific areas must also comply with mandatory capacity limits.

Guest must be advised to stand at least 2 metres* away from other groups of people who are not from the same household. Careful consideration needs to be given when standing in queues, using communal areas, using elevators, stairs or moving around the attraction.

Seating and other furniture in public areas and physical layouts, must be rearranged to ensure appropriate distancing. Ensure there are systems in place to prevent intermingling in communal areas (e.g. entrances, exits, relaxation areas, toilet facilities). The same guidelines apply to employees: they must be reminded not to touch their faces and stand at least 2 metres* away from guests and other employees whenever possible.

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

Employee Physical Distancing

If you cannot arrange for employees to keep a distance of 2 metres* apart at all times, alternative protective measures must be put in place.

Minimise any direct employee contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids such as hand sanitisers, wipes, etc. Ensure these are readily accessible so employees can perform hand hygiene as soon as a task is complete.

Make face masks available to employees in line with Public Health advice. You should note that wearing masks is not a substitute for the other measures outlined above.

Providing Hand Sanitisers

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all, at each access point. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based.

When choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against COVID-19. Further information on hand sanitisers is available on page 41 of the Work Safely Protocol, found [HERE](#).

Contact Tracing

Keep contact tracing records for guests. Explain that the reason for keeping these records is to provide them to Public Health for contact tracing in the event that someone becomes ill with COVID-19.

Details must be securely retained for 28 days and be compliant with GDPR.

Signage

You must display appropriate COVID-19 signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures throughout your property. Where feasible, television screens and monitors can communicate these messages in reception and public areas.

Employee & Guest Health Concerns

When they return to work, employees must be trained on what to do if they or a guest becomes unwell. Employers and employees must follow the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

When dealing with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 among employees, follow the Work Safely Protocol.

If management is alerted to a suspected case of COVID-19 in the business, a clinician from a local medical centre should be contacted. The clinician will advise on the next steps. Further information is available on the HSE website and also on page 5 of the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Where possible in a day spa environment, have a designated isolation area available until the guest is able to safely return home and self-isolate. Details on how to manage the designated isolation area/room can be found in the Overall Guidelines for re-opening [HERE](#).

Note: Your reception desk needs to have the telephone numbers of the health authorities, medical centres plus public and private hospitals readily available in case a guest or employee falls ill. For a full list of Dept of Public Health contact details, please see [HERE](#).

Employers must ensure all employees submit their pre-return to work form before they return to work. For further details relating to what information should be obtained, please refer to Section 3.D4 of the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Advice is available to business owners and employees on how to support your wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis. Wellbeing supports can be viewed on the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Support Hub [HERE](#)

Isolation Area

If possible, identify an area/room on the premises where any guest or employee showing possible COVID-19 symptoms can be isolated from other people. From there, the individual can travel home to seek medical attention elsewhere. It is essential to clean and disinfect this isolation area thoroughly after it has been used.

Further information is available in the Overall Guidelines for Re-opening of All Sectors, found [HERE](#).

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4. Spa Owner & Employee Responsibilities

The effective delivery of the Action Plan depends on the professionalism, conduct and behaviour of the Spa owner/management and employees. Paying attention to the following issues is especially important:

Hand Hygiene

Correct hand hygiene practices are vital to help minimise the spread of infections including COVID-19.

This involves hand washing with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, or the use of hand sanitiser (if hands are visibly clean), as required and frequently.

Hands must be washed as often as necessary and always:

- Before starting work
- Before and after each spa treatment
- Before eating
- After handling waste
- After cleaning duties including sweeping/mopping, etc.
- After using the toilet
- After blowing nose, sneezing or coughing
- After eating, drinking or smoking
- After handling money
- At the end of a shift

This list is not exhaustive.

For additional COVID-19 hand hygiene measures, hands must be washed before putting on or after removing PPE.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information from the HSE.

COVID-19 Training

All employees should receive specific training on COVID-19 safety and cleaning protocols as well as SOPs and processes. This should be particularly comprehensive for team members in frequent direct contact; beauty therapist, nail technician, etc.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

If required by their roles, appropriate PPE must be worn by employees. You must assess each section of the Spa to decide what is needed. Training on how to properly use, apply and dispose of all PPE is also essential. As part of the business risk assessment consideration needs to be given to the level of PPE required for various tasks e.g. hands on therapies such as facial treatments and massage treatments.

Further information on PPE is available [HERE](#)

In the context of COVID-19 risk, employers should check the [HPSC website](#) regularly for updates regarding use of recommended PPE.

Employee Welfare Facilities & Timekeeping

On their return to work, employers and employees must follow the [Work Safely Protocol](#). Employers must ensure all employees submit their pre-return to work form before they return for work. Further details relating to what information should be obtained is available [HERE](#) for more information

It is also essential to display prominent signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene as well as physical distancing back of house.

Employee welfare facilities (such as employee areas and locker rooms) need to be re-organised to suit physical distancing measures and be frequently cleaned and disinfected. Staggered start times and break times can also be very helpful and you must review the use of clocking-in machines.

Staff meetings should be held online if possible. If physical meetings need to take place, physical distancing measures must be taken.

Reception Area

Your reception area must always have a medical kit available that includes:

- Germicidal disinfectant/wipes for surface cleaning tissues.
- Face masks/goggles or visors. Note that disposable face masks can only be used once.
- Gloves (disposable).
- Protective apron (disposable).
- Biohazard disposable waste bags.

5. Physical Distancing

The Spa owner or management needs to meet Public Health advice on maintaining physical distancing of 2 metres* between people. Physical distancing of 2 metres* does not apply to members of the same household.

Capacity Management

The capacity of your business must be reviewed prior to re-opening and at all times when your business is operational. Overall capacity will depend on the size of the floor space within the premises where guests will be seated.

Seating layout need to be reviewed to ensure the recommended physical distancing and other protective measures can be strictly adhered to.

The employee and guest flow of the business must be carefully managed, particularly at entrances, exits and other areas where guests might potentially congregate but are not permitted to do so.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures subject to the current Public Health advice](#) in relation to capacity management. Physical distancing measures required throughout your business are outlined below.

Queuing

Any area where guests or employees queue must be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing. This includes reception, public and employee areas.

Reception Area

Where possible, employees should be separated from each other at reception workstations.

It is the responsibility of supervisors and managers to ensure that guests do not congregate in groups. Where physical distancing is not physically possible, the business must provide an alternative e.g. a physical barrier.

Treatment Rooms

Where physical distancing protocols cannot be maintained, alternative measures such as face visors, masks and screens must be in place as well as strict hand hygiene measures to ensure guest and employee safety throughout the guests visit.

Toilets & Changing Room(s)

Where practical, provide one-way entry and exit routes to the changing rooms. To ensure physical distancing, consider the following:

- Encouraging the use of alternate sinks.
- If there are a significant number of showers, close off alternate shower cubicles.
- Create schedules for smaller blocks and manage these during busy periods.

Nail Bar & Pedicure Lounge

Preview the capacity of your manicure and pedicure lounge to determine how many workstations can be realistically occupied at one time while incorporating current physical distancing requirements as outlined by the Government's Public Health advice.

Laundry Room

Limit the number of employees using laundry facilities to ensure that physical distancing is possible.

Install clear markings to minimise contact between employees. Install signage in visible locations that refers to COVID-19 physical distancing measures.

Back of House

Physical distancing protocols also need to apply in employee areas, shared office spaces, employee locker rooms and other relevant facilities for all employees.

Timekeeping Facilities

If you use clocking-in machines, a strenuous cleaning regime must be put in place to ensure all touch points are regularly cleaned, followed by disinfecting.

If queuing takes place at the machine, have clear floor markings that illustrate the recommended physical distancing between employees.

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

6. The Guest Journey – Arrival & Departure

To follow the Government’s Public Health advice throughout the guest journey, businesses must minimise the number of access points for arriving and departing guests. Each access point must be equipped with hand sanitiser, along with signage instructing all guests to use it as they enter and leave.

Spa Bookings/Online Bookings

A Spa’s website must be kept fully up-to-date with current COVID-19 safety information, updated prices and an explanation on how to book a treatment. Guests may find it reassuring to read about the additional rigorous cleaning procedures the business adapted to keep them safe.

Where possible, a COVID-19 Declaration should be added to the booking protocol as well as any policy updates or changes to cancellation. Each guest should receive a ‘Welcome and Safety Information’ explaining what is expected of them when interacting with employees and other guests. Each guest should receive an email or SMS prior to arrival outlining what they can expect upon arrival.

Arrival by Taxi, Drop Off or Parking on the Property

Before they book, and when they arrive, guests must be informed of the guidelines that apply. Details of the COVID-19 preventative policies and protocols that you have in place should be outlined in detail on booking, as well as on online platforms, marketing or via email. This information must also be outlined in all public areas. This information may include:

- Physical distancing measures,
- Hand and respiratory hygiene,
- Requirement for face covering/mask,
- Stay at home policy for any guests with symptoms,
- Cancellation or refund policy,
- [Specific government measures in place.](#)

Physical distancing of 2 metres* does not apply within members of the same household. Physical distancing is required between individuals that are not from the same household.

You should consider evaluating and adjusting appointment schedules to allow implementation of updated cleaning and disinfecting practices of treatment rooms, workstations at nail bars, etc.

Review booking times to help reduce large queues of guests arriving at peak times.

Signage

Appropriate COVID-19 signage must also be prominently displayed outlining the physical distancing and hygiene practices that apply throughout the business.

Carpark & Outdoor Areas

All outdoor areas, grounds, gardens, greens, verges, roads and car parking areas within the property must be kept clean and well maintained.

This means ensuring that lidded bins are available for the disposal of gloves, masks, tissues, etc. that may be contaminated. You must ensure all rubbish bags are disposed of in an appropriate external facility such as a waste removal skip.

Payment

Guests should be encouraged to use card/contactless payment and pay in advance where possible.

If handling cash, employees must observe the Government’s Public Health advice on hand hygiene measures. If gloves are not worn, employees must wash their hands immediately after handling cash.

Guest Hygiene Amenities

Hand sanitiser must be provided at public entrances and exits and at key locations throughout the premises.

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all, at each access point. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based.

When choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against COVID-19. Further information on hand sanitisers is available on page 41 of the Work Safely Protocol, found [HERE](#).

Subject to availability, hand sanitiser and wipes also should be provided for guest use. It is important to ensure that these are stored out of reach of small children.

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7. Cleaning Products & Protocols

Cleaning products and protocols must be suitable and manufacturer approved for use against viruses, bacteria and similar risks.

It is important to follow manufacturer instructions with regard to dilution, application and duration of use. Management must review cleaning and disinfection procedures within all areas of the Spa and update these if any cleaning products are changed.

It is also important to work with suppliers, vendors, and distribution partners to ensure an uninterrupted supply of cleaning supplies and PPE.

Further information is available in the Overall Guidelines for Re-opening of All Sectors, found [HERE](#).

Public Spaces & Communal Areas

Cleaning and disinfection must take place in all public spaces at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.

Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as reception desk and counters, door handles, toilet and showers, seating areas and other facilities.

Laundry Facilities

All towels and other washable materials must be washed at a high temperature and in accordance with the Government's Public Health advice. Dirty towels must be bagged immediately to eliminate excess contact while they are transported to the business' laundry facility. Where feasible, it is recommended that disposable towels be used.

Cleaning and disinfection must happen at least twice per day and whenever the laundry facilities are visibly dirty, with an emphasis on frequently touched surfaces (e.g. washing machines, dryers, etc.).

Back of House & Employee Areas

Back of House areas must also be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty. Particular attention must be paid to the staff room, locker rooms, employee bathrooms, delivery areas, shared office spaces and other relevant facilities.

Equipment Shared by Employees

Clean and disinfect shared equipment and tools before, during and after each shift or any time the equipment is transferred to another employee. Where possible, the therapist should have their own tools and take responsibility for appropriate sterilisation and disinfection throughout the day, and whenever used following a treatment.

Shared equipment also includes items such as phones, computers and other communication devices, keys, payment terminals, tools, safety buttons, cleaning equipment, time clocks and all other direct-contact items used.

Shared food and beverage equipment in Back of House areas (e.g. kettle, microwave, etc.) need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use. The same applies to clocking-in machines which must be accompanied by hand sanitisers and antibacterial wipes.

Control of Waterborne Hazards

It is critical that businesses review the guidance on 'Control of Legionella Bacteria During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic' and review their own systems in line with this.

This guidance highlights the requirement to continue managing Legionella control to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease.

The following is a non-exhaustive list relevant to the tourism sector of potential sources of aerosols which may contain Legionella bacteria: wet cooling systems (for example, cooling towers and evaporative condensers); spa pools; showers, taps and toilets; machine cooling systems; spray booth water curtains; humidifiers in food cabinets; ornamental fountains and water features; dust suppression systems; horticultural misting systems, lawn sprinklers; clinical humidifiers; sprinklers and hose reels; and power hoses.

Legionnaires' disease can be fatal and hospitalisation is generally required to treat symptoms. With the health service currently dealing with a Public Health emergency, it is vital that employers take appropriate action to maintain and operate their water systems especially wet cooling systems, so far as reasonably practicable, during this Public Health emergency.

For further advice, please see HSA information [HERE](#) and HSE information [HERE](#).

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

8. Suppliers of Goods & Services

Deliveries

- An employee must meet each supplier who is delivering to the property. If possible, delivery drivers should not be allowed to enter the site (with the exception of food deliveries which adhere to HACCP delivery protocols). Employees must not come in close contact with the driver.
- HACCP is in the context of food safety and re-opening only, not COVID-19 prevention.
- If your business provides food service please refer to the operational re-opening guidelines for Restaurants & Cafés on www.failteireland.ie.

Dealing with Drivers

Delivery personnel must use hand sanitiser if required to exit their vehicle and enter the building. Signage must make drivers aware of 1) physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to employees, 2) the need to maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and 3) the need to wear clean protective clothing.

- Hand sanitiser must be available in the delivery area. Drivers must clean their hands before passing delivery documents or goods to employees. They must also be made aware of the potential risks involved in contact transmission of COVID-19.
- Hand hygiene, in conjunction with physical distancing, is also of paramount importance.
- Disposable containers and packaging should be used to avoid the need to clean any returns. In the case of reusable containers, appropriate hygiene and cleaning protocols must be followed by employees.

Entering the Property

Delivery personnel must use hand sanitiser if required to exit their vehicle and enter the site buildings. Signage must make drivers aware of:

- 1) physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to employees
- 2) the need to maintain a high degree of personal hygiene and
- 3) the need to wear clean protective clothing.

A system for recording visits to the site/property by employees/others should be put in place as required (contact log). Ref. Section D9 of [Work Safely Protocol](#). The same system should be implemented for suppliers who are required to enter the site/property.

Accepting Deliveries

- A goods reception area must be set up that is large enough to ensure physical distancing for both driver and Spa employees.
- All excess packaging must be removed by the driver. All outer packing must be removed (if possible) and placed in a suitable disposable unit.
- When signing for deliveries, employees should only use their own pens. In the case of electronic devices, both device and pen must be cleaned and disinfected prior to signing.
- The delivery area must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.



9. Locations for Distribution of PPE

If required, PPE should be distributed at the following locations:

- Entry and exit points
- Office area (if applicable)
- Cleaning and Maintenance
- Treatment rooms/nail bar/salon where physical distancing is not possible between guest and employee.
- Location in proximity to the Isolation Room

Note: Hand sanitiser should be provided in all entry and exit points of the Spa including reception, treatment rooms, laundry facilities, back office, toilet and changing rooms, etc.

Note: All employees must wash their hand as required for a minimum of 20 seconds and frequently (or use hand sanitiser if hands are visibly clean).



10. Employee Uniforms

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The policy on the care of uniforms must be updated to ensure every employee is clear on the standards of appearance and dress expected while at work. For example, they should know that uniforms have to be worn appropriately (in work only not externally).

Consider the use of a disposable apron for employees with cleaning responsibilities in line with the Government's Public Health advice.

Physical Distancing Protocol

Where a locker/changing room is provided, mark floors to indicate available and unavailable spaces that should be used when changing into work attire/PPE. It may be necessary to roster access times for access to these rooms so physical distancing can take place safely.

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

11. Reception Area & General Offices

Appropriate COVID-19 signage must be prominently displayed outlining current physical distancing and hygiene practices in use throughout the Spa.

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

Cleaning and disinfection of the Reception Area must take place at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty. This must place particular emphasis on frequently touched surfaces especially counters, equipment, communication devices, door release buttons, etc.

Where appropriate, the sharing of office equipment should be avoided and each workstation must be self-sufficient with an individual computer, telephone and all ancillary equipment. Where shared equipment is necessary, it must be cleaned and disinfected before, during and after each shift or any time the equipment is transferred to another employee.

Physical Distancing Protocol

Employees sharing workspaces should be grouped in fixed teams that are as small as is reasonably practicable.

In all shared office spaces, the physical distancing protocol must be strictly adhered to. Where necessary, station dividers must be installed.

A designated employee should be stationed, where possible, during busy periods to control physical distancing measures.

In offices where face to face meetings/consultations take place, they must be arranged in line with the Government Public Health advice that is in place at the time of holding the meeting. The length of the meeting and the number attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times. Seats and tables of all visitors must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each visit.

Guest Considerations

Debit/credit card machines should be moved to the front of the counter and cleaned and disinfected after each use. The use of cashless/contactless payment systems is recommended. Online payment should also be considered.

12. Public Areas

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in all public areas to at least twice daily. Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched surfaces which must be visibly clean at all times. These include reception desk and counters, door handles, toilet and shower facilities, the retail area and other facilities where appropriate.

Evaluate high traffic areas that require the opening of doors and determine if they can be propped open to prevent repeated touch, if fire regulations allow.

The following areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day:

- Internal and external doors (e.g. door plates, handles, releases)
- Hard surfaces (e.g. tables, countertops, light switches)
- Stair handrails

- Interior seating (e.g. arms of chairs)
- Exterior seating/benches
- Public toilets

Interior and exterior refuse bins must also be emptied, cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals.

Physical Distancing Protocol

You must place clear markings to ensure that contact between guests and employees is kept to a minimum and to ensure that guests adhere to physical distancing requirements in all public areas.

Display signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing measures in visible locations.

Review seating capacities and arrangements in public areas to ensure physical distancing guidance is adhered to.

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

13. Relaxation Areas

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

Relaxation areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day or whenever visibly dirty. Particular emphasis must be placed on frequently touched surfaces such as remote controls, water dispensers, tables, seating areas, etc.

Consider staggering access to relaxation areas or limit the number of guests at one time to ensure adequate cleaning can take place.

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all, at each access point. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based.

When choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against COVID-19. Further information on hand sanitisers is available on page 41 of the Work Safely Protocol, found [HERE](#).

Physical Distancing Protocol

The capacity of relaxation areas needs to be managed by management to allow appropriate physical distancing between groups of guests based on Government Public Health advice.

Capacity Management

The capacity of your business must be reviewed prior to re-opening and at all times when your business is operational. Overall capacity will depend on the size of the floor space within the premises where guests will be seated. For further guidance on Capacity Management click [HERE](#).

Guest Considerations

All relaxation areas need to be reviewed to ensure that measures are in place for hand hygiene.

Employees must assist in guest movement and flow to ensure physical distancing protocols are followed within all relaxation areas.

Signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing and hygiene measures must be displayed in visible locations.

Remove all shared reading materials such as magazines but suggest that guests could bring their own personal reading material.



**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

14. Wet Areas – Pools, Saunas & Hot Tubs, etc.

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The External Water Testing (EHO) should be completed prior to re-opening for guests.

- All cleaning and sanitisation protocols must be outlined and recorded as well as ensuring that chlorination levels should be maintained at the higher levels of the spectrum range.
- Ensure correct pool dosage levels are adhered to at all times in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Ensure that water testing is completed and recorded every 3 hours.
- The wet area must be pressure washed, cleaned, and disinfected each night. If pool areas are to be pressure hosed, suitable and adequate PPE for employees must be supplied, as an aerosol will be produced.
- The towel desk and all other desks and counters must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- All Jacuzzis and Hot Tubs must be emptied each night, as well as being cleaned and disinfected.

For additional information relating to the control of waterborne hazards, please review the information on page 15 pertaining to [legionella](#).

Additional Recommendations

- Handrails and frequently touched points around the wet areas must be cleaned and disinfected regularly or

whenever visibly dirty. Display signs at Spa reception requesting guests do not use facilities if feeling unwell.

- Regular chlorine and pool checks are required.
- As saunas run at 70° - 100°C, these can be used as long as physical distancing is adhered to at all times, unless notified otherwise by Government's Public Health advice. Please ensure to refer to your manufacturers guidelines.
- Steam rooms run at 40° OR 104°F, these too can be used as long as there are steps in place to ensure that physical distancing between guests is possible, unless notified otherwise by Government's Public Health advice. Please ensure to refer to your manufacturers guidelines.

Physical Distancing Protocol

- Poolside seating must be configured to allow for physical distancing as outlined by the Government's Public Health advice. Where physical distancing cannot be maintained, viewing chairs and seating must be removed.
- A designated employee must ensure the maximum pool capacity is not exceeded. Alternatively, consider allocating a booking system for wet area use per guest.
- A strict disinfection programme of the changing rooms must be put in place and maintained.
- Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures subject to the current Public Health advice](#), in relation to wet area facilities and operations.

15. Nail Technician Treatment Areas

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

- Cleaning and disinfection of the manicure/pedicure workstations must take place following each guest. Particular emphasis must be placed on frequently touched surfaces such as counter tops, chairs, UV hand lamp, inside drawers (where applicable), etc. Where possible, assign one person to a workstation to avoid cross-contamination. If this is not possible, please ensure shared workstations are cleaned and disinfected before switching between employees.
- Guests should be asked to wash their hands or apply hand sanitiser to their hands prior to commencing the treatment.
- Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based. When choosing a hand sanitiser, it

is important to ensure that it is effective against COVID-19. Further information on hand sanitisers is available on page 41 of the Work Safely Protocol, found [HERE](#).

Physical Distancing Protocol

- The capacity of manicure/pedicure workstations needs to be managed by management to allow appropriate physical distancing between guests based on Government Public Health advice.
- Where physical distancing cannot be adhered to between a guests and employee during this treatment, alternative measures must be in place to ensure guest and employee safety i.e. using nail bar screens or visors. If these items are reusable, they must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

16. Hair Station Areas

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

- Ensure hair stations are stocked with all necessary equipment required (e.g. hair dryer, hair clips, hairspray, etc.) and cleaning and disinfecting supplies (disinfectant, disposable paper towels, etc.).
- Minimise any direct employee contact and provide hand washing facilities and offer hand hygiene aids such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc.
- Make face masks available to employees in line with Government's Public Health advice.
- Remove all shared reading material such as magazines, newspapers and books. Guests can be advised to bring their own reading material should they wish to do so.
- All equipment must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.

Physical Distancing Protocol

- In settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained between employees, physical barriers should be in place such as sneeze guards or Perspex.
- Manage physical distancing requirements in reception areas and, where possible, provide one way systems that are clearly marked throughout the salon.
- Contactless payments or online payments should be encouraged where possible.
- Allocate specific times for appointments to allow extra time for cleaning and disinfecting of the work space before the next guest arrives.

17. Treatment Rooms & Service Areas

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

- Prepare the treatment room in advance, sanitise the products, devices and tools that will be used for the treatment. It is advisable to use an autoclave, dry heat or other techniques to sterilize utensils such as tweezers, scissors, cuticle nippers, etc.
- Prepare the treatment table or chair and cover it with disposable towels or washable cotton fabrics that are easily removed and laundered.
- Consider replacing the towels with disposable material where appropriate.
- It is recommended to discontinue the use of facial cleaning sponges.
- Eliminate all the expendable elements of the treatment room to avoid the guest touching items and products that are within reach.
- Provide a bag or a tray for the guest to store their belongings.
- Inform the guest about the hygiene measures carried out and, if appropriate, provide the option to the guest to

have the tools that will be used during their treatment re-sanitised in their presence. This will provide great comfort to nervous guests.

- On completion of a treatment, discard all single use items that have been in contact with the guest. If the items are reusable, ensure that they are cleaned and disinfected prior to reuse for another guest.
- Textiles must be washed at a minimum of 60° for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Physical Distancing Protocol

When accompanying the guest to the treatment room, please ensure that physical distancing is maintained as much as possible. Where physical distancing cannot be maintained during the treatment, the appropriate PPE must be worn.

Additional Recommendations

It is the responsibility of each individual business to provide sufficient facilities throughout the site and ensure these facilities are appropriately maintained to minimise the risk of infection.

**Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

18. Changing Room(s)

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

If towels are provided to guests for the use in changing rooms, it is recommended that towels are provided from the reception area and handed to each guest individually. Suggest that guests can bring their own towels if they so choose if it makes them feel more comfortable. Where possible, it is recommended that reusable towels be replaced with disposable material.

A strict disinfection programme of the changing rooms must be put in place and maintained. This programme should be clearly delivered to each employee to ensure there is no misinformation of the new process.

Establish personnel who are responsible for general cleaning and provide the necessary equipment to carry out the process. There must be a record of general cleaning hours kept.

Ensure that guests are made aware of the additional disinfection and hygiene measures that the business is carrying out.

Physical Distancing Protocol

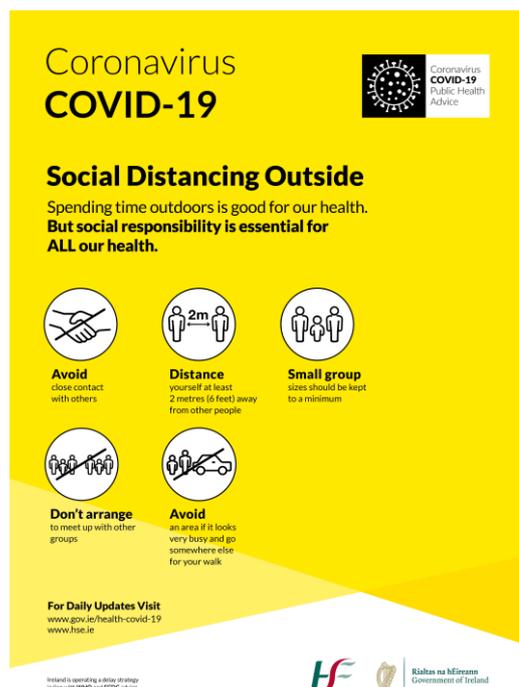
Establish workflows that ensure the non-agglomeration of employees and guests within the changing rooms of the spa.

Within the changing rooms, ensure that lockers are assigned to guests in a manner that facilitates adherence to physical distancing guidelines.

Signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing and hygiene measures must be displayed in visible locations throughout the changing room.

19. Templates & Checklists

The Irish Spa Association have devised a detailed list of templates, scripts and checklists, etc. These are downloadable from their website and are editable for your convenience. You can find these templates [HERE](#).



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Appendix 1

Source: [HPSC Guidance on Non-Healthcare Building Ventilation during COVID-19](#)

Ventilation

The ventilation of enclosed places of work is a requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (General Application) Regulations, 2007. natural (via windows and doors) and mechanical ventilation (Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition systems – HVAC) significantly improves hygiene and better air quality. The ability to adequately ventilate an indoor setting including opening windows and doors where possible is a key mitigating measure to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

General recommendations contained with *HPSC Guidance on Non-Healthcare Building Ventilation during COVID-19 (14.10.20)* are listed below. This document provides an overview of the current literature examining the association between ventilation and COVID-19 and is aimed at commercial and public buildings.

Manual Requirements

Considerations:

- Windows and doors should be opened on a regular basis to allow for a flow of fresh air throughout the premises.

Mechanical Requirements

Considerations:

- Make sure that any mechanical ventilation systems are adequately maintained as per manufacturer's instructions. There is no need for additional maintenance cycles beyond the routine maintenance.
- Where filters are used in the central HVAC system, ensure that these are replaced regularly as per manufacturer's instructions. There is no need for additional cleaning or changing beyond routine maintenance.
- If filters are used as part of a central ventilation system, consideration should be given to installing the most efficient filter for the system (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value - MERV – 13 to 16; ISO 16890 ePM1 rating 60-90%). HEPA filtration should be considered where air is re-circulated.
- Increase the outdoor air fraction of air inside buildings as much as possible. This can be done by fully opening outside air dampers in mechanical systems or opening windows where available.
- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces by increasing number of air exchanges per hour.

- Mechanical fans should only be used where there is a single occupant in a room. If this is not possible, then fans should be directed to exhaust directly to the exterior environment (e.g. open window), to minimise potential spread of pathogens.
- Disable demand controlled mechanical ventilation if possible. These types of HVAC systems are set to only circulate air when a certain threshold is passed, usually the amount of CO2 build-up in the room, or the ambient room temperature. If it is not possible to bypass this system, then set the threshold to the lowest possible setting (e.g. 400ppm or less of CO2) so that the system remains ventilating at a nominal speed.
- Keep ventilation running at all times (i.e. 24/7), regardless of building occupancy. When unoccupied, ventilation can be reduced to the lowest setting.
- Extend the hours of nominal HVAC operations to begin two hours before the building is occupied, and to only reduce to lowest setting 2 hours after the building has emptied. This ensures that rooms are well ventilated before occupancy each day.
- Ensure extractor fans in bathrooms are functional and running 24/7. When the building is occupied, they should operate at full capacity. As with the central HVAC, they can be set to the lowest speed 2 hours after the building is emptied and ramped up again 2 hours before occupancy if the system allows.
- Avoid directing air flow directly onto individuals or across groups of individuals, as this may facilitate transmission of pathogens between individuals.
- Avoid the use of air-recirculation systems in HVACs as much as possible. Use 100% outdoor air if supported by the HVAC system and compatible with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations. If it is not possible to disable the air recirculation system, then HEPA filtration or the highest efficiency filter possible according to the HVAC manufacturer's specifications should be considered.
- While there is evidence in experimental settings that coronaviruses like the SARS-CoV-2 virus deteriorate faster in high temperatures and humidity, the levels that need to be achieved are not attainable or acceptable in buildings. In addition, indoor humidification is not a common feature in most HVAC systems, and would incur additional maintenance and equipment costs. However, low relative humidity (<20%) is known to increase an individual's susceptibility to infection. Where such systems do exist, the advice is to maintain a relative air humidity of 20-60% if feasible.
- Create "clean" ventilation zones for staff that do not include high-risk areas (e.g. reception). This can be done by re-evaluating the positioning of the supply and exhaust air diffusers and adjusting flow rates to establish measurable pressure differentials.



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