



	<h1>Guideline Document</h1>				
Ref: GD:015:00	Guidance on Staff travel during COVID 19 Outbreak - Things to consider when you and your employees are to engage in travel				
Issue date:	May 2020	Revised Date:		Review date:	May 2021
Author(s):	National Health and Safety Function				
Consultation With:					
Responsibility for Implementation:	All HSE Managers and Employees				
Note:	<p>The Government has announced a number of measures to protect citizens by delaying the spread of COVID 19. One of this measures is to stay at home with some exceptions which are outlined see https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cf9b0d-new-public-health-measures-effective-now-to-prevent-further-spread-o/</p> <p>There are exceptions for workers in key/ essential businesses. The HSE is regarded as an essential service and in order to comply with this the HSE has issued the following circular to all its employees "HR Circular 019/2020 Essential Service Under New Public Health Guidelines" https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-019-2020-essential-service-under-new-public-health-guidelines-covid-191.pdf</p> <p>Travelling for work may present certain challenges, however there are steps which can be taken to minimise risk of exposure to COVID 19.</p> <p><i>The information provided is for general guidance only, should you require more specific advice please contact the Health & Safety Help Desk. The management of any occupational safety and health issue(s) remains the responsibility of local management</i></p>				

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1.0 Introduction

It is the policy of the HSE to reduce, as far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with exposure to COVID-19 and acknowledges that some employees may potentially be exposed through their work activities i.e. travel for work to COVID-19 and is committed to eliminating or reducing the risk of exposure.

As outlined by the Health and Safety Authority driving for work¹ includes any person who drives on a road as part of their work either in:

- A vehicle provided by their employer or
- Their own vehicle and receives an allowance or payment from their employer for distances driven.

Commuting to work is not generally classified as driving for work, except where the person's journey starts from their home and they are travelling to a work location that is not their normal place of work.

2.0 Purpose

This guideline has been developed to help guide managers and employees in relation to travel for work during the COVID 19 pandemic.

3.0 Scope

This guidance applies to managers and employees in the HSE who may be required by their job to travel within Ireland (domestic travel) by:

- Public Transport
- HSE Vehicles - shared
- Private/ Own staff vehicle

4.0 Before travelling

- If you develop a cough, shortness of breath or a fever (as outlined on HSE.ie website) you should stay at home and follow the guidelines for self-isolation. You should contact your Line Manager, local Occupational Health Department/ GP or the COVID 19 Staff help line on 1850 420 420 for assessment for testing and contact tracing.
- Be aware of the need to update yourself with the latest information regarding COVID-19 before travelling which can be found at <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/news/coronavirus-news/>
- Based on the latest information, assess the benefits and risks related to travelling, and establish if the meeting /task can be undertaken remotely using technology.

- Employees within the 'at risk groups' should they contract the virus should not travel when COVID- 19 is spreading (e.g. employees 60 years of age, those who have a long term medical condition – for e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer or high blood pressure or who have a weak immune system)
- Hand hygiene practices should be observed before travelling (by washing your hands with soap and water or by using an alcohol based sanitiser). Issuing employees who will be travelling with alcohol-based hand sanitiser is advisable.
- Engage in journey pre-planning. Avoid unnecessary social contact and practice social distancing. Consider factors such as the route taken, the transport required, parking etc.
- It will be necessary to take your HSE staff identification badge / work identification, another form of identification and also a letter identifying you as a HSE essential Healthcare worker in line with HR Circular 019/2020.
- Gatherings should be avoided where possible. Where unavoidable, social/ physical distancing must be maintained (2 m/ 6.5 ft or more)

5.0 Travelling

5.1 Public transport

- If using public transport, engage in regular hand hygiene practice i.e. use of alcohol based-hand sanitiser and maintain the recommended social distance (2m/ 6.5 ft) away from passengers.
- Be conscious of body positioning on public transport. Where possible use seats facing the same direction. If standing, position yourself such that you can maintain the recommended distance away for a passenger(s) and such that you are not directly facing a passenger in the event that they sneeze or cough.
- Where possible avoid using your hands to open/close doors, e.g. use elbows, shoulders. Where surfaces, handles, buttons have to be used ensure that you carry out hand hygiene afterwards (by using an alcohol based sanitiser or hand washing with soap).
- Carry out hand hygiene upon reaching your destination.

5.2 HSE Vehicles

Travel separately where possible (second staff member to follow in another HSE or private vehicle)

The following measures should be taken given the confined nature of vehicles:

- Ensure there is a risk assessment for each journey type. Risk assess all potential opportunities for contact with staff/ passengers (e.g. assisting service users in and out of the vehicle)/ other person(s).

- Advise those requiring collection and/or -any of their house-hold members - that should they display potential symptoms of COVID 19 they must self-isolate, -contact their GP and advise their service contact accordingly such that collection is postponed (if the person is a Health Care Worker – refer to the first Bullet point under ‘ Before Travelling’ section above).
- There may be instances where it may be necessary to implement a method of verifying that the person(s) requiring collection from private residence and their household members are not displaying symptoms of COVID 19 by remote checking e.g. by telephoning or using other similar device, prior to collection.
- Minimise the number of passengers so far as is practicable, and
- Passengers should be seated as far apart as possible to maintain social distancing (2m / 6.5ft at least).
- Where a vehicle travel requires to be shared, ensure as much ventilation is created as possible within the vehicle – open windows to allow fresh air to enter the vehicle. The recirculation setting within the vehicle for ventilation should not be used.
- Follow HPSC guidelines on PPE and infection prevent and control guidelines where there is HCW contact with person is possible either within or outside of the vehicle. Ensure that you:
 - Conform with hand hygiene practices(in line with my 5 moments for hand hygiene or alcohol based sanitiser as appropriate) & respiratory etiquette
 - Driver and passenger(s) (i.e. all occupants) to wear a surgical face mask
 - An assessment of other PPE requirements for the driver and HCW is also required in line with https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/Interim%20Guidance%20for%20use%20of%20PPE%20%20COVID%2019%20v1.0%2017_03_20.pdf

Note: Treat this situation as if one or more of the vehicle occupants is a suspected case

- If there is a passenger bulkhead/physical separation of driver compartment within the vehicle, the driver may not need a surgical mask unless he/ she comes within 2m of a colleague (for 15 minutes or more) or patient/service user (regardless of his/ her COVID 19 status) inside or outside the vehicle.
- Driver to consider keeping a private and confidential passenger manifest for use if contact tracing subsequently becomes necessary. All passengers (and/ or family member) to be made aware that such a list is being kept and the purpose for which the data will be used if required.
- Keep journeys as short as possible (i.e. minimise contact time).
- Information cards indicating good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and any other necessary precautions can be displayed within vehicles.
- Carry out hand hygiene before and after operating vehicles. It is recommended that disinfectant/detergent impregnated wipes/ cleaning products and tissues should be kept

available within your vehicle to clean the surfaces which are most frequently contacted at the start and end of the journey e.g. external door handles, internal door handles, key(s)/fob(s) , steering wheel, dashboard (including driver switches), inside door buttons/key pads/latches (to include window switches/ latches), indicator, light switches, seat belt and buckles, gear stick, hand brake, fuel filler cap and release button, touchscreens/ buttons (including radio and ventilation controls), mobile phone and handset, internal mirror, handrails, chairs and arm rests, controls for lift etc. The type of cleaning method chosen must take into consideration the type of surface being cleaned. Soap and water can be used on materials whose integrity may be affected by disinfectant.

NOTE: The vehicle will require to be cleaned between uses where it is used to transport people from different service area.

- Recording of the scheduled cleaning for transport vehicles is advisable.
- Keep any waste in a suitable lidded receptacle and remove from vehicle at the end of each journey.

5.2 Private transport

- If using own transport employees should travel separately. Carpooling is not advised in these circumstances.
- Ensure that your vehicle is road worthy and that you have sufficient fuel to bring you to and from your destination to avoid unnecessary stops.
- Carry out hand hygiene before and after operating your vehicle.
- It is recommended that disinfectant/detergent impregnated wipes/ products and tissues are kept available within your vehicle to clean the surfaces which are most frequently contacted at the start and end of your journey e.g. external door handles, internal door handles key(s)/fob(s), steering wheel, dashboard (including driver switches), inside door buttons/ key pads/latches (to include window switches/ latches), indicators, seat belt and buckles, gear stick, hand brake, fuel filler cap and release button and touchscreens/ buttons (including radio and ventilation controls), mobile phone and handset, internal mirror etc. The type of cleaning method chosen must take into consideration the type of surface being cleaned. Soap and water can be used on materials whose integrity may be affected by disinfectant.
- Keep any waste in a suitable lidded receptacle and remove from vehicle at the end of each journey.
- For long journeys ensure that you have water, snacks and a flask /thermos and a coat/jacket Remember to perform hand hygiene before and after eating.
- If you do have to refuel your vehicle, contactless service stations should be used where possible. Use gloves when handling the fuel pump and remember to perform hand hygiene when you have finished.
- If you have to use public facilities e.g. toilets at a service station, ensure you carry out hand hygiene.

6.0 Supporting Information

For further health and safety advice or support during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact the HSE health and safety helpdesk by visiting www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing or alternatively phone 1850 420 420.

7.0 References

World Health Organisation (2020) Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19 World Health Organisation

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Vehicles_at_Work/Driving_for_Work/

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

rte.ie/news/politics/20

<https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/campaigns/clean-hands/5moments/en/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/news/title-19806-en.html>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-019-2020-essential-service-under-new-public-health-guidelines-covid-191.html>

https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/Interim%20Guidance%20for%20use%20of%20PPE%20%20COVID%2019%20v1.0%2017_03_20.pdf

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/ppe/useofsurgicalmasksinhealthcaresetting/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/healthandsocialcareworkers/Guidance-HealthSocialCareWorkersWhoVisitHomes.pdf>