THE HEALTH AND SAFETY ONLINE 2021

28-29th April, 2021

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COVID-19
HOW TO IDENTIFY HIDDEN HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK FACTORS

Meet your speakers

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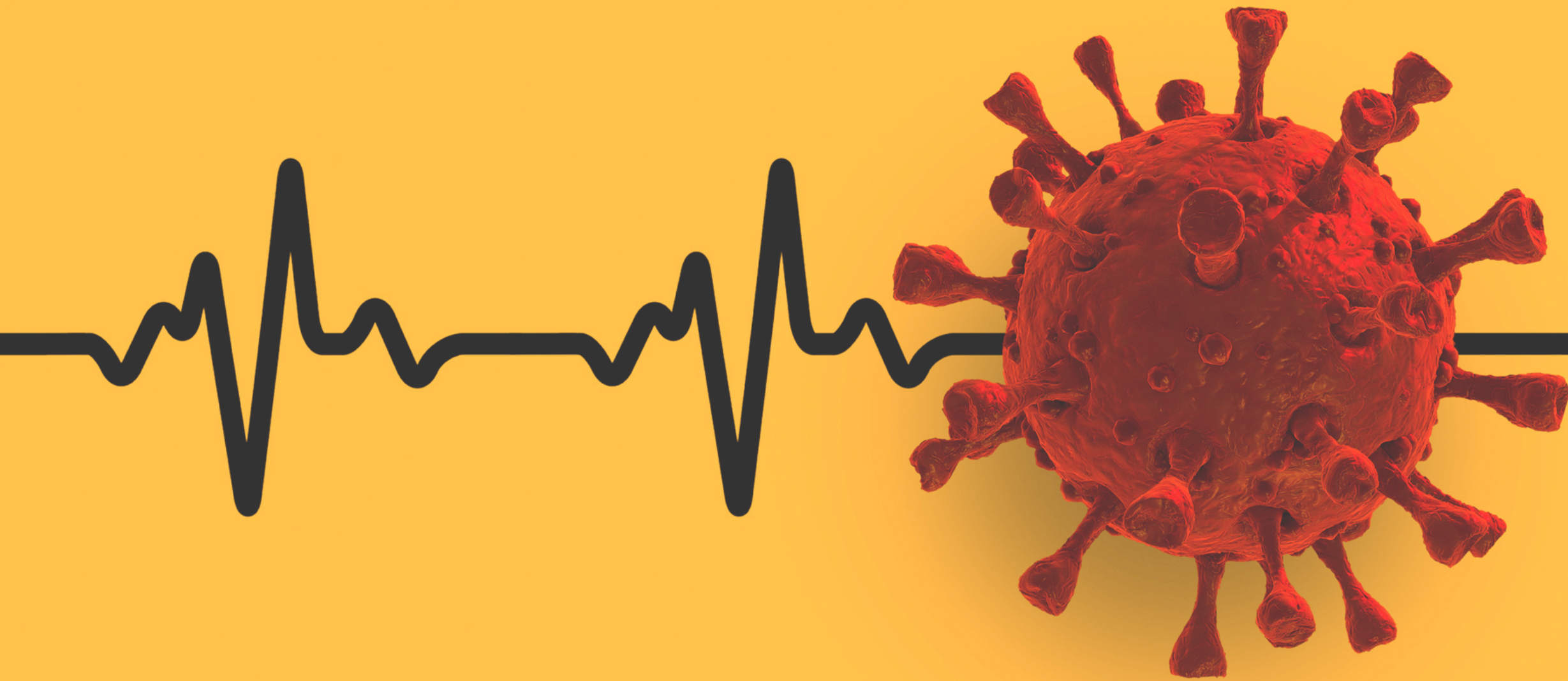
Changes in Government guidance

Government guidance has been being updated all the time.

Main changes from the beginning of the pandemic to now:

Isolation period - was 14 days, now just 10 days

Symptoms - original symptoms were a cough and high temperature, other symptoms were later added e.g. loss of taste and smell

Shielding - on, off, on and off again**...**

Face coverings

Work from home guidance - each lockdown has meant changes to the advice on working arrangements.

If you created a risk assessment at the beginning of the pandemic it's particularly important you keep going back and updating this in line with changes in government guidance.

What you created in March/April last year or even January or February this year, won't be accurate now as guidance changes regularly.

Work from home guidance

Work from home guidance

The Work from Home guidance has changed many times since March 2020. Changes need to be reflected in your risk assessment.

Current guidance:

" **Work from home where you can.** "

But what if I can't work from home?

At present:

- Manufacturing/plant/warehouses - can open if COVID secure

- Construction/outdoor work - can open if COVID secure

- Retail - both essential and non-essential now able to reopen if COVID secure

- Hospitality - now able to be open if serving outdoors or offering takeaway

- Close contact services - can open if COVID secure

- Offices/contact centres - work from home where you can. If work cannot be done from home, can return so long as the office is COVID secure

Part of being "COVID secure" means having a COVID-19 risk assessment in place.

Travelling to & from work

COMMUTING & WORK OFFSITE

Although this involves time staff are not at site, commuting for work and travel to worksites should still be considered in your risk assessment.

- Guidance is to still work from home if possible.
- Avoidance of public transport if possible.
- If using public transport, wear a face mask unless exempt.
- Staggering of arrival and departure times.
- Provide hand washing facilities and/or sanitiser at the site entrances.
- Provide hand sanitiser to offsite workers, such as drivers and delivery staff.

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SHARING WORK VEHICLES

2 meter social distancing is not possible in most cases - mitigation measures required.

Controls to consider include:

- Allocating designated seats.
- Use physical screens.
- Ventilation: open windows and use of mechanical ventilation systems.
- Avoid face-to-face seating.
- Working in fixed teams or pairs if staff need to work in close proximity.

- Regular cleaning of vehicles
- Use of face coverings

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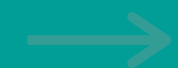
How's your cleaning looking?

In order to be COVID secure, you are going to need an enhanced cleaning regime in place at work.

This can include:

- Regular touchpoint cleaning
- Deeper daily cleans
- Emptying bins daily
- Provision of cleaning products and materials
- Ensuring the competency of cleaners

Do those cleaning your workplace know about contact times?

- **This is the amount of time a cleaning agent needs to be in contact with the surface in order to kill bacteria and viruses.**
- Did you know that the average contact time is three minutes?

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What about the difference between cleaning and disinfecting?

- Cleaning removes impurities from the surface
- Disinfecting kills the germs/viruses/bacteria
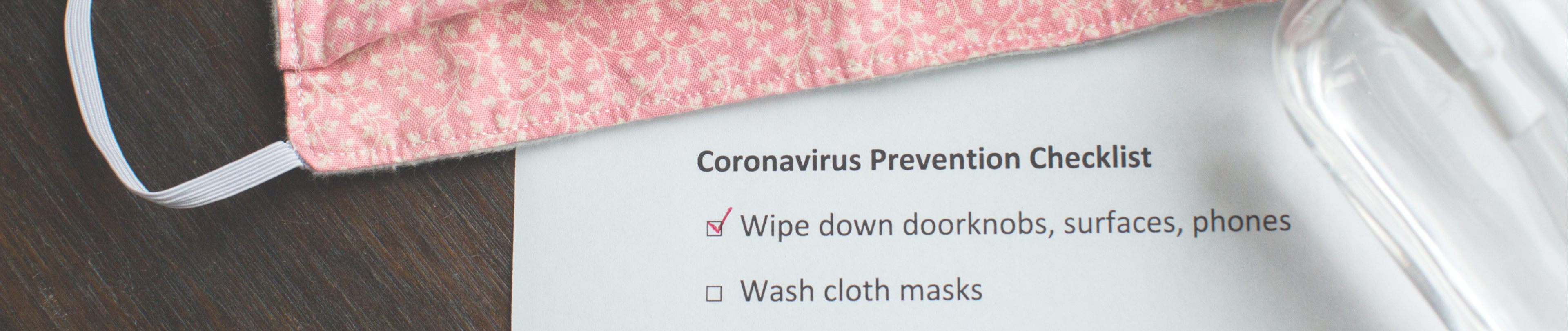- You should be cleaning and disinfecting to control the risk from COVID-19

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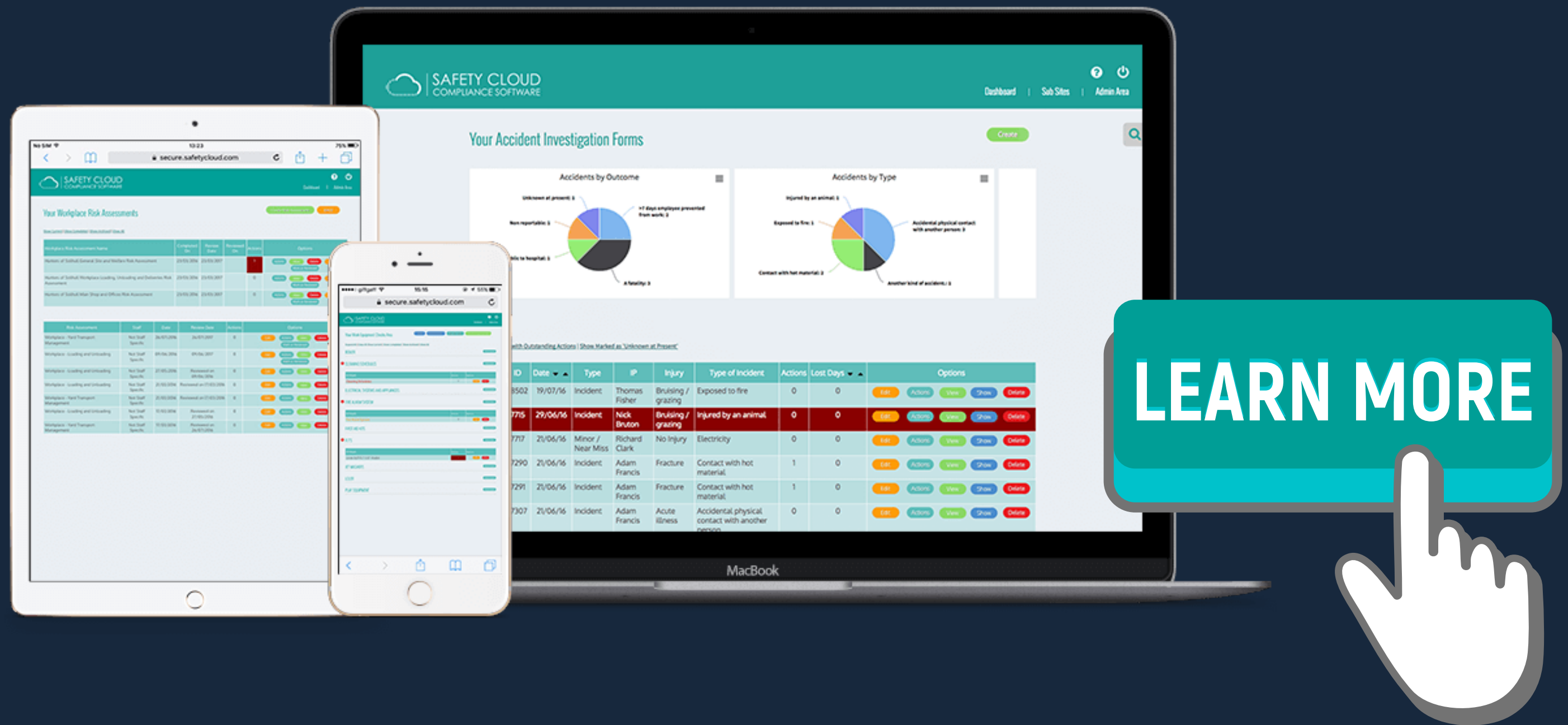# Checklists & monitoring →

Coronavirus Prevention Checklist

☑ Wipe down doorknobs, surfaces, phones

☐ Wash cloth masks

You may implement control measures such as touchpoint cleaning and you may mention these in your COVID risk assessment, but best practice would be to have physical checklists in place as evidence that they are actually being carried out.

A checklist will also help you to identify what it is that needs to be cleaned/disinfected. Often these will be overlooked or missed if they are not part of a formal documented check.

Safety Cloud can be used to do just this!

LEARN MORE

Staff training & communication →

Vital for effectively implementing risk assessment findings across the business.

- E-learning Courses (e.g. 'Infection Prevention & Control' via Safety Cloud)
- Safety Bulletins & Memos
- Signage
- Posters

Following risk assessment updates, keep staff informed of changes to site arrangements and procedures that they are expected to follow.

Clear communication is key!

Issue frequent reminders on key COVID-19 control measures, principally:

- Social Distancing Measures
- Personal Hygiene
- Increased Cleaning Arrangements

Be wary of 'COVID-fatigue', particularly toward the end of the day.

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- Check that staff follow the training they've been given.

- Conduct routine audits and spot-checks to ensure training is followed by staff.

- Challenge staff if non-compliance is observed.

- Speak individually to those who struggle to understand, but avoid face-to-face meetings or training sessions where practicable.

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Office controls you might have missed

When you return to work, your COVID risk assessment should consider the following commonly overlooked controls:

- Use of shared equipment
- Hot desking
- Occupancies for smaller rooms
- Staggered arrival/departure/break times
- Fixed teams
- Workplace layout and screens
- Meetings
- Visitor management

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Ventilation? A common question

Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus, so focus on improving general ventilation, preferably through fresh air or mechanical systems.

Identify poorly ventilated areas of the site.

Indicators include:

- Provision & effectiveness of ventilation sources (natural and mechanical)
- Types of ventilation in place - fresh vs recirculated air.
- Does it feel 'stuffy'?
- CO_2 Monitors may be used.

When evaluating ventilation, consider the following:

- Occupancy
- Time spent in areas
- Size of the areas
- Tasks undertaken in the areas - Can these be re-designed?

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Ventilation? A common question

How can ventilation be improved and maintained?

- Open windows, air vents and doors.

Note: Fire doors should not be left wedged open.

- Make sure you understand the operation of your site's ventilation system(s).

- How is the mechanical ventilation provided? Fresh air is preferred over recirculated.

- Check if enough fresh air is being drawn into the area. Increase the rate if possible and/or supplement with natural ventilation by opening windows, vents and doors.

- Prevent pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces. E.g. ceiling fans and desk fans.

Fire door keep clear

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COVID-19 outbreak management plans

Outbreak Management Plans outline the business' arrangements for if a worker becomes symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19. Consider referencing your plan in your risk assessment.

The plan will usually consider the following scenarios:

- Site contacted by Test & Trace (T&T)
- Employee contacted by T&T
- Employee develops symptoms away from work
- Employee develops symptoms at work
- Multiple cases involving employees.

Ensure key individual understand RIDDOR reporting requirements for confirmed cases of Coronavirus in the workplace.

"
The responsible person must make a judgement, based on the information available, as to whether or not a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 is likely to have been caused by an occupational exposure, that is whether or not there is reasonable evidence that a work-related exposure is the likely cause of the disease.
"

Southalls can assist in determining whether a confirmed case should be reported under RIDDOR and submit reports on behalf of the client where necessary.

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Questions?

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We've dedicated health and safety consultants who love making a difference for our clients.
Talk to us today.

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