



FEBRUARY 2020

CORONAVIRUS

MANAGING RISKS TO YOUR STAFF AND WORKPLACE

In the last few weeks, the news has steadily been filling with reports on the outbreak of confirmed cases of a new strain of coronavirus, known as COVID-19, first identified in Wuhan City, China.

As of 25 February 2020, there are over 80,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus worldwide, most of which are within mainland China, with over 2,000 deaths reported. Currently, there are 13 confirmed cases in the UK.

You might be wondering what kind of risk such an outbreak might pose to your staff and your business, especially if you or your people travel to and from affected areas. In this guide, we're going to look at some of the best ways to plan ahead to manage the spread of coronavirus and how to assess the risks of travelling to other countries, along with some of the best working practices around workplace hygiene.



SOUTHALLS
DEFINING SAFETY EXCELLENCE

ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS OF PEOPLE RETURNING FROM AFFECTED AREAS

As the threat of coronavirus spreading is a rapidly changing situation, employers should make sure they keep up to date with government and medical advice available online. Monitoring the current situation in the UK, along with the risk level, will help you plan for all eventualities.

Sharing pertinent, critical information such as specific advice for people returning from affected areas is vital in preventing the spread of infection and encouraging employees to act responsibly.

ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS WHOSE PEOPLE TRAVEL ABROAD FOR WORK

As an employer, you have a duty to assess the risks of travelling and working in other countries, regardless of whether there is an acute situation going on, as is the case with coronavirus, currently. When planning travel for work in any circumstance, some best-practice advice and areas for consideration include:

- safety and security including personal safety
- health guidelines; including vaccinations
- risk of terror threats
- local laws and customs
- entry requirements
- natural disasters
- driving abroad
- insurance
- means of communication



There could be other considerations beyond these, depending on the country you or your people are travelling to – such as sun protection, travel in rural areas.

Once abroad employers should keep in contact with their workers by ensuring they have a means of contact such as a mobile phone with a working SIM.

Encourage them to keep you up-to-date on where they are, the schedule they're working to and when they're leaving and arriving back at their base.

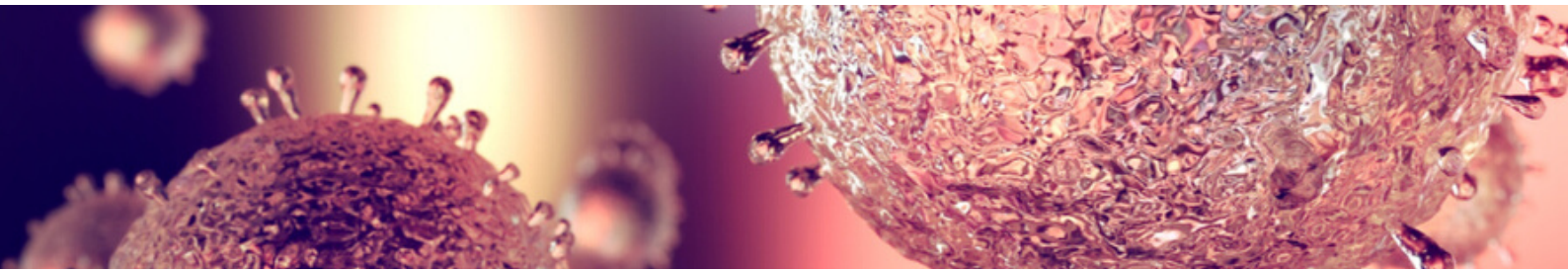
Emergency procedures should also be considered and agreed with all those involved including having a list of emergency contacts.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has published an official foreign travel checklist that provides some useful hints and tips for you and your people to run through and keep in mind when travelling for work. You can visit it [here](#).

SOME USEFUL LINKS

- You can find the most up-to-date government guidance [here](#).
- [This article](#), from the government's Public Health Matters blog, gives practical guidance on self-isolation.
- The government has prepared an [advice sheet on home isolation](#).





ADVICE FOR CONTROLLING INFECTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Good working practices around hygiene in the workplace will help prevent the spread of infection.

Best practice hygiene considerations include:

- providing handwashing facilities and alcohol-based hand sanitiser where appropriate
- ensuring work surfaces are cleaned daily
- daily waste removal
- ensuring that heating and ventilation is in good working order and is maintained

There is always going to be illness risk with certain destinations, including diseases like malaria etc. in some countries, so illness or disease is always something an employer would have to consider as part of its duty of care.

You can view the government's official travel advice concerning coronavirus [here](#).

**AS ALWAYS IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER
QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT
YOUR CONSULTANT OR THE SOUTHALLS
OFFICE ON 0345 257 4015**



SOUTHALLS
DEFINING SAFETY EXCELLENCE