

# Social Distancing

## **BRC Recommended implementation practices for Warehouses and Distribution**

*A guide for retailers on how to implement Government advice*

*Version 3: 12 May 2020*



## Social Distancing in Warehouse and Distribution Settings

On 23 March the Government, stepped up measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus and save lives (detailed advice [here](#)). All non-essential premises are now closed. Online retail remains open and is encouraged by Government, and postal and delivery service continue to run as normal. There will also be businesses that are closed to customers but have to continue to operate warehouses to fulfil intake of stock in transit.

Since then, the UK government published its Covid-19 recovery [plan](#) on 11 May. This refers to a phased approach to re-opening non essential retail which will begin from 1<sup>st</sup> June.

The safety and wellbeing of every retailers' staff and customers is a top priority. Retailers welcome continued government support and clarification to assist managing their workforces. Fundamental to provision of online retail and those with stores still open or stock in transit obligations are the colleagues working in warehouse, distribution areas and logistics and supply chains.

The following outlines measures to facilitate implementation of Government advice in warehouse and distribution to ensure the safety of our staff and customers. Over and above these specific measures there should be open dialogue with colleagues to reassure them and discuss any concerns about the safety of their role.

This guidance has been prepared by the BRC based on input from across the membership. It will be regularly updated, so if you have any proposed enhancements or further input, please email [Elizabeth.Andoh-Kesson@brc.org.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.Andoh-Kesson@brc.org.uk).

This document has been shared with Public Health England and their feedback incorporated. Government safe working advice for [factories, plants and warehouses](#) and [vehicles](#) was published on 11 May.

### 1. MANAGING EMPLOYEE SICKNESS

#### **Government Advice**

*If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in the business or workplace they should be sent home and advised to follow the [stay at home guidance](#). If you or an employee are experiencing symptoms, visit NHS 111 online or call 111 if there is no internet access. In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.*

*If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.*

*It is not necessary to close the business or workplace or send any staff home, unless government policy changes. You should keep monitoring the [government response to coronavirus](#) for further updates.*

**BRC recommendations on how to implement:**

- **Regular and visible written or verbal communication of the government messages.**
- **Frequent reminders using the following:**
  - **Additional signage to ask staff not to turn up for work if they have symptoms.**
  - **Written communication.**
  - **Posters and signage.**
  - **Regular messages to all warehouse staff via noticeboard, intranets and/or tannoy.**

## **2. LIMITING SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **Government Advice**

*Businesses and employers can help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by reminding everyone of the public health advice.*

*Employees and customers should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently than normal.*

*Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products.*

### **2.1 Social distancing**

#### **Government advice**

*All employers are expected to follow social distancing guidance. Where the production environment makes it difficult to do so, employers should consider what measures may be put in place to protect employees. Once staff have left the work areas, social distancing and further hand washing guidance should be adhered to.*

*Government advice recognises that “the practical implementation of this advice will depend on the local circumstances.” The guideline goes on to acknowledge the need for a local management assessment of measures that can be implemented. Businesses can meet these objectives by implementing the following measures.*

**BRC recommendations on how to implement:**

- **Use floor markings inside to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas.**
- **Make regular announcements to remind staff to follow social distancing advice and clean their hands regularly.**
- **Consider physical barriers if feasible, as an additional element of protection for workers.**
- **Stagger shifts start, end and break times.**
- **Limit non-essential movement between sites or areas.**

- Leave non-essential doors open to avoid multiple use. This does not apply to fire doors.
- Identify and clean key touch points eg. door handles, keypads.

#### How to Implement in delivery networks:

- Restrict all non-essential visitors to sites/hubs/warehouses.
- Offer non-contact deliveries, where the nature of the product allows.
- Where delivery staff must enter customer homes eg. delivery of large items, contact the customer on the day of the delivery to ensure that they are not self-isolating or experiencing symptoms. If they are, cancel and reschedule the delivery.
- Drivers should be given full discretion to refuse to complete any delivery if the customer appears unwell or they do not feel it is safe to continue.
- When entering customer homes drivers should ask customers to maintain a 2m distance. Hands should be washed with soap and water on arrival and departure. Hand sanitiser should be supplied in case it is not possible to wash hands.
- Sanitiser and wipes should be provided in all delivery vehicles and at entry/exit points to sites.
- Customer order collection points should be set up to ensure the 2m separation either by floor markings or by limiting the number of customers that can enter at a time.
- Consider limiting installation services to only provide where installation is essential for use and where only certified workers can carry out the installation.
- Ensure all drivers working on installation and in-home repair are fully informed of protection measures. Offer alternative tasks if there are concerns.
- Consider alternative solutions to two-person delivery such as crew consistency through shift rota change (ie same two crew members in delivery) and reducing the need for such deliveries as much as possible.
- Ensure vehicle cabs are cleaned regularly especially between shifts and at the end of day.
- Offer alternative tasks if concerns are raised.

## 2.2 In staff canteens and rest areas

### Government Advice

*It is very unlikely that coronavirus is transmitted through food. Workplace canteens may remain open where there are no practical alternatives for staff to obtain food. As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres should be maintained between users.*

### BRC recommendations on how to implement:

- Staff can continue to use rest areas if they apply the same social distancing measures.
- Notices promoting hand hygiene and social distancing should be placed visibly in these areas.
- Staff should be reminded to wash their hands regularly using soap and water for 20 seconds before and after eating.
- Canteen staff who are unwell should not be at work.
- Canteen staff should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and before and after handling food.
- A distance of 2 metres should be maintained between users.

- Where possible, staff should be encouraged to bring their own food.
- If possible, increase the number of hand washing stations available.
- Introduce a staggered or extended break rota to avoid crowding.
- Space out chairs and tables. For example, by removal or marking as “do not use”.
- Remove sofas from break areas.
- Permit food consumption or breaks to be taken outside of usual areas.
- Restrict number of people using designated smoking areas at one time. Also consider increasing the number of designated areas or asking staff to smoke off-site.
- Frequently clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products
- Consider providing a takeaway service to avoid crowding in the canteen

### 3. GOOD HYGIENE PRACTICE

#### *Government Advice*

- *Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds.*
- *Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.*
- *Wash your hands as soon as you get to work and when you arrive home, after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze, before you eat or handle food.*
- *Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.*
- *Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.*

#### **BRC recommendations on how to implement:**

- Provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water and hand sanitiser, if available.
- Provide wipes and hand sanitiser, if available to all colleagues on site.
- Facilitate handwashing breaks.
- Introduce frequent deep cleaning of work areas, with attention to multi contact points. For example, between shifts, staff change overs and/or during breaks.
- Encourage use of disinfectant wipes to clean all equipment before and after each use.

### 4. OTHER AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

#### **Other BRC implementation recommendations:**

- No orders taken in person on the premises, only online or by telephone
- Delivery slots or click and collect services are offered at the time of ordering.
- Where shuttle buses are provided limit the number of people on each bus and increase frequency of service.
- Review tasks that require two people and determine appropriate way to protect staff.
- Consider whether windows can be opened especially in enclosed spaces

## **5. Regular review and compliance checking**

It is important that any of the measures put in place are regularly checked to ensure colleagues understand and follow the procedures put in place.

Changes since version 2 - 12 May

Page 2: The introduction now includes links to the UK recovery strategy and accompanying guidance.