

HEMPSONS

COVID-19 Risk Assessment

6 January 2021

Sixth & Ninth Floors The Exchange Station Parade

Harrogate HG1 1DY



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Introduction

We undertook this risk assessment to assess business activities during the current COVID-19 outbreak, taking into account guidance from the Government and the requirements of health and safety law.

Employers have legal duties under health and safety law to:

- protect the health, as well as safety, of their employees;
- protect others who may be exposed to health risks as a result of the employer's activities, including members of the public, clients and contractors;
- manage the health and safety risks from workplaces under the employer's control, which includes the means of access to the workplace and any plant such as lifts and air conditioning systems. The extent of the duty depends on the level of control.

Employers are required to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to manage these risks, and if challenged the onus is on the employer to demonstrate that they took all reasonably practicable manage the risks.

The best way to demonstrate compliance with the law is usually to follow government and industry-led guidance wherever possible.

The Government has prepared guidance written by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) with input from firms, unions, industry bodies and the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Details of the local PHE office for notification purposes are set out below:

PHE Yorkshire and the Humber

Dr Andrew Furber, Centre Director
Blenheim House
West One
Duncombe Street
Leeds
LS1 4PL
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The risks from COVID-19 in the workplace

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The main route of transmission is from cough and sneeze droplets. These droplets fall on people in the vicinity and can be directly inhaled or picked up on the hands and transferred when someone touches their face.

How long any respiratory virus survives will depend on a number of factors; for example:

- what surface the virus is on
- whether it is exposed to sunlight
- differences in temperature and humidity
- exposure to cleaning products

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 24 hours, and even more so by 48 hours.

Employers have a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. The UK government has issued guidance for employers outlining the steps it expects employers to take to manage the risks from COVID-19 in the workplace.

General information

Date of assessment

We undertook this assessment on 3 August 2020 and revised on 6 January 2021.

Name of assessor(s)

This assessment was undertaken by Mick Parker, Facilities Manager (m.parker@hempsons.co.uk).

Scope of assessment

Floors 6 & 9 The Exchange Station Parade Harrogate HG1 1DY

Description of site, task or activity being assessed

Access to and from 6th & 9th floors, the main working floors, reception, meeting rooms, kitchens and toilets, on the 6th & 9th floors only

Equipment and substances used

The work involves use of desk IT equipment, photocopies, kitchen equipment, on the 6th & 9th floors only.

People affected by the hazards in this assessment

All staff, contractors, members of the public, entering the 6th & 9th floor area.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment and recommendations

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Fire safety and electrical systems not functioning following period out of use	Employees/ others	Regular checks on fire safety and electrical systems	The landlord's contractors have been in occupation throughout lockdown and all regulatory and PPM checks and works have been carried out.	Commercial Estates Group	Continuous	YES
Water hygiene compromised, hazard from legionella etc.	Employees/ others	Water hygiene procedures in place	Hygiene assessments on water systems & sampling were carried out in June	Commercial Estates Group	Continuous	YES
Statutory Inspections not completed during lockdown (lifts, gas, electricity, fire equipment etc.)	Employees/ others	Statutory inspections (e.g. via insurers)	The landlord's contractors have been in occupation throughout lockdown and all regulatory and PPM checks and works have been carried out.	Commercial Estates Group	Continuous	YES
Damage/ vandalism to building	Employees/ others	Security measures	24/7 keyholder service in operation	Commercial Estates Group	Continuous	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
/workplace whilst empty						
Insurance invalid	Employees/ others	Statutory and voluntary insurance	The 6 th & 9 th floors has not been unoccupied for a long period of time, except for weekends.	AON	N/A	Done
Public & employer's Liability Insurance requirements adhered to	Employees/ others	Statutory and voluntary insurance	Only requirement is that current Government guidelines be adhered to.	IO / Hempsons	Confirmation received from AON insurance 15/07/2020	YES
Pest infestation	Employees/ others	Pest control contracts	Pest control measures have been checked and replaces on a regular basis by building management.	Commercial Estates Group	Continuous	YES
Waste management	Employees/ others	Waste removal/recycling	Shredding services are scheduled for collection once a month	Hempsons	September 2020	YES
Waste management	Employees/ others	Waste removal/recycling	Waste on 6 th & 9 th floors removed by Lee Premier Cleaning	Hempsons	Continuous	YES
Defibrillators/EVAC chairs not serviceable	Employees/ others	Service contracts	Make sure servicing and staff training is current and that sufficient operators are available.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vehicle parking/movement	Employees/ others	Authorised parking areas, traffic routes	Change to reflect any amendments (e.g. social distancing). Provide	Commercial Estates Group	Continuous	N/A

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
			additional storage for bicycles if required.			
Post and delivery management biosecurity	Employees/ others	Arrangements to handle incoming and outgoing post and parcels	<p>All post electronically scanned and saved daily. Landlord locked the doors to the building with a contact number displayed following lockdown to gain access for post, so incoming & outgoing post is handled in main reception area by Building Manager Team following cleaning regime of cleaning/sanitising hands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming into the office • Collecting the DX • Collecting the post • Going in and out of the lift • Going in and out of the goods life • Before handling the post • After handling the post • Before handling/opening any deliveries • After handling/opening any deliveries • Any communal doors 	Hempsons /Commercial Estates Group	Continuous	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
			Envelopes, boxes, delivery packages, are all placed in the same bin for collection to limit the number of times they are handled			
Keeping vulnerable employees safe and well (from a building/facilities perspective)	Employees/ others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEEPS for emergency evacuation • Facilities for disabled staff • Access for wheelchairs etc • Disabled visitors • Young Workers • Pregnant women • higher-risk groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older males, ○ people with a high body mass index (BMI), ○ people with health conditions such as diabetes, and • people from some Black, Asian or minority 	<p>Higher Risk groups discouraged from entering the building, unless necessary.</p> <p>Office induction checklist to be completed by all staff coming into the building to ensure they are aware of the Covid Secure protocols.</p> <p>Review of all arrangements accessing and exiting the office and ensuring all those in the office can observe the 2m social distancing and other Government guidelines.</p>	Hempsons	August 2020	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
		ethnicity (BAME) backgrounds				
Keeping visitors and contractors safe and well (from a building/facilities perspective) and protecting employees	Employees/ others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor information and management • Control of contractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of all arrangements accessing and exiting the office and ensuring all those in the office can observe the 2m social distancing and other Government guidelines • Visits by non-essential visitors will be restricted. All drop in visitors will be required to wear a face covering, those with appointments it is not mandatory 	Hempsons	August 2020	YES
Access and security of employees	Employees/ others	Access control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check and ensure employee access passes still valid. Delete expired passes from system • HR to notify Facilities Manager of any leavers. 	Hempsons	August 2020	YES
Controlling common areas to avoid infection	Employees/ others	Managing shared areas through cleaning and housekeeping processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing in reception areas etc. • Reception and public-facing employees – safeguarding staff (screens etc.) • Cleaning/sanitiser for access control points 	Commercial Estates Group	Confirmation received from the landlord that all measures have been put in place. This will	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cleaning for high use areas (e.g. lifts, stairs, toilets, canteen areas, showers, changing rooms, first aid rooms, maternity rest rooms). 5 hour daily janitorial service in operation • Face coverings to be worn in common areas 		be kept under review.	
Managing equipment to reduce risk of infection	Employees/ others	Security of laptops, company property etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for individual workstation cleaning and sanitising • Bookable desk arrangements to address potential virus transmission. 	Hempsons will ensure supplies of hand sanitiser and wipes are available for use	August 2020	YES
Signs do not consider new work arrangements	Employees/ others	Guidance and instructions for health and safety	New signage for revised arrangements in place (e.g. social distancing, hand washing).	Hempsons	August 2020	YES
Emergency and accident/incident management	Employees/ others	Fire drills, fire wardens, accident and incident reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that individuals' training and certification is up to date • Ensure first aider training reflects necessary precautions (i.e. based on current guidance) • Amend accident and incident reporting regarding reporting virus cases 	Hempsons	August 2020	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for isolation of symptomatic individuals. 			
Return to work post lockdown – existing and new employees, transferees, employees from other locations	Employees/ others	Induction and specific location requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of mini induction for returnees describing all new arrangements • Revise induction contents and delivery • Site-specific requirements (social distancing, PPE, sanitisers etc.) • Arrangements for common areas (lifts, kitchens, rest areas, corridors etc). 	Hempsons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Checklist to be carried out by staff on their first day returning to the office requirements) 	August 2020	YES
Return to work post lockdown – existing and new employees, transferees, employees from other locations	Employees/ others	Induction and specific location requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing (Staying Covid-19 Secure Statement) • Agile working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hempsons • New statement/ policies accessible 	Could start phased return from 14th Sept 2020	YES
Return to work post lockdown – existing and new employees, transferees, employees from other locations	Employees/ others	Induction and specific location requirements	Arrangements for common areas (lifts, kitchens, rest areas, corridors etc.). Induction to be carried out to ensure returnees are aware of new procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hempsons • Landlord will deal with building common areas 	May/June 2020	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Communications to employees and building users are not clear. Guidance is not accurate	Employees/ others	H&S Communications policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure advice and guidance is based on and follows current Government requirements. • Ensure communications clearly describe expectations and feedback routes for issues. 	Hempsons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular communication from the Managing Partner 	YES
Key/essential workers	Employees/ others	Roles during e.g. business continuity processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify staff with key roles; work patterns may need to be alternated to avoid mass infection of key individuals • Allocate roles for business continuity • Procedure for symptomatic or Positive cases defined in FADOC023 Covid-19 in the Workplace document 	Business Continuity Committee	Key skeleton staff in place in the office throughout lockdown.	YES
Employees do not understand arrangements to prevent infection	Employees/ others	Arrangements to protect health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective physical means to prevent virus transmission are considered/introduced and effectively communicated, including: • Workstation safety – unsuitability of hot desks, spacing requirements, 	Hempsons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff briefing 10th Sept 2020 • Email to all staff with office reopening information 	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
			<p>equipment provision, cleaning requirements etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing guidelines observed • Personal hygiene reinforced • Refreshments/kitchen areas managed (e.g. numbers using limited, staggered breaks) • Storage of coats and bags to avoid cross contamination • Use of PPE (where applicable) • Hand washing facilities and sanitisers provided and refilled • Meeting safety (face to face and online) • Shift patterns to be reviewed • Emergency action plans • Reporting illness • Testing/tracing • Accident and incident reporting • Staff made aware of maximum number permitted on site, this could change 		<p>to be circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage throughout the building 	
Employees' new work patterns not	Employees/ others	Arrangements to protect health/ working methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home working procedures reviewed • Agile working considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hempsons 	Return to the office	YES

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
appropriate/ followed by individuals			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting safety (face to face and online) • Shift patterns to be reviewed as necessary • Staggered start times to be determined by dept heads? • Non-essential travel avoided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of homeworking policies 	permitted from 14 th September. General Office and HR to manage staff as required	
Potential for infection during business travel and commuting	Employees/ others	Health and safety policies and procedures when travelling for and to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review travel policies • Encourage alternative modes of travel (cycles, walking, taxis etc.) • Suspend all non-essential travel 	Hempsons	Following current Government guidelines	YES
Employee develops symptoms at Work or has received a notification by NHS Test & Trace	Employees/ others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information statement available on The Hub. • Following Government guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep employees up to date with information. • Employees to let HR know immediately if they have Coronavirus symptoms • Employees to let HR know immediately if they have been contacted by NHS Test & Trace • Procedure for symptomatic or Positive cases defined in FADOC023 Covid-19 in the Workplace document 	All employees	Immediately information is available	YES

Recommendations

Hazard or activity	Action	Likelihood	Severity	Priority	Allocated to	Due date	Date completed	Is the hazard now acceptable?
Travel into the office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following Government Guidelines: Work from home when you can Only use public transport for essential travel 	3	3	9 High	Staff/contractors	Every day	Every day	Yes
Access to the office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand sanitising stations Guidance posters Induction on first re-entry to the office Abide by all signage on site Face coverings to be worn in common areas 	2	2	4 Medium	Staff/visitors/contractors	Every day	Every day	Yes
Use of Workstations in the office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of hand sanitisers in the office Wipes to wipe down workstation at start and end of day 	2	2	4 Medium	Staff	Every day	Every day	Yes

Use of copiers in the office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of hand sanitisers in the office • Wipes to wipe down copiers after each use by user 	2	2	4 Medium	Staff	Every day	Every day	Yes
Use of kitchen areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person at each station at a time • Wait in the marked waiting area for someone to complete their use of an area • Use hand washing guidelines • Wipe any touchpoints with wipes 	2	2	4 Medium	Staff/contractors	Every day	Every day	Yes
Use of toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person at a time • Wait in the marked waiting area for someone to exit • Use hand washing guidelines • Close lid before flushing • Wipe any touchpoints with wipes and dispose of in Hempsons waste bins • Abide by all signage on site 	2	2	4 Medium	Staff/contractors/clients & visitors	Every day	Every day	Yes

Appendix 2: Methodology

We compared the current controls in place for the risks we assessed with the relevant health and safety legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

Our criteria – good practice

We used guidance and standards published to help responsible people with managing risks posed by COVID-19 in the workplace:

Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres. Guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed. Published on 11 May 2020 – (www.gov.uk).

Our approach

We identified hazards and were possible the existing control measures in place. Where we identified risks that were not already adequately controlled, we have made recommendations in order to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

Assessing risks

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on how to assess risks, including a simple technique for estimating risks to help employers make decisions about priorities and safety precautions. It is based on estimating the severity of harm that could be caused by a hazard and the likelihood that any harm will occur. It uses a three-point scale for each factor.

We estimate risk levels by multiplying the ratings for the severity and likelihood together, resulting in a risk level between 1 (very low) and 9 (very high). This technique is suitable for assessing the risks encountered in most workplaces and we have therefore used it as part of our risk assessment.

Likelihood ratings		
1	Low	Where harm is highly unlikely to occur
2	Medium	Where harm is unlikely to occur
3	High	Where harm is likely to occur

Severity ratings		
1	Slight	Minor injury or illness
2	Moderate	Injury or illness resulting in short-term absence from work
3	Extreme	Death or major injury resulting in long-term absence from work

The risk level is calculated by multiplying the ratings for the likelihood and the severity together, resulting in the risk level shown in the table below.

Likelihood	High (3)	3	6	9
	Medium (2)	2	4	6
	Low (1)	1	2	3
		Slight (1)	Moderate (2)	Extreme (3)
		Severity		

The definitions for each risk level are shown in the table below.

Risk level	Definition
High	The building or area should not be occupied, or the task should not proceed, until action has been taken to reduce the risk. Considerable resources may need to be allocated to reduce the risk.
Medium	Some actions are required to reduce the risk. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined period.
Low	No further actions are required.

Recommendations arising from this assessment are prioritised using the rating system below to indicate the seriousness and urgency of the recommendations. They have been prioritised them as follows.

1. **High priority** indicates areas where there are breaches of health and safety legislation and/or where people are at risk. Action should be taken as soon as possible to achieve compliance, or immediately if people are at risk.
2. **Medium priority** indicates areas where there may not be compliance with health and safety legislation or good practice but there were no immediate risks. Action should be taken as soon as is reasonably practicable.
3. **Low priority** indicates areas where the action is not essential but would be desirable to satisfy good practice.

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