

COVID-19 and Social Distance Policy

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Our policy is to ensure that Eunomia Research & Consulting is a safe and healthy place to work for our staff and our clients to visit.

This policy has been issued to strengthen the normal health and safety arrangements and enable Eunomia Research & Consulting to safely operate with the risk of COVID-19.

1.0 Responsibilities

Directors

The Directors are accountable for health and safety in Eunomia Research & Consulting Ltd and anyone else effected by its operation.

Managers

Managers are responsible for ensuring that health and safety is managed in accordance with UK legislation. This includes identifying risk and reducing it so far as is reasonably practicable.

All Employees

All employees are responsible for their own health and safety and have the responsibility to co-operate with Managers and Directors to achieve a healthy and safe working environment. Employees must take reasonable care of themselves and others.

Competent Person

Paul Sidney GradIOSH, MIIRSM, of Astute Safety Consulting has been employed as a competent person to assist in producing this briefing.

Consultation

Any member of staff can raise a safety issue at any time with Managers and Directors.

Training

All staff will be briefed on the contents of this policy and will sign to show that they understand their responsibilities. A risk assessment has been carried out to understand the risk of COVID-19 in our premises and this is also being made available for all staff as required.

2.0 Government Guidance

The Government has released safety guidance for businesses like ours to follow. The aims of the guidance are clear. It is to reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures.

In the context of COVID-19 this means working through these steps in order:

- 1) In every workplace, increasing the frequency of handwashing / hand sanitising and surface cleaning.
- 2) Businesses should make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (keeping people 2m apart wherever possible).
- 3) Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.
- 4) Further mitigating actions include:
 - a. increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
 - b. keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
 - c. using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
 - d. using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
 - e. reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)
- 5) Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.
 - a. In your assessment you should have regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

3.0 What has Eunomia done to meet the government advice?

A risk assessment has been carried out to make sure that the business can operate safely. This risk assessment is available for all staff to read and the control measure have been put into this policy.

4.0 Working Arrangements

Who should be in work?

We will only ask the minimum number of staff required to come into work. The offices are separated into small numbers of people. These will be fixed teams and will therefore limit the number of people that you see outside of your household. If people can work productively from home, then this will remain an option when possible.

If you are in classed as clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable individuals, please let your manager know.

- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals have been advised to stay at home.
- Clinically Vulnerable individuals (those who have the flu jab offered each year) may be asked to work, however you will be given roles which reduces the likelihood of you coming within 2 metres of another person.

If you or anyone in your household show COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how serious, then follow the self-isolation guidelines. Report it and stay at home.

Preparing for Work

If you, or anyone in your household are showing any symptoms of COVID -19, do not come to work.

Make sure that your work clothes are washed and clean so they will not bring the virus into the office.

If possible, shower just before leaving to go to work and change into your work clothes as late as possible before leaving.

Unless you have no other option, do not use public transport to travel to and from work.

Arriving at Work

Practice social distancing as soon as you arrive at the office. Do not crowd around doorways and give each other enough time and room to wash / sanitise hands as you enter the front door. Then allow people enough room to put personal belongings away or at their desk before walking past them.

Ensure that the desk you are working at is cleaned by wiping over the desk and other surfaces you will touch with a cleaning wipe. Touchpoints such as door handles, printers, kitchen area should be wiped clean at regular intervals.

When it is possible to open windows and doors then do so. Ventilation and fresh air will reduce the likelihood of passing COVID-19 around the office if it is present.

At Work

Whilst at work, stay two metres away from each other as and from visitors and contractors. There will be times where this may not be possible, such as in confined spaces or when you must discuss the details on a work matter. In these instances, wear a face covering and keep the time together as short as possible.

You must wash your hands or use hand sanitiser more regularly whilst at work. A hand wash should be at least 20 seconds long to ensure that any virus on the hands is washed off. Do not touch your face, the virus most easily enters the body through the mouth, nose, and eyes by being transferred from the hands.

Restrict the number of people in the office at any time if it looks like social distancing might become an issue. Staff will not be seated at all the desks to ensure that there is spacing between people sat working. If other people need to enter the office, the two-metre distancing may become a problem, so always be aware of your surroundings and leave the office for a short while if social distancing is becoming a problem.

Where staff need to work closer, maybe to review a document or help with details on a screen, staff will be asked to wear a cloth mask and work side by side rather than opposite each other. Working side by side is safer than working opposite each other, as breath and water droplets are going away from each other rather than towards each other.

When handling paperwork, it will be very unlikely that any virus will be present, but always treat the paper as if it is infected. Do what you need to do to complete your part of the paperwork, and as soon as you have finished handling it, clean your hands by either washing them or using hand sanitiser.

If you need to pass each other in tight spaces where 2 metres gap is not possible, pass each other back to back. Once again this is safer than face to face as you are not breathing over each other. In general, if passing on the stairs or needing to use the kitchen, let the person already there leave before entering.

Visitor Interaction

Where possible, clients will be met online via video conferencing or phone calls etc. Face to face meetings with clients are really a last resort to limit the interaction and social distancing must be maintained.

People are now used to social distancing from regular updates and shopping at supermarkets etc., so this is not a new thing. You should remind the clients of social distancing, ideally in a light-hearted way rather than harsh and officious.

There will be a sign showing that Eunomia Research & Consulting are following the Government COVID-19 advice and hand sanitiser will be made available for people to use as they enter the office. If people wish to wash their hands then they should be allowed to and directed towards the toilets.

Make sure that social distancing is maintained, or face coverings used when working close to another person.

When handing over paperwork to / from a visitor, make sure you hand over at a point where you can remain distanced. Have the visitor stand back, place the paperwork on a table, then stand back yourself to allow them to pick it up.

If a visitor is of reduced mobility and cannot adhere to the handover process, make sure that you wear a facemask, and hand over the paperwork whilst side by side rather than face to face.

Keep any interaction less than 2 meters as short as possible, and as soon as you have moved away from the customer, wash or sanitise your hands.

Visiting Sites

Site visits are being carried out as much as possible via video or telephone calls. If, however you do need to go to site, continue to socially distance yourself and wash / sanitise your hands more frequently.

Take hand sanitiser and a face covering with you so that you can clean your hands and cover your face when needed.

When travelling to and from a site, only use public transport as a last resort. If you are driving, make sure that you do not take a passenger with you. If more than one person is going, use separate cars. Cycle or walk where possible.

Make sure that as soon as you leave the place you are visiting, clean or sanitise your hands as soon as possible and certainly before you enter a vehicle.

If you are at any time concerned over the cleanliness or social distancing taking place at a site that you are visiting, inform the clients of your concerns and leave if necessary.

Cleaning

The offices, shower and toilets are being cleaned more regularly.

To prevent the transfer of COVID-19, wash your hands or use hand sanitiser much more regularly.

Clean surfaces which are touched on a regular basis. Use an antiseptic cleaning wipe and dispose of it in the bin.

Work services, such as desks, computer keyboards, computer mouse, telephone etc should be wiped clean regularly.

Clean areas where you eat and other common touchpoints more often and ensure that your hands are washed/sanitised just prior to eating, drinking, or smoking.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is really the last line of defence when it comes to protecting yourself against COVID-19.

The 2-metre distance rule, regular hand washing / sanitising, working side by side, back to back passing, limiting numbers of visitors, more regular cleaning and not touching your face etc. are much more likely to reduce the risk of passing or catching the virus. However, there are some occasions where wearing face coverings or gloves may help.

Face coverings have a slight beneficial effect when working inside where social distancing is not always be possible. It slows down some of the air leaving the mouth and reduces the risk of you passing on COVID-19 if you have it. However, if COVID-19 is present in the air, a face covering is unlikely to stop it passing into the mouth or nose as you breath in. Only medical grade properly fitting respiratory protective equipment can stop you breathing in the virus if it is present.

Please wear face coverings when needing to work close to each other (within 2 metres) as they will reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 being passed around if one of you do become infected. This is the type of face covering that you can make at home or make out of a scarf or bandana etc.

Remember that face coverings do not significantly reduce the likelihood of you catching COVID-19 therefore do not think that you become invincible when wearing one.

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- when wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it
- continue to wash your hands regularly
- change and wash your face covering daily
- if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste
- practise social distancing wherever possible, even when wearing a mask

Gloves are another PPE which may provide some benefit, but only in specific cases. Our skin is a very effective barrier against COVID-19, it cannot normally pass through your skin at all and can only enter through the soft entry points, such as the nose, mouth, or eyes where membranes are much thinner.

There are occasions when our skin does not work well as a barrier. If we have cuts and abrasions to the hands and fingers, if the skin is thinner, dried, or cracked through eczema or excessive washing or if some chemicals strip the natural oils out of the skin. Therefore, if you have any of these issues, wear waterproof gloves. These should be changed regularly (as often as you would normally wash your hands) and thrown out when taken off.

Remember to wear gloves if using aggressive cleaning products as the cleaning chemicals may take out some of the skins natural oils or increase the likelihood of eczema.

Minimising contact with contractors

As already mentioned, there are smaller numbers of people working in the offices, however there may be occasions where you have others in the office, working on the building or equipment, making deliveries or collections etc.

During these times, it is important that you maintain social distancing and keep the 2 metres apart. Have people doing deliveries, put the products down and move away from them before you approach.

Many delivery companies have stopped asking for signatures for deliveries as this reduces the amount of interaction.

Treat products brought into the office as if they are contaminated and wipe over the exterior before storing them and then wash / sanitise your hands.

If contractors are working in the office due to equipment failures or problems with the building or fixtures, then social distancing must be adhered to. The contractor should be made aware of these arrangements for reducing the risk from COVID-19 and should be asked to follow the guidance by regular handwashing / sanitising and adhering to the 2-metre rule. It will usually be the responsibility of the Office Administrator to inform contractors of this, unless the Office Administrator is not present.

Emergencies

In an emergency such as a fire or first aid being required, social distancing should not be your first concern whilst evacuating, rescuing, or giving first aid. Deal with the emergency first if lives are at risk.

If you dial 999 for a medical emergency, the call handler will talk you through the steps that you will need to do and will be up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice.