



Safe work – Safe services and consumption – Safe transport

Best practices for all businesses

Confederation of Finnish Industries, EK – 19 May 2020

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Why safe work – safe services and consumption – safe transport?



The coronavirus halted the normal functioning of society in 2020, which had a heavy impact on economic activity and people's everyday lives. The situation has caused great uncertainty and concern. The success of restrictions has allowed us to reach a point where we can gradually start reopening society and restart economic activities.

The period of gradual lifting of restrictions may last for quite a long time. There may also be various stages within this period when restrictions need to be imposed again. **In order to return to a more normal situation, businesses must adopt visible and credible safety measures.** These measures also support people's feeling of safety and help restore confidence: how do we build systems where working, services, consuming and using transport are safe despite the coronavirus risk?

In this guide, the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and its member associations have compiled best practices from abroad and Finland for the benefit of all Finnish enterprises. The practices described in this guide are provided as recommendations and good examples. Each company is free to decide which methods are suitable for its specific operations and how they should be put into practice. It is certain the every business will be able to make their everyday operations safer for their staff, visitors, customers and passengers!

The working group who authored this report will update this guide as necessary based on close monitoring of the situation, official guidance and recommendations and the best new practices.

Contents of the guide



- The first section of the guide describes the best process for planning and implementing safety measures, the equipment and products that companies should purchase for the purpose and any other aspects that business should consider: when the practical daily running of a business changes, its management often also has to change accordingly.
- The recommendations and best practices have been divided into three themes: 1) Safe work 2) Safe services and consumption, and 3) Safe transport:
 - **Safe work** is an aspect relevant to a business as well as its employees: what should each employer consider and what role does each employee play in ensuring safe work and a safe workplace. The guide introduces best practices with examples from a range of different industries so that workplaces in all industries will benefit from them. Therefore, we have aimed to highlight essential safety measures that relate to all industries but also to employees of a service business and to employees of a public transport provider.
 - **Safe services and consumption** covers what is relevant from the perspective of the service provider and customer: what a service provider should consider to ensure safe services and how a customer can ensure a safe service experience.
 - **Safe transport** refers to the services and facilities related to passenger transport services from the perspective of the service provider and passengers: what measures should a transport service provider take regarding public transport vehicles or facilities such as terminals to ensure the safety of passengers and how the passengers themselves can contribute to a safe customer experience.

Step by step towards safer everyday life – the change is a process



1. Plan

1. Assess risks – the risk assessment of each business and location is the basis of all safe work and provision of services
2. Identify and cater for risk groups
3. Plan your measures together with supervisors, staff representatives and occupational health services and organise the management and monitoring of measures. Use external resources if necessary, such as business premises consultants and other experts.

2. **Submit the plan to your company's usual approval process.**

3. **Arrange for physical distancing and obtain necessary materials and services** (e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning services and equipment, signage, information boards, other equipment and support).

4. **Train your staff and other stakeholders** (e.g. subcontractors, contractors and temporary staff) before they return to the place of work and provide the necessary PPE.

5. **Implement changes in your processes and regularly communicate these to all relevant stakeholders.** Remember to inform your customers and occasional visitors.

6. **Monitor the effectiveness of the changes adopted and adjust/change your policies accordingly**

“Coronavirus kit” and service contracts

- **Your company may need to stock various materials and equipment:**
 - Soap and hand wash
 - Cleaning agents and equipment
 - Hand sanitisers/disinfectants
 - Disposable gloves
 - Face masks and /or visors
 - Signs, decals and other information equipment
 - Disposable cleansing wipes
 - Paper towels
 - Non-contact thermometers
- **Your company may also need to review its service contracts and make amendments regarding:**
 - Occupational health services
 - Property management and maintenance (incl. cleaning)
 - Consumables, equipment and materials (purchasing, stock management, deliveries)
 - Subcontracting services, incl. building services and security, reception desk and access control services
 - HR services
 - Staff catering



When practices change, management practices must also change

- When we work under exceptional circumstances, with more people working remotely or in other locations, and when there is less face-to-face interaction between managers and the staff, the importance of good management practices increases in the following areas:
 - communicating clear targets and expectations
 - maintaining contacts both ways, involvement
 - working hours and workload planning and management
 - competence development and self-management skills
- More information about remote management and remote working is available on the [website of the Centre of Occupational Safety](#).



Safe work

Identification of the infected before they arrive at the workplace

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Instruct employees not to come to work if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms. For description of the symptoms, see the [THL website](#).
- Adopt the practice of self-certified sick leave widely. An employee who is displaying symptoms should inform their workplace directly to assess whether others at work may have been exposed.
- Instruct visitors (subcontractors, temporary workers, guests etc.) not to enter the premises if they are displaying symptoms.
- Remind employees to monitor their health (self-assessment) and possible COVID-19 symptoms and contact occupational health services if displaying even the slightest of symptoms.
- The use of antibody tests is to be considered together with occupational health services. The reliability of any tests used must be verified in advance.
- If an employee belongs to a high-risk group (for more information, refer to the [THL website](#) (in Finnish), it is recommended that they contact occupational health services to discuss the situation, after which the employee and their employer can together agree on any changes in the work arrangements.

Ensuring sufficient physical distancing between employees



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Arrange workstations so that they are further apart (may require fewer workstations or keeping some workstations unoccupied).
- Use tape on the floor to indicate sufficient safety distance between fixed workstations and around machinery/equipment.
- Repurpose other rooms and spaces as workspaces.
- Instruct everyone to maintain a safe distance (approx. 2 m) in all situations in the workplace: small kitchens, toilets and lifts should be used by one person at a time, and advise everyone to use stairs instead of the lift, if possible.
- Assess the need to restrict movement between departments and buildings. Introduce restrictions if necessary.
- Create one-way traffic within the premises, if possible, so that one door is used for entering and another for exiting the building.
- The use of meeting rooms can be decided on a case-by-case basis. The number of people in one meeting room should be limited so that the 2-metre safety distance can be maintained in all situations. If the meeting can also be attended online, the number of participants in a meeting need not be limited in any way.
- Particular attention should be given to the safety of face-to-face meetings at receptions and service desks through floor markings indicating the sufficient safety distance in waiting rooms and customer service areas and by installing plexiglass screens between the customers and customer service employees.

Ensuring sufficient temporal distancing between employees

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Organise work so that fewer employees need to occupy a space at one time, e.g. by working in shifts in production or by office staff taking turns working from home and the office.
- Plan shift changes so that those arriving and leaving their shifts are not in contact with each other (separate entrance and exit routes and staff facilities). If there is a break between shifts, this time could be utilised for enhanced cleaning.
- Use electronic tools to clearly communicate the division of tasks so that employees do not need to gather for briefings and can instead go directly to their workstation.
- If possible, use flexitime and encourage remote working in any tasks where this is feasible.
- Instruct employees to take their lunch and coffee breaks at different times and not together to minimise the number of people in lunch/coffee rooms at one time (remember cleaning between groups of users). Also inform the employees that staff facilities and dressing rooms may only be used by a limited number of users at one time.

Ensuring high level of hygiene in business premises and on surfaces



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Review the cleaning regime and improve the level of hygiene and amount of cleaning by utilising any breaks between room bookings, so the meeting hosts or a cleaner can tidy up and clean all surfaces.
- Make frequent cleaning a visible practice and at least inform employees how this will be implemented and what is expected of each employee. This improves everyone's feeling of safety and confidence.
- Clearly inform all users of a space of the cleaning times with, for example, a notice at the entrance: "This room has most recently been cleaned/disinfected on date/time" or on the workstations of an activity-based workplace "This workstation has been cleaned/disinfected". If there is no notice, the next user will know that the surfaces have not been cleaned/disinfected.
- Ensure efficient ventilation.
- Consider whether it is necessary to install more hand washing stations at the premises.
- If possible, avoid using shared utensils in common dining areas and favour meals that are prepacked or served on a plate. The cleaning of equipment, tools and surfaces used by several users should be given special attention. These should be carefully cleaned between every shift.

Ensuring high level of hygiene in business premises and on surfaces



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Make sure that there are disposable wipes and paper towels in kitchens and other common areas.
- Consider abandoning hot desking in open-plan or activity-based offices for the duration of the pandemic.
- Clean the PPE (hardhats, safety glasses, safety shoes, visitor card holders) used by several users (e.g. visitors) after each use.

Ensuring high level of personal hygiene

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Maintain good hand hygiene and coughing and sneezing etiquette (e.g. wash hands with warm water and soap for a minimum of 20 seconds). THL has published excellent illustrated instructions in several languages. They are available in the [THL material bank](#).
- Don't shake hands or hug when greeting someone.
- Avoid using cash.
- Avoid touching surfaces. Make sure there are plenty of disposable gloves and hand sanitiser/disinfectant in common spaces and coffee rooms and instruct everyone to use them when handling the coffee maker, dishwasher or reading magazines. Use mobile apps as a preferred way of signing in at work instead of shared devices.
- Remember that while wearing gloves you still must not touch your face. If you do, you could transfer the virus to your face, making the use of gloves pointless.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser/disinfectant when entering and leaving a public space unless there is a possibility to wash your hands with soap and water.
- Keep hand sanitiser/disinfectant at key locations (near the entrance and places where washing hands with water and soap is not possible) at the workplace. However, hand sanitiser/disinfectant is always the secondary option after washing hands with soap and water.
- Observe the agreed guidance for common spaces and only use small kitchens and toilets/washrooms one person at a time, put your own dishes in the dishwasher and clear up after yourself.
- Make sure that those who have to use public transport for commuting are aware of the safety procedures observed in public transport.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Carry out a risk assessment paying special attention to the PPE required for different tasks during the epidemic.
- Stock the necessary PPE and give user guidance/training to staff members (incl. temporary workers, contractors working in your premises, subcontractor and visitors).
- Take a regular inventory of materials and make sure a sufficient quantity of PPE is always available and in stock.
- Observe official recommendations on the use of face masks and other PPE, including guidance on their correct usage.
- If physical safety distance cannot be maintained in certain situations, suitable face masks and PPE (such as a visor) must be provided for workers carrying out their tasks in these conditions.
- More information on surgical masks and respirators is available on the [THL website](#).

Minimising physical exposure in special conditions and when travelling abroad



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

Examples of special working conditions:

- If a role involves visits to customer locations, the guidance provided by the customer company or private consumer customer must be observed in addition to the safety policy of the employee's organisation.
- If you have contractors or recruitment agency employees, such as temporary workers, working in your premises, they must be taken into consideration in the company's safety guidance and plans.
- Establish/agree on the self-isolation policy for foreign workers arriving in the country for work.

Examples of foreign work-based travel:

- When planning work-based travel abroad, it is essential to establish the situation in the destination country and locality before travel and closely monitor the situation during the trip. General country-specific risks are explained in the [travel guidance](#) (in Finnish) published by Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which include a link to the embassy responsible for the country in question. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs also collects and updates information on the coronavirus prevention policies of different countries (entry into the country, quarantine, use of face masks etc.) and publishes these on its [coronavirus news site](#) (in Finnish).
- It is also important to find out policies for transfer passengers and of individual airlines.
- It is always highly advisable to submit a travel notification to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs before travelling. The company should also be aware of the employee's itinerary, schedule and contact details at the destination.
- Also find out in advance whether the employee is required to observe self-isolation after returning to Finland and what the consequences of this are for performing of duties.

Procedure in case of suspected coronavirus infection at the workplace



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

If an employee at work starts to display symptoms during the working day, the following is recommended:

- Take the employee to a room where they cannot infect others and, if possible, ask them to contact occupational health services and their supervisor by phone or online chat.
- The employee should be in contact with occupational health services immediately, and follow their instructions on the next steps.
- In case of a suspected coronavirus infection, it is recommended that the employer tries to trace all possible persons that may have been exposed to the virus. This supports the tracing of infection chains that may be required by the physician responsible for infectious diseases.

- Communications on the matter must be carefully planned. Also note that there may be personal data protection aspects to consider.
- The spaces that the person with the suspected infection has used should be closed off and cleaned according to the instructions of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.
- EK has previously published more detailed guidance based on instructions issued by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health and Data Protection Ombudsman.
- Links to relevant websites:
 - [EK guidance](#)
 - [Special cleaning instructions of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#)
 - [Guidance issued by Data Protection Ombudsman](#)



Safe services and consumption



Identification of the infected before they use services

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Customers are advised at the entrance and other suitable places that they must not enter the premises if they have flu-like symptoms, a high temperature or respiratory tract symptoms. Customers displaying symptoms are advised to use other service channels if possible.
- In services that take a longer time to deliver, customers are offered the possibility of measuring their temperature with a non-contact thermometer.



Reducing physical contact between people, instructing customers and maintaining temporal distance

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Introduce extended opening hours and inform customers of off-peak hours.
- Limit the maximum number of people allowed in the premises at one time.
- Introduce staggered service hours and deliver services at designated times and locations.
- Send information of your safety policy in advance to customers who have booked an appointment.
- Actively offer and market online and phone services to customers. E.g. online shopping, doctor's online appointments, online meetings and conferences, take away and delivery services, pick-up services.
- Encourage customers to use contactless and other electronic payment methods or advance payments instead of cash.
- Offer customers in risk groups the opportunity to receive help with their shopping and services.

Reducing physical contact between people, instructing customers and maintaining physical distance



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Use primarily spatial arrangements to instruct customers to keep about a two metres away from members of staff and other customers.
- If this is not possible, the cashier tills, customer service desks and tables should be fitted with plexiglass screens.
- Ensure efficient ventilation and never circulate indoor air.
- Replace menus and price list cards with wall-mounted or menus and price lists or digital screens..
- If possible, different doors should be used for entering and exiting. Keep doors open as much as possible.
- Remove items that could transmit the virus when handled by several people, such as conveyor belt dividers, magazines and brochures, price lists, water dispensers and spice containers. If it is not possible to remove these items, make sure they are cleaned and replaced frequently. If enhanced cleaning of these surfaces is not feasible, remind customers of good hand hygiene.
- Minimise unnecessary circulation of customers within shop premises by, for example, increasing personal service.

High level of hygiene in business premises and on surfaces

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Review the cleaning process and raise the level of hygiene and increase the frequency of cleaning as necessary and clearly communicate the new cleaning regime. Pay particular attention to spaces and surfaces that are frequently used and touched.
- Provide preferably disposable paper towels or roller towel dispensers for drying hands.
- Provide or sell protective gloves, hand sanitiser/disinfectant and face masks for customers.
- Increase the amount of hand-washing facilities for customers.

Making safety measures visible

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Clearly and effectively inform consumers of your own safety policy and official guidance through the available channels (e.g. website, magazine articles, advertisements, television, radio, PA systems).
 - Add visual guidance (safety distance, giving customers space in packing area, hand hygiene and coughing etiquette, floor markings).
 - If possible, provide customer service personnel with PPE such as plastic visors, gloves and/or face masks.
- The safety of face-to-face encounters should be ensured at receptions and service desks through floor markings indicating the sufficient safety distance in waiting rooms and customer service areas and by installing plexiglass screens between the customer and customer service employees.



Safe transport



Methods: general points and challenges

- The safety measures adopted and the feasibility of new safety measures in public transport are regulated by contracts between the transport service provider and the contracting authority.
- Some of the practices compiled for this guide were found to be challenging to implement either because of the contract terms and conditions in force, traffic safety regulations and other reasons such as the shortage of spare fleet during peak hours.
- Differences between regions and different modes of transport are considerable, and some of the examples presented below may not be relevant to all operators.

Ensuring sufficient physical distancing and reducing interaction between drivers and passengers

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Examine ways of maintaining sufficient safety distances between passengers depending on the layout of the vehicle.
- Encourage passengers to use online booking and payment services, contactless payments and other electronic and digital applications. Avoid handling cash.
- Make sure all instructions for passengers are clear and visible, as this will reduce unnecessary communication between passengers and drivers.

Ensuring sufficient physical distancing between passengers



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Advise passengers to use all available space to help maintain sufficient safety distances.
- Advise passengers to maintain a sufficient safety distance with all other passenger and staff when boarding, while onboard and when leaving a vehicle.
- Advise customers to maintain sufficient safety distances inside transport terminals, travel centres and at stops.
- Advise customers hiring a coach to select a larger than usual vehicle to help maintain sufficient safety distances while onboard.
- Inform passengers about peak hours and advise them to travel outside these hours whenever possible.
- If a service is already full, ask passengers to wait for the next service if possible.
- Instruct ticket sales to promote less popular services, particularly for passengers who belong to a [high-risk group](#).
- Adjust system algorithms on digital booking platforms to optimise passenger seating to comply with safety measures.

Enhanced cleaning

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Introduce an enhanced cleaning regime for vehicles.
- Pay particular attention to surfaces that are frequently touched and in use.
- Add extra waste bins at stations and stops and empty bins more often (used face masks, gloves, tissues).
- Instruct drivers, transport staff and passengers about good hygiene.
- Advise passengers to take all used PPE (face masks, gloves) with them and not leave them in the vehicle.
- Make safety visible by informing customers efficiently about the cleaning regime.

Clear and coherent communication about safety instructions and measures for all transport users



Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Clearly display instructions for passengers about safety on public transport in vehicles, terminals and stations as well as in digital communications.

Advise passengers to:

- Follow all guidance and recommendations given by the transport operator and service providers.
- Avoid travel during peak hours, if possible.
- If a public transport vehicle is already full, wait for the next service, if possible.
- Maintain sufficient safety distance to other passengers and staff onboard a vehicle and at stations.
- Avoid touching surfaces.
- Observe good hand hygiene before, during and after your journey.
- When reaching your destination, immediately wash your hands carefully with soap and water.
- Avoid all travel if you are ill; if you must travel when ill, use a face mask and gloves as instructed to minimise the risk for fellow passengers.
- If you need to cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with your sleeve or a tissue.
- Purchase tickets in advance if possible. If you purchase when boarding the vehicle, pay with a card to avoid handling cash.
- Avoid unnecessary communication with the driver and other staff.
- Consider using PPE if maintaining sufficient physical distance when using public transport is difficult or impossible.
- Don't reuse face masks, gloves or other PPE on public transport.

Links

- [THL's coronavirus website](#): Information, instructions and materials on coronavirus and preparing for the disease for different target groups
- [THL's material bank on coronavirus](#): communication materials on the novel coronavirus related to hand hygiene, coughing etiquette, keeping a distance etc.
- [TTL's Guidelines for workplaces to prevent coronavirus infection](#): guidelines for employers and employees
- [The Centre for Occupational Safety's coronavirus website](#): tips for remote management, workload management etc.
- [Finnish Government](#) for current policies, please also notice [Ministries' websites](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Act](#) (in Finnish and Swedish)
- [Data Protection Ombudsman](#): data protection and the coronavirus

Contact information

Confederation of Finnish Industries

Markku Rajamäki, Chief Policy Adviser, Corporate Security, markku.rajamaki@ek.fi, +358 405 539 137

➤ **Auli Rytivaara**, MD. Chief Medical Officer, auli.rytivaara@ek.fi, +358 403 567 594

[Member associations](#) that have been involved in making this guide.