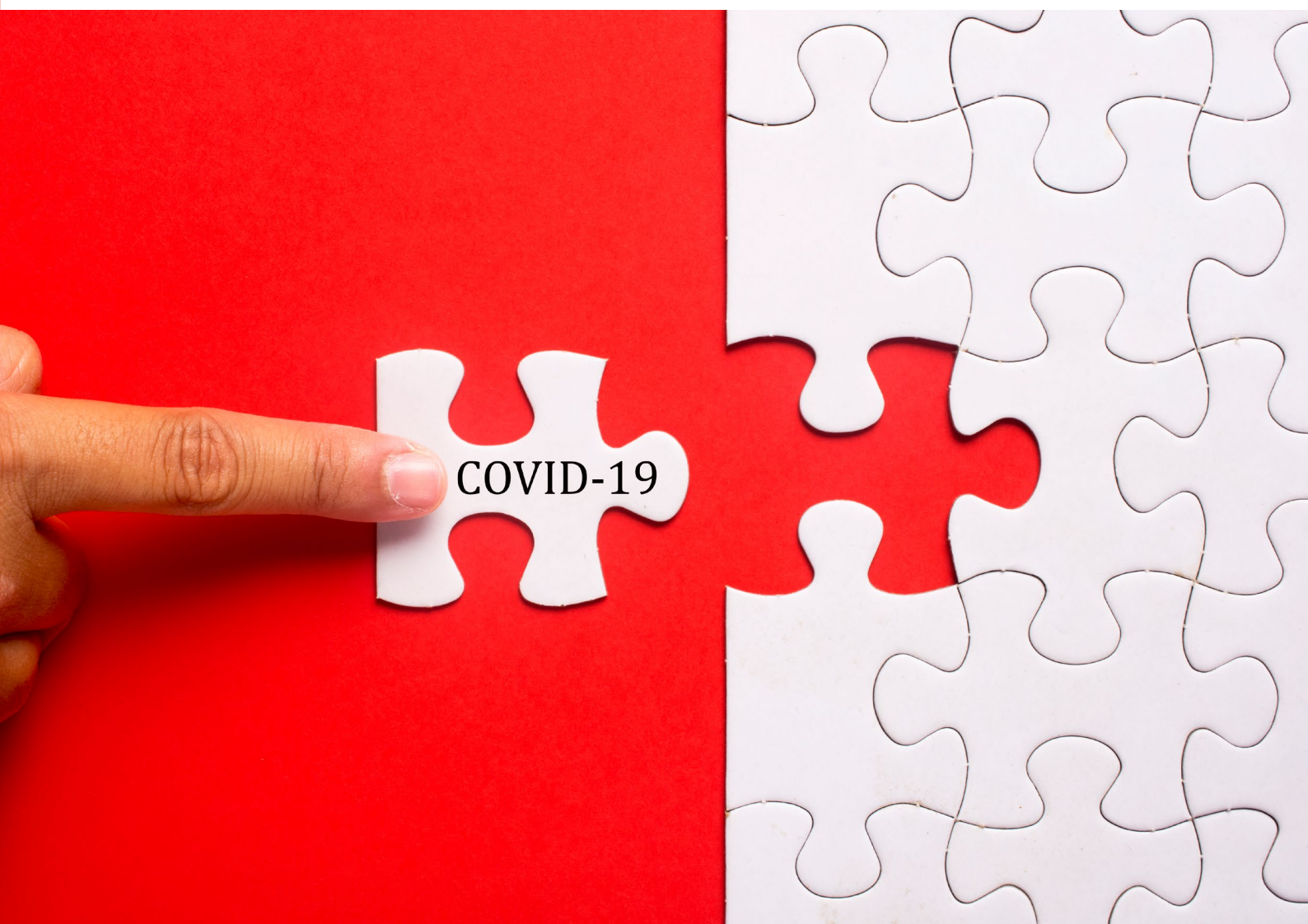


Safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic – General guidelines for organizations

Version 1



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Foreword

The current pandemic has fundamentally shifted the way people live and work. The 'lockdown' that many countries and their populations have been facing has meant a rethink of what was previously considered normal. Capturing the lessons learned as we progress through the phases of the pandemic is crucial. Whilst economic considerations are important, the fundamental principle of protecting human life underpins all economic recovery.

All organizations face questions from their customers, stakeholders, suppliers, investors and the general public. The most important stakeholders for the success of an organization however, are the workers. In order to provide reassurance to all interested parties, protect an organization's reputation and build confidence, planning is crucial.

Building on formal guidance issued by UK Government, BSI has developed this set of guidelines to assist organizations as they adjust the way they work, to protect workers and other people in their workplace from the ongoing risks related to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

This document is not a formal standard, but a set of guidelines, developed at pace, using an agile process. The first version of this document, as presented below, has been reviewed by an expert Advisory Group. This document will be revised frequently to reflect the dynamic situation, taking into account comments from users, government guidance, the level of risk and emerging knowledge.

Each version of this document will be available on BSI's website to provide ongoing guidance to business owners, managers, workers and other users as they deal with the complexities of this changing situation.

Users are encouraged to submit feedback on this document <https://standardsdevelopment.bsigroup.com/projects/9020-04219>.

Although this document incorporates UK Government guidance, the information and recommendations within it are generally applicable to any organization that needs to manage the risks related to COVID-19, regardless of location.

Comments are therefore welcome from national and international users to ensure the document captures up-to-date knowledge and good working practices that are evolving.

In this document, the following verbal forms are used:

- a) "should" indicates a recommendation;
- b) "may" indicates a permission; and
- c) "can" indicates a possibility or a capability.

Version Control

Version 1 published May 2020.

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Please note that the content in this version is part of an iterative process and changes from time to time with subsequent iterations.

This document is not intended to be a single step-by-step set of recommendations. It provides a framework in which the PDCA cycle should be repeated, with all parts active at all times, to enable ongoing continual improvement and ensure the organization responds to changes.

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This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with this guidance document cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

0 Introduction

This document is a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased risk this disease presents to the health, safety and wellbeing of people in all settings, including the workplace.

The UK Government has published guidance on [*Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)*](#). This guidance emphasizes that workers should not be forced to work in an unsafe workplace. The UK Government states that organizations should implement all reasonable measures to manage risks related to COVID-19 that can affect the health, safety and wellbeing of workers and other relevant interested parties.

This document is aligned to and complements the UK Government guidance. It provides practical recommendations to organizations and workers on how to work safely during the pandemic. It is suitable for organizations that need to resume operations as well as those organizations that have been operational throughout.

This document explains what is expected of both organizations and workers. The guidance is generic and applicable to organizations regardless of the nature of business or service provision or size or complexity. It includes practical examples for different types of organizations to help determine the actions the organization can take to make the workplace safer.

By implementing the guidance in this document, an organization will be able to:

- a) understand what it needs to do to protect workers and other relevant interested parties from the risks related to COVID-19;
- b) demonstrate that it is addressing risks related to COVID-19 using a systematic approach; and
- c) put in place a framework to enable them to adapt to the rapidly changing situation

This document uses a Plan – Do – Check – Act approach.

Plan: plan what needs to be done for the organization to work safely (Clause 4 to Clause 6).

Do: do what the organization has planned to do (Clause 7 to Clause 9).

Check: see how well it is working (Clause 10).

Act: fix problems and look for ways to make what the organization is doing even more effective (Clause 11).

1 Scope

This document provides general guidance to organizations on how to manage the risks related to COVID-19 in order to protect work-related health, safety and wellbeing.

This document is intended for use by organizations of all sizes and sectors including those that:

- a) have been operating throughout the pandemic;
- b) are resuming operations following full or partial closure; and
- c) are re-occupying workplaces that were fully or partially closed.

This document also provides guidance relating to the protection of workers of all types, including employees, volunteers, contractors, those on zero hours contracts, freelancers and the self-employed, and other relevant interested parties.

NOTE *This document does not provide specific guidance for workers in high risk clinical roles.*

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.