

G1314 A3

Guidance for employees who are visiting and/ or returning from countries where there is an Ebola outbreak

This guidance has been prepared using advice from Public Health England (PHE), who protect the nation's health through the national health protection service and prepares for public health emergencies.

Ebola can only be transmitted from one person to another through direct contact with blood or bodily fluids of an infected person or the deceased body of a person who has been infected with Ebola. This risk is very low.

There is an on-going outbreak of Ebola in -Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, and Congo, although the latter is a different strain of Ebola and not linked to the outbreak elsewhere.

Senegal, Spain and Nigeria have now been declared Ebola free. This is because these countries implemented good public health measures to prevent the spread of Ebola.

The first case of Ebola diagnosed in the UK was of a nurse returning from Sierra Leone to Heathrow. She was allowed to board a flight to Glasgow from Heathrow despite reporting she felt unwell. PHE say that the risk to the public is still extremely low, as she was not showing any signs of infection at the time. Screening procedures have been reviewed for health care professionals returning from affected areas as a result of this case.

PHE expect a further handful of cases in the next few months in travellers from the above areas arriving in the UK who may not show any immediate signs of the disease, but could develop symptoms after their return. The time taken for the disease to show symptoms is anything from 2 to 21 days – this is known as the incubation period.

What will happen to me when I get back?

The Government is screening people returning from the countries where there are Ebola outbreaks at Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester and Birmingham airports, and at Eurostar terminals.

If you are one of these passengers, you will have your temperature taken and then be asked to complete a risk questionnaire asking about your current health, recent travel history and whether you might be at potential risk through contact with Ebola patients.

Although the risk of imported cases remains very low, health care professionals in the UK will remain vigilant for those who have visited areas affected by this outbreak and subsequently become unwell.

It is very important to be truthful in answering the screening questions, so that an accurate risk category can be assigned.

Ebola Employee Guidance issued 22.10.14 revised 11.11.14, 25.11.14 and 6.1.15

MAYOR OF LONDON

Transport for London



The PHE categories are:

Category 1 - If you have been in an area affected by Ebola, but had no contact with an Ebola case whilst there.

Category 2 - If you have been in an area affected by Ebola, and while there, were wearing protective gloves and taking other protections, but may still have had close contact with body fluids, or the body of a deceased Ebola case but, as far as far as you know, you do not believe you had direct contact with body fluids.

Category 3 - If you have been in an area affected by Ebola, and had close contact with the body fluids of an affected person or with the body of a deceased Ebola case, and are concerned that you could have had inadvertent contact with their blood, vomit or other secretion without being protected.

Can I return to work if I am well?

On your return, please contact Occupational Health (OH) on 020 7027 8818 or Auto 58818 to seek advice on which of the three PHE Categories applies to you and whether you should return to work as normal or stay at home. You must also keep your line manager informed of the situation.

Depending on the risk category confirmed by OH, and assuming that you have no symptoms:

For Category 1 - If you feel well and you have no symptoms it is unlikely there will be any restrictions placed on you upon commencing work, but this will be confirmed by OH.

Category 2 - You will be required to check your own temperature twice a day for 21 days and report to OH and PHE any concerns or symptoms. OH will liaise with PHE. If you have no symptoms you are likely to be able to return to work without restrictions.

Category 3 - OH will need to conduct a joint risk assessment with PHE before you can return to work during the incubation period.

What if I was well when I returned, but now I have now developed symptoms?

In the very unlikely event that you were well on returning from countries where there is an Ebola outbreak, but now have developed a fever of 38 degrees or above, or symptoms such as weakness, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhoea or bleeding, you **MUST** contact your GP or call NHS 111 to seek further advice.

You **MUST NOT** go to your GP surgery or A+E department without having spoken to medical personnel who will make appropriate arrangements for continuing care.

Please remember that Ebola is rare, so it is far more likely that a fever following return from African countries could turn out to be Malaria or typhoid or indeed another infection. However, to be sure you MUST seek medical advice/treatment.