



The COVID-19 Health & Safety Guide for Field Sales Managers and Business Owners

Guidelines and best practices for the mitigation of COVID-19, from medical industry experts, for protecting both your field team members and customers during face-to-face encounters



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Covid-19: Business as “Newsual”

Until a proven cure or vaccine for COVID-19 is globally available, there will be no ‘business as usual’. Until then, a new way of doing business will need to be accepted – at Skynamo we call it ‘business as newsual’.



There will be essential additional tasks and laborious routines for field staff, which will affect targets and capacity. New processes and procedures will have to be followed to protect staff and customers from the risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

Reducing face-to-face contact between people to less than 15 minutes at any given time, wearing a face mask (covering both your nose and mouth and spacing persons at least 2m apart, are the most effective ways of curbing the spread of this virus. Regulations require contact between people in the workplace to be minimised to the extent that they encourage working from home where at all possible. Although many of our daily tasks can and must be conducted remotely, there is still a need for in-person visits for research, deliveries, prospecting and sales.

COVID-19 is considered a biological hazard and therefore an occupational health and safety (OH&S) issue in the workplace. Any employee who becomes infected or exposed to a person confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 will disrupt your business through an enforced isolation of at least 13 days.

Your field staff will be regarded as a potential threat by your clients, because if they enter your clients' premises while being COVID-19 asymptomatic but infectious infected or exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, those premises will require disinfecting (which may mean closing the business for that process). Thus your reputation and the quality of the service you provide will be influenced by your field staff's ability to remain virus-free. The only way to achieve this is through instilling a culture of continuous compliance (i.e., compliance 100% of the time (both on duty and off duty, every single day) to the mitigating principles for controlling the spread of the novel SARS-2CoV-2 coronavirus (further herein referred to as 'the virus')..

Your client will regard you as a potential source of contamination for their staff and premises and thus a risk or threat to their business. And you will be regarding your clients in the same way. Therefore, company COVID-19 compliance with strict adherence to mitigation protocols will be an important part of the relationship between service provider and client to assure clients that everything is being done to prevent your staff from introducing the virus into their workplace.

In order to protect yourself, your teams and your customers from contracting the virus, you are now required by law to take extra precautionary measures when visiting customers and prospects in the field. So, we've produced training and a handbook with safety tips for sales teams returning to work in the field during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is expected to be with us for a prolonged period.

We have collaborated with occupational health experts to create and source relevant and best practices in the fight against this virus. This guide has been created specifically for you, to help you to manage teams out in the field every day as they visit your customers and prospects to sell and replenish stock and collect important insights.

As with all OH&S issues, both the employer and employee have responsibilities. As managers, you are required to keep staff informed of the hazards that this virus presents in the workplace, and of any changes in protocols and regulations. You are further required to monitor and ensure protocols and regulations are continuously complied with. How that is accomplished will differ from company to company. Your staff are obliged to follow protocols and comply with all Occupational Health and Safety regulations, including those for the mitigation of the spread of COVID-19.

Please take note that COVID-19 is a very new disease (only a little more than 8 months old at the time of writing) and there are many gaps in understanding the disease. It is the subject of intensive global research, so new information and the correction of 'old' views happens constantly. These can result in changes to government regulations as well as best practice for mitigating the spread of the virus. This guide has been compiled with current insight and best practice in mind. Please keep yourself informed as new insights emerge.



A recent survey recorded that 32% of employers consider compliance monitoring (to the mitigating procedures) as the most challenging aspect of COVID-19 mitigation for managers in the workplace.

The threat of contracting COVID-19 will increase the emotional and psychological stress levels in employees and their families. The assurance that the company and all the staff are committed on duty and off duty, to a safe environment, will help to ease the tension.

Key Information



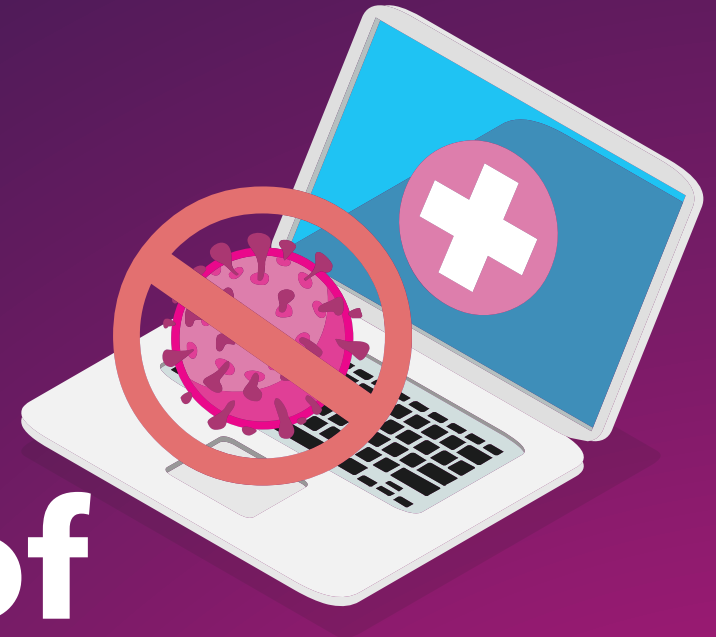
- COVID-19 is the name of the disease caused by the SARS-CoV2 virus. It is a respiratory disease that spreads through direct contact with contaminated surfaces and respiratory droplets produced when an infected person (who may or may not display symptoms) coughs, sneezes, talks or laughs. The virus is 'heavy', so quickly settles (1.5 to 2m). Note this distance may be affected if the person shouts, spits or if there is strong air movement (e.g., from air conditioning or wind).
- The virus enters the body through mucus membranes (e.g., eyes, nose and mouth).
- A person may have contracted the virus and yet be infective/infectious without realising it, because they have no symptoms and feel fine. Therefore

assume yourself and each person to be COVID-19 positive.

- The correct protocols for applying and removing face masks, taking temperatures, washing/sanitising hands, maintaining a 2m social distancing must be followed, or the process becomes counter-productive.
- Persons with co-morbidity illnesses (obesity, hypertension, arthritis, diabetes, asthma, etc.) are at risk of severe complications from COVID-19 infection.
- A vaccine for COVID-19 is only expected to be available globally mid to late 2021.
- COVID-19 is a notifiable disease in South Africa.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (OHSA) imposes a duty on employers to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, a **safe and healthy working environment** for their employees. This duty includes, for example: a) taking such steps as may be reasonably practicable to eliminate or mitigate any hazard or potential hazard to the safety or health of employees, before resorting to personal protective equipment; b) the provision and maintenance of systems of work, plant and machinery that is as far as reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to health; c) providing such information, instructions, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of its employees; and d) enforcing such measures as may be necessary in the interests of health and safety. (<https://www.bowmanslaw.com/insights/mergers-and-acquisitions/covid-19-impact-on-businesses-and-investments-in-south-africa/#Employmentconsiderations> (accessed 26 05 2020))

A strategy for the mitigation of the spread of the novel Coronavirus in the workplace



Each company and their service will be unique, and every industry different. This guide seeks to provide broad guidance on generic aspects of managing the health and safety of field staff.

Each time a staff member is exposed to, or think they were exposed to a COVID-19 infectious person), whether in the workplace or in private, they will have to be quarantined for 14 days and shown not to have the virus. The potential for disruption of service delivery, planned events and appointments is obvious.

Please refer to the guide that has been prepared for the field staff themselves. The information contained in that handbook is assumed in this guide and will not be reiterated.

Planning

AMONG OTHERS, THESE RESOURCES OR NOTES ARE USEFUL

Occupational Health and Safety Act
(No 85 of 1993)

[View Source](#) (Accessed 03 06 2020)

WHO: General guidelines for preparing the
workplace ready for COVID-19 mitigation

[View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)

Dentons: What must employers do before they
operate from their business premises?

[View Source](#) (Accessed 26 06 2020)

Checklist

- Conduct detailed risk assessment related to COVID-19 [View Source](#) (Accessed 28 05 2020)
- Design a workplace plan related to COVID-19 [View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Develop policies and protocols. Communicate them to staff [View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Appoint a dedicated person to champion OH&S as it relates to COVID-19 (this need not be a medically trained person) [View Source](#) (Accessed 03 06 2020)
[View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Place systems in place for preserving of COVID-19 related records [View Source](#)(see paragraph 3.2) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Conduct a workplace risk assessment and communicate appropriately [View Source](#) (Accessed 28 05 2020)
- Consider any physical changes to your facilities required to meet mitigation regulations [View Source](#)(see paragraph 4) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Consider changes to work processes to reduce the risk of contact contamination [View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Assess the risk profile of staff members and adjust individual duties accordingly [View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Institute enhanced hygiene and disinfecting at your facilities Based on risk assessment and the needs of individual staff categories
- Institute sign-on screening for all staff (field and facility based staff) [View Source](#) (Accessed 02 06 2020)
- Institute temperature screening for all persons arriving at and leaving your facilities [View Source](#) (Accessed 02 06 2020)
- Plan initial and ongoing training specifically related to COVID-19 for all staff
- Provide a budget for physical modifications to the workplace, the additional training, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), screening equipment and cleaning materials

Risk Assessment

- Conduct individual personal risk assessment of staff Worker COVID-19 Risk Assessment
(DoH and DoEL): **Annexure 1**
Risk based consent form : **Annexure 2**

- Conduct a risk assessment of facilities and workplace. This will include transport and client business types for field staff. [View Source](#) (Accessed 03 02 2020)

- Conduct a risk assessment for the various categories of staff (e.g., security, cleaners, office staff, shop floor staff, field sales staff) Note especially events where high incidence of face-to-face contact can occur.

- Consider zoning the work space to restrict the movement of categories of staff/visitors to particular zones

- Identify 'high risk' areas (e.g., security entrance, waiting areas, rest rooms, canteens, etc.) High pedestrian traffic areas, delivery of documents/items, receiving areas, etc.

Policies & Protocols

- Consider including the safety of clients and staff in your company value statement Build company's reputation as being COVID-19 compliant

- Encourage staff to commit to compliance to all protocols and policies relating to COVID-19. This includes keeping accurate records of all contacts in case active contact tracing becomes necessary [View Source](#)
(Accessed 03 06 2020)

- Adjust the duties of the OH&S representative to include COVID-19 responsibilities The appointment of an OH&S representative must be done annually in writing. The duties and responsibilities must be listed in writing

- Develop policies and protocol as related to COVID-19, regarding HR aspects (e.g., submitting to screening before and after work, sick leave, self-isolation after exposure, etc.) [View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Daily screening before and after work protocols that include analysis and recording. [View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Develop protocols for enhanced hygiene for the facilities [View Source](#) (See paragraph 3.3.2) (Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Develop protocols for decontamination [View Source](#) (See paragraph 3.3.2) (Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Develop protocols for staff with COVID-19 symptoms. Communicate this protocol especially. [View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Develop protocols for staff that develop COVID-19 symptoms during work hours including isolation and transport home. Communicate this protocol especially.

[View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Develop protocols for return to work after isolation. Communicate this protocol especially.

[View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)
- Develop a protocol regarding the sanitising of the facilities and the immediate guidelines for staff, after a staff member who has been at the facility tests positive for COVID-19.

[View Source](#) (Accessed 02 06 2020)
- Develop a policy and protocol regarding PPE (e.g., purchase, storage issuing, quantities allocated to various categories of staff, washing of face masks, etc.)

Based on Risk Assessment and individual staff category requirements.
Storage: Clean, dry, lockable cupboard
Washing: based on individual staff category requirements
- Develop a policy and protocol regarding cleaning chemicals (e.g., purchase, storage issuing, quantities and types allocated to various categories of staff, waste management, etc.)

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Develop a policy and protocol regarding the capture and permanent storage of data for possible contact tracing and potential COVID instances. (Consider an app that traces contacts and movements)

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Develop a disciplinary process for staff who do not comply with OH&S directives

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)
[View Source](#)
(Accessed 29 05 2020)

- Develop 'informed consent' forms for staff

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)
[View Source](#) (see paragraphs 2
and 3) (Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Communicate protocols and responsibilities with staff

[View Source](#) (Accessed 26 05 2020)

Adopt Workplace for Covid-19 Mitigation

- Provide a dedicated isolation area for people who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during work hours.
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- Evaluate ventilation. Ensure that air conditioner filters are regularly maintained. Promote natural ventilation by opening windows where possible.
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[View Source](#) Ventilation
(Accessed 02 06 2020)

- Arrange workstations, conference/meeting rooms so as to provide for physical distancing or introduce permanent (transparent) barriers
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[View Source](#) Social distancing
(Accessed 02 06 2020)

- Reduce 'clutter' and minimise furniture
 - Provide sanitiser dispensers, paper towels and the correct bins with liners for restrooms.
 - Provide for entrance screening and sanitising for all visitors, install correct waste bins and liners
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Training

- All training attendance is to be recorded as required by the OH&S Act and must include the safe storage and handling of PPE and relevant chemicals.

As per OHS Act No. 85 of 1993

- Provide general training in the basics of COVID-19 mitigation for all levels of staff (this must include mitigation during transport)

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Provide specific detailed training for cleaning staff including safe waste disposal.

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)
[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)

- Provide detailed specific training for those administering screening tests

- Provide specific training for staff who come into direct contact with clients (e.g., security, receiving/dispatch depts, field staff, shelf packers, etc.)

- Design and implement a routine of regular refresher courses

- Train all staff regarding the requirements and processes in COIDA

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 05 2020)

Record Keeping

- Provide permanent storage for all data emanating from COVID-19 mitigating activities and issues

Communication

- COVID-19 is a notifiable disease. Staff must inform the local COVID-19 structures or the hotline if they present with any symptoms. They must also be encouraged not to 'hide' symptoms.

It is not the responsibility of the employer to notify the Health Department.

- Inform staff and any clients who might have been exposed to a staff member who has been tested positive for COVID-19

Be aware that personal privacy must be respected.

- It may build relationships with clients if you communicate your COVID-19 policies and protocols as they pertain to your clients, giving them the assurance of staff compliance

- Communicate with staff on a regular basis on the need for compliance with mitigating practices, both at work and at home.

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 06 2020)

- Every effort must be made to reduce face-to-face contact. All inter-staff communication and meetings ought to be digital

[View Source](#)
(Accessed 26 06 2020)

DISCLAIMER: This document is intended as general abbreviated guide and is not exhaustive. It does not constitute legal advice or recommendations. Professional opinion must be sought where necessary to ensure compliance with the legal requirements related to the various acts. Neither does this document constitute medical advice. Employers must satisfy themselves that their employees, customers and workplaces are safe.