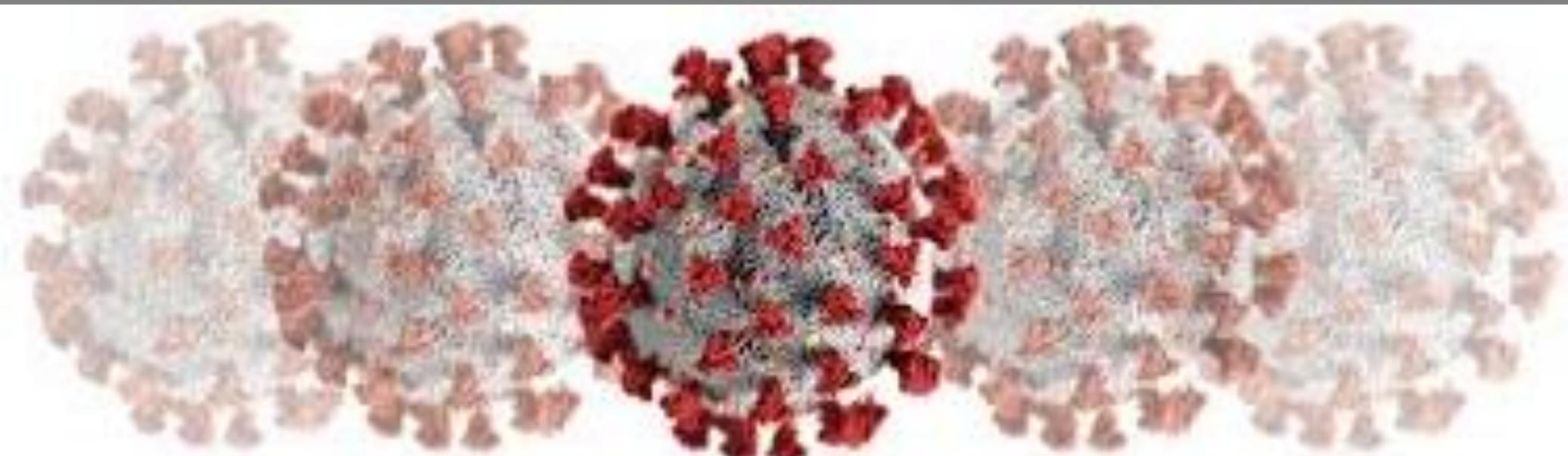




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CHANGE

# COVID-19: Workplace Safety Guide

April 2020



# Four suggested steps for a safe workplace environment



This is intended purely as a guiding document. Considerations should be adapted to the context, based on feasibility.

- 1 Develop a preparedness and response plan**
  - Incorporate national Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines and regulations into workplace-specific plans.
  - Plans should consider and address the levels of risk associated with various worksites, as well as the tasks workers perform at those sites.
  - Follow MoH recommendations regarding development of contingency and business continuity plans for situations that may arise as a result of outbreaks.
- 2 Implement an infection-prevention plan**
  - Require frequent and thorough hand-washing. Provide workers, customers and worksite visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
  - Encourage workers to stay at home if they are sick. Promote respiratory etiquette, and discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
  - Enhance housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment and other elements of the work environment.
- 3 Identify and isolate sick people**
  - Install temperature and questionnaire screening at entry points to sites. Develop policies and procedures for workers to report and isolate when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.
  - Take steps to limit spread of the respiratory secretions of a person who may have Covid-19. Provide a face mask, if feasible and available, and ask the person to wear it.
  - Isolate suspected cases separately from confirmed cases to prevent further transmission – particularly in worksites where medical screening, triage or healthcare activities occur, using either permanent (e.g. wall/different room) or temporary barriers (e.g. plastic sheeting).
- 4 Communicate workplace flexibilities and protections**
  - Ensure sick-leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance, and that employees are aware of them.
  - Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home, and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
  - Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay at home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees than usual may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members.

# Four workplace controls employers should attempt to put in place (dependent on financial constraints)



Controls	Steps
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Engineering</b></p> <p>Reduces exposure to hazards without relying on worker behaviour. Can be the most cost-effective solution to implement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Install high-efficiency air filters.</li><li>• Increase ventilation rates in the work environment.</li><li>• Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards.</li><li>• Install specialised negative-pressure ventilation in some settings, where feasible.</li></ul>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Administrative</b></p> <p>Requires action by the worker or employer. Typically, administrative controls are changes in work policy or procedures to reduce or minimise exposure to a hazard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish minimum and maximum numbers of employees on site per day.</li><li>• Stagger workstations on either side of operation lines so that workers are not facing one another.</li><li>• Provide PPE such as face masks, hair nets, disposable gloves, clean overalls and slip-reduction work shoes for staff.</li><li>• Space out workstations, which may require reduction in the speed of production lines.</li><li>• Organise staff into working groups or teams to facilitate reduced interaction.</li></ul>
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Safe work</b></p> <p>Includes procedures for safe and proper work used to reduce the duration, frequency or intensity of exposure to a hazard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide resources and a work environment that promotes personal hygiene, e.g. provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol, disinfectants and disposable towels for workers to clean their work surfaces.</li><li>• Require regular hand-washing or using of alcohol-based hand rubs. Workers should always wash hands when they are visibly soiled and after removing any PPE.</li></ul>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>PPE</b></p> <p>Prevents some exposure to hazards. It should not take the place of above prevention strategies, nor reduce the availability of PPE to healthcare workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Select type of PPE and non-medical masks based on the hazard to the worker.</li><li>• Train users in appropriate donning and doffing procedures for PPE.</li><li>• Manage proper removal, cleanliness, storage or disposal of PPE (as applicable), to avoid contamination of self, others or the environment.</li><li>• Use properly fitted and periodically refitted equipment, as applicable (e.g. respirators).</li><li>• Monitor the usage and maintenance of equipment, and replace as necessary.</li></ul>

# Preliminary health and safety guidelines for **very high risk** and **high risk** occupations

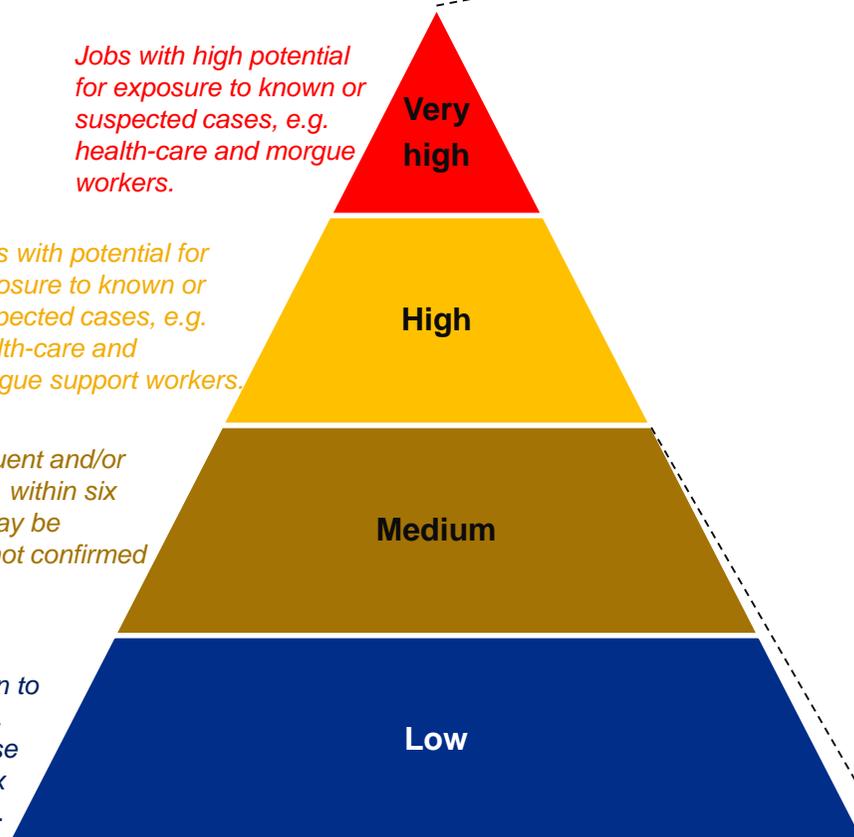


*Jobs with high potential for exposure to known or suspected cases, e.g. health-care and morgue workers.*

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*Jobs that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e. within six feet of) people who may be infected but who are not confirmed to have Covid-19.*

*Jobs that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected, nor frequent close contact with (i.e. within six feet of) the general public.*



## Considerations for **very high** and **high risk** occupations

- Ensure appropriate air-handling systems are installed and maintained in healthcare facilities.
- Known or suspected cases should be placed in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR), if available.
- Use isolation rooms when available for performing aerosol-generating procedures on patients with known or suspected Covid-19.
- Develop and implement policies that reduce exposure, such as cohorting (i.e. grouping) Covid-19 patients when single rooms are unavailable.
- Provide all workers with job-specific education and training on preventing transmission of Covid-19, including initial and routine/refresher training.
- Ensure that psychological and behavioural support is available to address worker stress.
- Provide emergency responders and other essential personnel who may be exposed while working away from fixed facilities with alcohol-based hand rubs, containing at least 60% alcohol, for decontamination in the field.
- Most workers at high or very high exposure risk will likely need to wear gloves, a gown, a face shield or goggles, and either a face mask or a respirator, depending on their job tasks and exposure risks.

# Preliminary health and safety guidelines for **medium risk** occupations

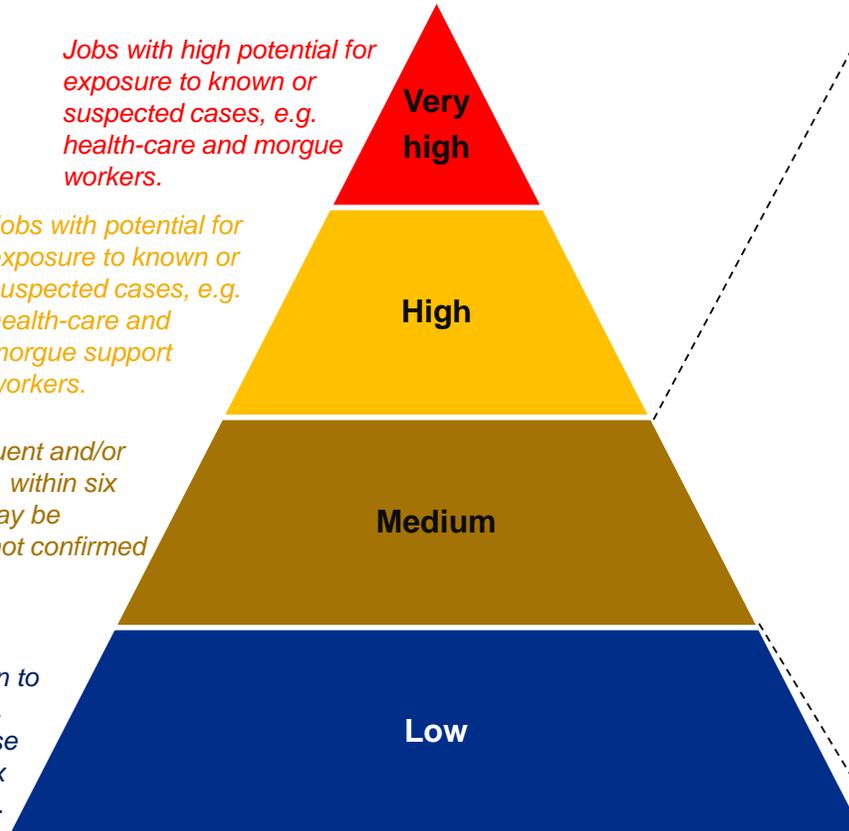


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## Considerations for **medium risk** occupations

- Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards, where feasible.
- Consider offering face masks to all workers, or at a minimum to ill workers, to contain respiratory secretions until they are able leave the workplace (i.e. for medical evaluation/care or to return home). In the event of a shortage of masks, a reusable face shield that can be decontaminated may be an acceptable method of protecting against droplet transmission.
- Consider strategies to minimise face-to-face contact (e.g. phone-based communication).
- Communicate the availability of medical screening or other worker health resources (e.g. an on-site nurse; telemedicine services).
- Workers with medium exposure risk may need to wear some combination of gloves, a gown, a face mask, and/or a face shield or goggles. PPE ensembles for workers in the medium exposure risk category will vary by work task, the results of the employer's hazard assessment, and the types of exposure to which workers are subject.
- Consider limiting the number of workers on site and offering accommodation to reduce travel times and use of public transport.

# Preliminary health and safety guidelines for low risk occupations

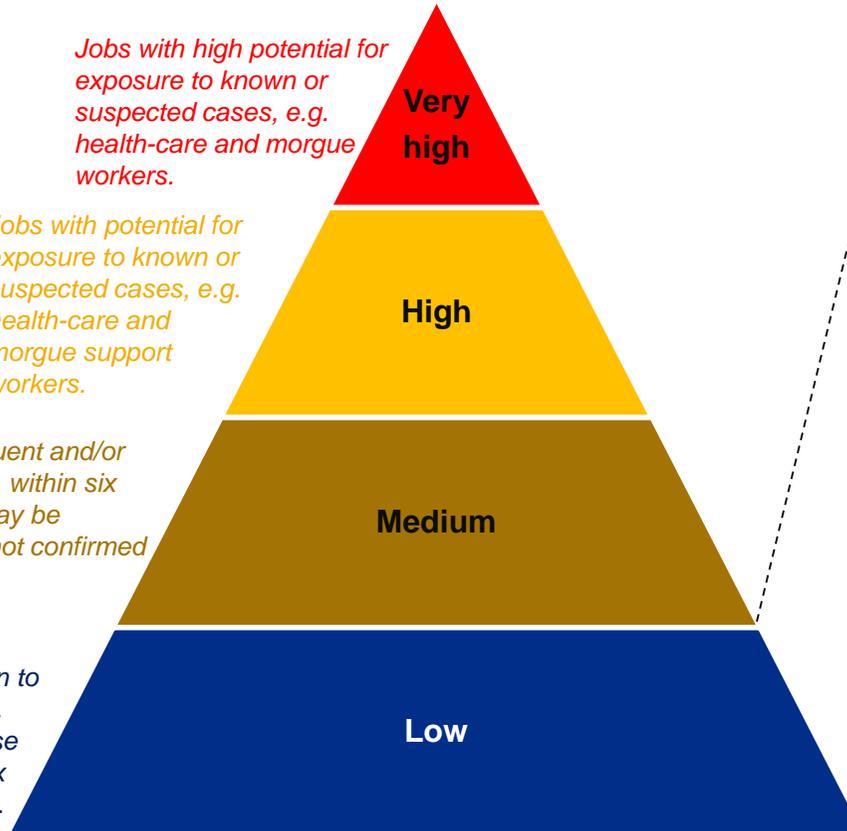


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## Considerations for low risk occupations

- Additional engineering controls are not recommended for workers in the lower exposure risk group.
- Employers should ensure that engineering controls, if any, used to protect workers from other job hazards continue to function as intended.
- Monitor public health communications about Covid-19 recommendations and ensure that workers have access to that information. Frequently check the MoH website.
- Collaborate with workers to develop effective means of communicating important Covid-19 information.
- Additional PPE is not recommended for workers in the lower exposure risk group. Workers should continue to use the PPE, if any, that they would ordinarily use for other job tasks.

# Tools for risk assessment and management at workplaces



## Risk assessment model

- Risk assessment is the process of identifying and assessing the risks to workplaces, and prioritising resources to reduce or eliminate the most significant risks.
- The model considers the likelihood/relevance and the severity of the impact of the issue at a workplace. Those issues with the highest score are the most significant risks and justify the most significant attention.

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very Likely
	1	2	3	4	5
Negligible 1	1	2	3	4	5
Minor 2	2	4	6	8	10
Moderate 3	3	6	9	12	15
Major 4	4	8	12	16	20
Severity Extreme 5	5	10	15	20	25

## Risk register

- Controls should be implemented for the issues with the highest score (risk) and employers should revisit the risk assessment to ascertain if the risk has been reduced – i.e. a reduction in the number (risk) associated with the specific issue.
- Controls could take the form of provision of sanitiser and PPE, social distancing, electronic shift handovers, installation of barriers at interfaces, implementation of different shift patterns, and staff working different shifts.
- Risk assessment should be documented in a register for implementing and managing controls and follow-ups.

Risk	L	S	Score	Control	L	S	Score	Responsibility	Monitoring
Closure due to outbreak amongst staff	5	5	25	Communicate risks to all staff; Advise staff of need to stay at home if showing symptoms or in contact with those with symptoms; Social distancing encouraged; Sanitiser and PPE (gloves/masks/safety glasses) provided; Staggered Canteen breaks; Segregation of shifts by 15 mins; Sanitisation of shared equipment/ areas.	3	5	15	All Staff; Facilities	General Manager; Shift Supervisors
L = Likelihood S = Severity									

# Choosing the most effective controls for the workplace



1

The first step is to try to eliminate the risk. If this is not reasonably practicable to do, this risk is minimised as much as possible.

2

When using the hierarchy of controls to minimise risk, take one or more of the following actions – whichever are the most appropriate and effective, taking into account the nature of the risk:

- Substituting with a lower risk activity or substance.
- Isolating the hazard/preventing people from coming into contact with it.
- Applying engineering controls.

3

If, after applying these higher order controls, a risk remains, minimise this by putting in place administrative controls.

4

Finally, if a risk still remains, minimise the remaining risk by ensuring the provision and use of suitable PPE.

Most effective

Least effective

## How to tackle workplace risks...

Elimination

Minimisation

Substitution (wholly or partly) and/or

Isolation/Preventing contact and/or

Engineering control measures

IF RISK REMAINS

Administrative control measures

IF RISK STILL REMAINS

Personal protective equipment (PPE)