

A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) H&S Policy

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd (the Company) is engaged in the wholesale, storage & distribution and retail of food and associated products to businesses, consumers, and communities. The Company provides an essential service to the community and as such our employees are recognised as key workers by the UK Government.

The Company recognises that it has a duty of care to, so far as reasonably practicable, ensure the health of employees and others in the workplace. The Company further recognises that this duty extends to the implementation of measures to prevent or control the risk of COVID-19 infection both within the organisation and arising out of its' work.

As a group, coronaviruses are common around the world; however, the widespread outbreak of this coronavirus has prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare it a pandemic.

Symptoms of the coronavirus in the majority of people are similar to mild symptoms of influenza and include fever, dry cough, loss of taste and/or sense of smell (Anosmia) and occasionally shortness of breath. Some people report a runny nose, sore throat, and diarrhoea. The current evidence is that most cases can be treated at home.

In a minority of cases coronavirus may cause more severe symptoms, notably in people with serious existing health problems.

People can catch the virus from others who are infected in the following ways:

- the virus moves from person-to-person in droplets from the nose or mouth spread when a person with the virus coughs, sneezes, or exhales.
- the virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces which people have coughed or sneezed on.
- people can pick up the virus by breathing in the droplets or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

The UK Government have introduced a number of measures to Contain, Delay, Research and Mitigate the spread of COVID-19 infection, with key advice given to businesses to support these measures, which we have strictly adhered to are:

- encouraging our employees to work at home, wherever possible.
- sending employees home immediately and advising them to follow the advice to stay at home if they become unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough, high temperature or loss of taste and/or sense of smell.
- reminding employees to wash their hands more frequently for 20 seconds and to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues.
- frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using our standard and specialist cleaning products.

- supporting employees where necessary to adhering to the recommendations to stay at home to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) to others.
- advising employees that those who follow advice to stay at home (self-isolating) will be eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP) from the first day of their absence from work (this may not include employees returning from abroad).
- using our discretion concerning the need for medical evidence for certification for employees who are unwell. This will allow GPs to focus on their patients.
- advising employees that those with symptoms of coronavirus and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get an isolation note from NHS 111 online <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

ARRANGEMENTS

1. The Company has taken steps to ensure that it is kept up to date with the latest guidance on COVID-19. Sources of updates include subscription to email updates from the UK Government websites, from the Freight Transport Association (FTA) and from the British Retail Consortium as well as regularly checking other sources such as PHE and HSE websites.
2. The Company shall ensure that it takes account of current Government guidance when considering implementing and maintaining control measures to prevent or control the risk of COVID-19 infection within its' operations. The Group H&S function is responsible for keeping the Board of Directors up to date with the latest available information and guidance to inform decision making.
3. The Company has prepared model COVID-19 risk assessments, completed at each site. The Group H&S function is responsible for reviewing the model assessments, ensuring that they take account of current guidance and best practice. Local Managers are responsible for validating and implementing the risk assessment at each site, including any site-specific controls, to ensure that the risk of COVID-19 infection is considered and managed in accordance with government guidance and company policies.

Local Managers will, upon implementation of the risk assessment, sign and display a "Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020" notice on the employee noticeboard.

4. From 1st August 2020 (England) and 13th August 2020 (Wales), clinically extremely vulnerable individuals can return to their workplace providing COVID-secure guidelines are in place but should work from home wherever possible. The Company shall take proactive steps to protect all such employees in line with current government guidance, including:
 - i. Reviewing the risk assessment to consider any additional measures required to accommodate the clinically extremely vulnerable employee's return to the workplace safely.
 - ii. Facilitating home working where possible.
 - iii. If they cannot work from home, and where practical, they will be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to maintain social distancing guidelines of 2-metres.

Anyone clinically extremely vulnerable who remains concerned about returning to work must speak to their manager in the first instance, and if it is agreed that the employee may remain absent from the workplace this will be considered as an 'Authorised UNPAID absence'.

5. Employees returning to the UK after travelling abroad are legally required to self-isolate for 14 days unless they have returned from an **'EXEMPT'** country. **Please be aware:** Should there be a 'spike' in reported cases of COVID-19 in the country that you have travelled to on holiday, the UK Government may bring in a quarantine policy while you are still on holiday, which would mean that you would have to self-isolate for 14 days immediately upon return to the UK.

The Government's travel advice is continually changing, with exemptions for travelling to certain countries and territories that no longer pose a high risk for British travellers. View the list of exempted destinations: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-countries-and-territories-exempt-from-advice-against-all-but-essential-international-travel>.

6. The Company shall provide employees information relating to COVID-19 infection and related risk control measures including but not limited to hand washing, respiratory hygiene, and social distancing procedures. Local management is responsible for ensuring that this information is made available to employees using toolbox talks and displaying centrally distributed signs and notices in the workplace to reinforce key messages.
7. The Company instructs employees not to attend work if they have symptoms of COVID-19 infection. The most common symptoms of infection are recent onset of a new continuous cough, a high temperature and/or loss of taste and sense of smell. In addition, employees are legally required to self-isolate to protect others in line with current guidance from the UK Government, if:
 - i. A member of their household or support bubble has symptoms of COVID-19 infection or has tested COVID-19 positive.
 - ii. They have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

In all such incidences employees must notify the HR dept. on 0121 568 2905 and will be given further advice on current self-isolation rules and procedures to access a test for coronavirus infection.

8. In England and Wales, it is a legal requirement for employees and visitors to wear a face covering in designated settings, unless exempt. Fines for non-compliance are payable by the individual. The Company has put in place arrangements to facilitate compliance with this requirement, including display of signs and notices at or near entrances and the provision of face coverings to all employees who are required to wear one during the course of their work. Where face coverings are provided, employees will be given instructions on how, where, and when it must be worn and as well as instructions on how to clean and care for their face covering.
9. Good hand hygiene is essential to reducing the risk of infection, which can be transmitted when a person touches a surface that has been contaminated with the virus and then transferring the virus to their face, particularly the eyes, nose or mouth. The Company provides suitable hand washing facilities across all the sites that it operates, and Local Managers are responsible for ensuring that these facilities are maintained in clean, hygienic, and efficient order, this includes adequate provision of:
 - i. Soap (or hand wash) and water.
 - ii. Hot air dryers or disposable paper towels.

10. The Company shall provide a supply of alcohol hand sanitiser to supplement hand washing facilities or for use where soap and water is not readily available (e.g. in delivery vehicles). Local Managers are responsible for ensuring that hand sanitiser stations are provided and maintained at strategic locations as determined by the Coronavirus Risk Assessment.
11. The Company will ensure that an appropriate and sufficient hygiene programme is implemented across all operations. Local Managers shall review cleaning procedures to identify frequently touched hand contact surfaces and ensure that they are cleaned and sanitised at increased regularity. All cleaning of these items shall be recorded on a documented cleaning schedule.
12. The Company is committed to ensuring social distancing within its' operations. Local Managers are responsible for implementing and monitoring social distancing measures as identified by the Coronavirus Risk Assessment. These include but are not limited to:
 - i. Making arrangements to ensure that employees are able to work from home where practicable.
 - ii. Using signs and notices requesting that customers do not enter retail premises if they have symptoms.
 - iii. Regulate entry to retail premises to ensure that they do not become overcrowded.
 - iv. Providing floor markings to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2-metres, particularly in the most crowded areas, such as retail serving counters and tills, clocking in machines, vending machines, and equipment collection points.
 - v. Providing directional arrow floor markings to guide customers around retail stores in an orderly manner to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2-metres.
 - vi. Regular announcements on store (SPAR) Radio and RDC 'tannoy' systems to remind workers and customers to follow social distancing advice and clean their hands regularly.
 - vii. Installation of Perspex barriers at tills and counters in retail premises (where practicable) and workstations as an additional element of protection for workers and customers.
 - viii. Encouraging the use of contactless payments where possible, without disadvantaging older or vulnerable customers.
 - ix. Controlling the number of persons permitted in rest rooms and office spaces at any one time to ensure that social distancing controls can, so far as possible, be implemented e.g. by use of break rotas.
 - x. Operating no contact and no signature delivery systems.

The basic principles are to implement reasonable measures to ensure that, where possible, workers should maintain a 2-metre distance from others. If a 2-metre distance cannot be maintained, further mitigating measures will be considered to enable workers to keep more than 1-metre apart safely. These include but are not limited to:

- i. Provision of additional Perspex screens and barriers at places of regular interaction such as reception and customer service desks and in office spaces.
- ii. Provision of PPE including face visors, face coverings and gloves where prolonged close contact is unavoidable e.g. when administering first aid.
- iii. Organising the work so that staff work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face where possible e.g. working at adjoining workstations.

- iv. Providing additional ventilation to the workspace e.g. keeping windows open in vehicle cabs during double man deliveries.
- v. Keeping contact under 2-metres to a maximum of 15 minutes. If contact for more than 15 minutes is unavoidable, one or more additional mitigating measures must be implemented as outlined above.

Measures will be similarly implemented to ensure appropriate separation of customers in retail environments.

13. The Company has taken steps to ensure that business meetings take account of social distancing requirements. Meeting organisers shall use technological solutions such as Microsoft Teams video conferencing or conference calling as a first-choice option. Where in person meetings are unavoidable measures to enable best practice in social distancing shall be taken including:
 - i. Keeping participants to the minimum required to meet the purpose of the meeting.
 - ii. Meetings should be kept to the shortest duration necessary.
 - iii. Meeting rooms will be allocated maximum occupancy limits to ensure social distancing can be practiced. Organisers are required to book an appropriately sized room for their meeting.
 - iv. Warehouse team briefs should, where possible be delivered using the tannoy system to avoid requiring employees to gather at one location.
14. The Company shall liaise with its' suppliers and sub-contractors to ensure that they have taken reasonably practicable steps to prevent or control the risk of COVID-19 within their own activities. The Company has an expectation that the measures implemented by its' suppliers and sub-contractors shall be consistent with UK Government guidance and the Company's own requirements.
15. The Company shall work with its business partners and customers to ensure that orders are delivered in a manner that is COVID-19 safe. This includes measures such as contactless deliveries, no signature deliveries, and the use of agreed safe transfer zones. Where practicable the Company and its' employees will comply with any local arrangements operated by the customer to control COVID-19 risks.
16. The Company will receive essential visitors into its workplaces by prior appointment only. Examples of essential visitors include supplier deliveries or contractors undertaking essential maintenance and repairs. Non-essential site visits should be postponed or technological solutions such as Microsoft Teams video conferencing or conference calling used when meeting non-essential visitors.
17. The Company has installed signage and notices at entrances and other key locations to communicate rules and requirements to visitors, including visiting suppliers and contractors, who are expected to comply with any and all measures implemented by the Company. Visitors are free to observe any additional controls that they have adopted within their own organisation, provided that they do not conflict with the company's arrangements and, where necessary, subject to agreement.
18. This policy will be reviewed regularly to take account of changes in guidance issued by the UK Government and enforcing agencies, industry best practice and organisational changes.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (CoSHH)

The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Business Guidance on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>