

Document No: HSGFM39	Document Title; Controlling the Risks of Infectious Diseases in the Workplace	
Revision Level: 1	Issue Date 15/05/2020	

Controlling the Risks of Infectious Diseases in the Workplace

Policy Brief & Purpose

All members of staff may be at risk of infection, or of spreading infection, especially if their role brings them into contact with blood or bodily fluids like urine, faeces, vomit or sputum. Such substances may contain micro-organisms such as bacteria and viruses which can be spread if staff do not take adequate precautions. It is therefore essential that strict hygiene precautions are observed at all times. Some members of staff may be required to take additional precautions, including those who prepare / handle food, or those who work on high risk client sites such as medical facilities, care homes and hotels.

Company rules on controlling the risks of infectious diseases must always be followed. However, there may be times when it is more important than ever that they are strictly followed, for example, during a pandemic and the outbreak of a disease such as the Coronavirus or COVID-19.

Employees have a vital role to play in ensuring that the risk of infection is kept to an absolute minimum, and must themselves stick to Government guidance in relation to hygiene, overseas travel, social distancing, quarantine etc.

During an outbreak, this policy and procedure will be reviewed and updated to take into account changing Government guidelines. If this policy changes, we will update you as soon as it is reasonably possible by email to health&safety@hsgfm.co.uk

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all members of staff who physically work in our office(s) and those who work on client's sites. For those working remotely, we strongly recommend that you read through this policy as well.

Failure to follow the procedures outlined in this policy may result in disciplinary action under the Disciplinary & Grievance (D&G) Procedure and could lead to dismissal without notice in the event of serious misconduct and / or serious negligence.

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Reducing the Risk of Infection in the Workplace

In order to restrict / reduce the risk of infection in the workplace, the Company will:

- Have sufficient systems and resources in place to assess the risk of, and prevent, detect and control, the risk of infection including designating a lead for infection prevention and control.
- Ensure employees, contractors and other persons who directly or indirectly provide work, are provided with suitable information, instruction, training and supervision in the precautions to follow to restrict and reduce risk.
- Ensure staff understand and follow our client's rules and infection outbreak control procedures when working on client's sites.
- Carry out audits to ensure policies and procedures are being implemented and that they are being followed, taking appropriate action as needed.
- Ensure an appropriate standard of cleanliness and hygiene is maintained throughout the premises, that suitable cleaning schedules are in place and followed, that premises are maintained and in good physical repair / condition.
- Ensure there is suitable and sufficient hand washing facilities, instructions, soaps (and antimicrobial hand rubs where appropriate), and ensure the supply and provision of hand dryers, towels, linen and laundry is appropriate.
- Ensure suitable information on infection control is provided to visitors, including the importance of hand washing by visitors.
- Ensure individuals who develop an infection are identified promptly and that they receive the appropriate treatment and care.
- Ensure all staff understand and co-operate with control of infection procedures and provide regular suitable training, including induction training to all staff on the prevention and control of infection.

The Company will apply the below infection outbreak procedure to control the risk of infectious diseases in the workplace should an outbreak occur:

- Follow Government guidelines and measures to protect staff and clients.
- Strongly recommend that all members of staff follow any Government guidance published on self-isolation / quarantine.
- Encourage staff to immediately report symptoms of infectious diseases.
- Ensure staff who have infectious disease symptoms do not come to work in accordance with Government and / or HSE guidelines.

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- Where required, ensure notifiable outbreaks are reported to the relevant authority e.g. HSE and local health protection units.
- Co-operate with any investigation by a relevant authority and comply with any investigation findings and interventions required.
- Keep the number of employees dealing with affected persons to a minimum and do not allow these employees to be involved with food handling.
- Prioritise cleaning, paying particular attention to the cleaning and disinfecting of toilets, handles, support handrails, taps and wash basins.
- Ensure staff pay strict attention to infection control procedures, in particular to the washing of hands, the wearing of personal protective clothing if required, and following social distancing guidelines established for the workplace.
- Ensure staff understand and follow client's rules and infection outbreak control procedures when working on client's sites to control infectious diseases.
- Inform visitors of the outbreak and discourage unnecessary visits.
- Seek out and receive external advice if necessary.
- Review company policies and procedures to ensure that they are appropriate, introducing temporary policies where needed such as leave and absence.
- Staff may be required to observe several measures put in place to keep the risk of infection to an absolute minimum. Whilst advice will be published at the time in question to ensure it is relevant to the outbreak, it is likely that rules will include the following:
 - Temporary site closures
 - Remote working measures where feasible
 - Staggering start / finish times so that fewer people are together
 - Cancelling non-essential national and international travel
 - Cancelling non-essential training sessions
 - Speaking with clients / customers by phone and email where possible
 - Cancelling all non-essential face-to-face meetings
 - Supplying and mandating the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as appropriate to the duties / work location of the member of staff
 - Close or restrict the use of staff canteens, staff rooms and other non-essential workplace areas
 - Consider whether it is appropriate to offer vaccines to employees and keep a record of relevant immunisations

All members of staff, contractors, client's and visitors should report any breach of this policy as soon as possible to health&safety@hsgfm.co.uk