

Safe work – Safe services and consumption – Safe transport

Best practices for businesses

Confederation of Finnish Industries, EK – updated 19/03/2021

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Why safe work – safe services and consumption – safe transport?

The coronavirus halted the normal functioning of society in 2020, which had a heavy impact on economic activity and people's everyday lives. The situation has caused great uncertainty and concern.

The crisis has had and will have different stages. Restrictions will be tightened or eased at times, as necessary. As a result, **businesses must adopt visible and credible safety measures. Effective safety measures are based on continued risk reassessment; we must constantly assess the situation and react to any changes.**

These measures also support people's feeling of safety and help restore confidence: how do we build systems where working, services, consuming and using transport are safe despite the coronavirus risk?

In this guide, the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and its member associations have compiled best practices from abroad and Finland for the benefit of all Finnish enterprises. The practices described in this guide are provided as recommendations and good examples. Each company is free to decide which methods are suitable for its specific operations and how they should put them into practice. It is certain the every business will be able to make their everyday operations safer for their staff, visitors, customers and passengers!

The working group who authored this report will update this guide as necessary based on close monitoring of the situation, official guidance and recommendations and the best new practices.





Contents of the guide

The first section of the guide describes the best process for planning and implementing safety measures, the equipment and products that companies should purchase for the purpose and any other aspects that businesses should consider: when the practical daily running of a business changes, its management often also has to change accordingly.

The recommendations and best practices have been divided into three themes

1. Safe work

Safe work is an aspect relevant to a business as well as its employees: what each employer should consider and what role each employee plays in ensuring safe work and a safe workplace. The guide introduces best practices with examples from a range of different industries so that workplaces in all industries will benefit from them. Therefore, we have aimed to highlight essential safety measures that relate to all industries but also to employees of a service business and to employees of a public transport provider.

2. Safe services and consumption

Safe services and consumption covers what is relevant from the perspective of the service provider and customer: what a service provider should consider to ensure safe services and how a customer can ensure a safe service experience.

3. Safe transport

Safe transport refers to the services and facilities related to passenger transport services from the perspective of the service provider and passengers: what measures should a transport service provider take regarding public transport vehicles or facilities such as terminals to ensure the safety of passengers and how the passengers themselves can contribute to a safe customer experience.

Step by step towards safer everyday life

– the change is a process

1. Plan

- Assess risks – the risk assessment of each business and location is the basis of all safe work and provision of services
- Identify and cater for risk groups
- Plan your measures together with supervisors, staff representatives and occupational health services and organise the management and monitoring of measures. Use external resources if necessary, such as business premises consultants and other experts.

2. Submit the plan to your company's usual **approval** process

3. **Arrange for physical distancing** and obtain necessary materials and services (e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning services and equipment, signage, information boards, other equipment and support)

4. **Train your staff and other stakeholders** (e.g. subcontractors, contractors and temporary staff) before they return to the place of work and provide the necessary PPE.

5. **Implement changes in your processes and regularly communicate these** to all relevant stakeholders. Remember to inform your customers and occasional visitors.

6. **Monitor the effectiveness of the changes adopted** and adjust/change your policies accordingly

7. **Continually assess changes** in, for example, the infection rates and official guidance and restart the process as required by these changes.

“Coronavirus kit” and service contracts

Your company may need to stock various materials and equipment:

- Soap and hand wash
- Cleaning agents and equipment
- Hand sanitisers/disinfectants
- Disposable gloves
- Face masks, respirators and /or visors
- Signs, decals and other information equipment
- Screens in customer service spaces, disinfectants for items in shared use
- Disposable cleansing wipes
- Paper towels
- Non-contact thermometers

Your company may also need to review its service contracts and make amendments regarding:

- Occupational health services
- Property management and maintenance (incl. cleaning)
- Consumables, equipment and materials (purchasing, stock management, deliveries)
- Subcontracting services, incl. building services and security, reception desk and access control services
- HR services
- Staff catering



When practices change, management practices must also change

- When we work under exceptional circumstances with more people working remotely or in other locations and when there is less face-to-face interaction between managers and the staff, the importance of good management practices increases in the following areas:
 - communicating clear targets and expectations
 - maintaining contacts both ways, involvement
 - working hours and workload planning and management
 - competence development and self-management skills

More information about remote management and remote working is available on the [website of the Centre for Occupational Safety and the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.](#)

1

Safe work

Identification of the infected before they arrive at the workplace

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Instruct employees and visitors (subcontractors, temporary workers, guests, etc.) not to enter the place of work if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms. For description of the symptoms, see the [THL website](#). When remote working is being recommended, only arrive at the workplace when absolutely necessary.
- Adopt the practice of self-certified sick leave widely. An employee who is displaying symptoms should inform their workplace directly to assess whether others at work may have been exposed.
- Remind employees to monitor their health (self-assessment) and possible COVID-19 symptoms, and to contact occupational health services if displaying even the slightest of symptoms.
- Instruct the employee to be tested at even the slightest of symptoms. Those who have received an alert via the app are currently urged to get tested and to avoid contacts even if they are asymptomatic.
- If an employee belongs to a high-risk group (for more information, refer to the [THL website](#)), it is recommended that they contact occupational health services to discuss the situation, after which the employee and their employer can together agree on any changes in the work arrangements.
- When the vaccinations for the working age populations begin, everyone must be encouraged to be vaccinated. Inform employees about the practicalities of getting a vaccination: whether they are allowed to get the vaccine during their working hours and whether vaccination can be arranged through occupational health.
- Follow the guidance and recommendations issued by the healthcare authorities continuously and update your own guidance accordingly.

Ensuring sufficient physical distancing between employees

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Advise your employees to use facial masks when working in shared spaces. In some occupations, the use of a more effective respirator may be necessary.
- Arrange workstations so that they are further apart (may require fewer workstations or keeping some workstations unoccupied).
- Use tape on the floor to indicate sufficient safety distance between fixed workstations and around machinery/equipment.
- Repurpose other rooms and spaces as workspaces.
- Instruct everyone to maintain a safe distance (2 m minimum) in all situations in the workplace: small kitchens, toilets and lifts should be used by one person at a time, and advise everyone to use stairs instead of the lift, if possible.
- Assess the need to restrict movement between departments and buildings. Introduce restrictions if necessary.
- Create one-way traffic within the premises, if possible, so that one door is used for entering and another for exiting the building.
- The use of meeting rooms can be decided on a case-by-case basis. The number of people in one meeting room should be limited so that the minimum 2-metre safety distance can be maintained in all situations. If the meeting can also be attended online, the number of participants in a meeting need not be limited in any way.
- Particular attention should be given to the safety of face-to-face meetings at receptions and service desks through floor markings indicating the sufficient safety distance in waiting rooms and customer service areas and by installing plexiglass screens between the customer and customer service employees.
- For sector-specific guidance see, e.g., [the website of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#).

Ensuring sufficient temporal distancing between employees

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Organise work so that fewer employees need to occupy a space at one time, e.g. by working in shifts in production or by office staff taking turns working from home and the office.
- Plan shift changes so that those arriving and leaving their shifts are not in contact with each other (separate entrance and exit routes and staff facilities). If there is a break between shifts, this time could be utilised for enhanced cleaning.
- Use electronic tools to clearly communicate the division of tasks so that employees do not need to gather for briefings and can instead go directly to their workstation.
- If possible, use flexitime and encourage remote working in any tasks where this is feasible.
- Instruct employees to take their lunch and coffee breaks at different times and not together to minimise the number of people in lunch/coffee rooms at one time (remember cleaning between groups of users). Also inform the employees that staff facilities and dressing rooms may only be used by a limited number of users at one time.
- For sector-specific guidance see, e.g., [the website of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#).

Ensuring high level of hygiene in business premises and on surfaces

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Review the cleaning regime and improve the level of hygiene and amount of cleaning by utilising any breaks between room bookings, so the meeting hosts or a cleaner can tidy up and clean all surfaces.
- Make frequent cleaning a visible practice and at least inform employees how this will be implemented and what is expected of each employee. This improves everyone's feeling of safety and confidence.
- Clearly inform all users of a space of the cleaning times with, for example, a notice at the entrance: "This room has most recently been cleaned/disinfected on date/time" or on the workstations of an activity-based workplace "This workstation has been cleaned/disinfected". If there is no notice, the next user will know that the surfaces have not been cleaned/disinfected.
- Ensure efficient ventilation.
- Consider whether it is necessary to install more hand washing stations at the premises.
- If possible, avoid using shared utensils in common dining areas and favour meals that are prepacked or served on a plate. The cleaning of equipment, tools and surfaces used by several users should be given special attention. These should be carefully cleaned between every shift.
- For sector-specific guidance see, e.g., [the website of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#).

Ensuring high level of hygiene in business premises and on surfaces

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Make sure that there are disposable wipes and paper towels in kitchens and other common areas.
- Consider abandoning hot desking in open-plan or activity-based offices for the duration of the pandemic.
- Clean the PPE (hardhats, safety glasses, safety shoes, visitor card holders) used by several users (e.g. visitors) after each use.
- Put extra waste bins inside and outside the premises and empty bins more often (used face masks, gloves, tissues).
- For sector-specific guidance see, e.g., [the website of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#).

Ensuring high level of personal hygiene

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Maintain good hand hygiene and coughing and sneezing etiquette (e.g. wash hands with warm water and soap for a minimum of 20 seconds). THL has published excellent illustrated instructions in several languages. They are available in the [THL material bank](#).
- Don't shake hands or hug when greeting someone.
- Card payments and mobile or electronic payments methods are preferred.
- Avoid touching surfaces. Make sure there are plenty of disposable gloves and hand sanitiser/disinfectant in common spaces and coffee rooms and instruct everyone to use them when handling the coffee maker, dishwasher or reading magazines. Use mobile apps as a preferred way of signing in at work instead of shared devices.
- Remind employees that while wearing gloves you must not touch your face. This will contaminate the gloves and make them useless.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser/disinfectant when entering and leaving a public space unless there is a possibility to wash your hands with soap and water.
- Keep hand sanitiser/disinfectant at key locations (near the entrance and places where washing hands with water and soap is not possible) at the workplace. However, hand sanitiser/disinfectant is always the secondary option after washing hands with soap and water.
- Observe the agreed guidance for common spaces and only use small kitchens and toilets/washrooms one person at a time, put your own dishes in the dishwasher and clear up after yourself.
- Make sure that those who have to use public transport for commuting are aware of the safety procedures observed in public transport.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Carry out a risk assessment paying special attention to the PPE required for different tasks during the epidemic.
- Stock the necessary PPE and give user guidance/training to staff members (incl. temporary workers, contractors working in your premises, subcontractor and visitors).
- Take a regular inventory of materials and make sure a sufficient quantity of PPE is always available and in stock.
- Observe official recommendations on the use of face masks and other PPE, including guidance on their correct usage.
- If physical safety distance cannot be maintained, PPE (such as face masks) and other protective equipment (such as visors) suitable and sufficient for the task and conditions must be considered for workers carrying out their tasks in these conditions.
- More information on surgical masks and respirators is available on the website of [Finnish Institution of Occupational Health \(in Finnish\)](#).

Minimising physical exposure in special conditions and when travelling abroad

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

Examples of special working conditions:

- If a role involves visits to customer locations, the guidance provided by the customer company or private consumer customer must be observed in addition to the safety policy of the employee's organisation.
- If you have contractors or agency employees (temporary workers) working in your premises, they must be taken into consideration in the company's safety guidance and plans. In shared premises, the client and the contractor must jointly agree on the communication of guidance and instructions. The client is responsible for ensuring compliance with all instructions.
- Establish/agree on the self-isolation policy for foreign workers arriving in the country for work.

Examples of foreign work-based travel:

- When planning work-based travel abroad, it is essential to establish the situation in the destination country and locality before travel and to monitor the situation closely during the trip. General country-specific risks are explained in the [travel guidance](#) (in Finnish) published by Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which include a link to the embassy responsible for the country in question. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs also collects and updates information on the coronavirus prevention policies of different countries (entry into the country, quarantine, use of face masks etc.) and publishes these on its [coronavirus news site](#) (in Finnish).
- It is also important to find out policies for transfer passengers and of individual airlines.
- It is always highly advisable to submit a travel notification to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs before travelling. The company should also be aware of the employee's itinerary, schedule and contact details at the destination.
- Also find out in advance whether the employee is required to observe self-isolation after returning to Finland and what the consequences of this are for performing of duties.

Procedure in case of suspected coronavirus infection at the workplace

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

If an employee at work starts to display symptoms during the working day, the following is recommended:

- Take the employee to a room where they cannot infect others and, if possible, ask them to contact occupational health services and their supervisor by phone or online chat.
- The employee should be in contact with occupational health services immediately, and follow their instructions on the next steps.
- In case of a suspected coronavirus infection, the employer must try to trace all persons who may have been exposed to the virus. This supports the tracing of infection chains that may be required by the physician responsible for infectious diseases.
- Communications on the matter must be carefully planned. Also note that there may be data protection aspects to consider.
- The spaces that the person with the infection has used should be closed off and cleaned according to the instructions of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.
- EK has previously published more detailed guidance based on instructions issued by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health and the Data Protection Ombudsman.
- Do not forget to keep records of all the employees who have been exposed to biological agents, as required in section 40 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.
- Links to relevant websites:
 - [EK guidance \(in Finnish\)](#)
 - [Special cleaning instructions of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#)
 - [Guidance issued by Data Protection Ombudsman](#)
 - [Records of persons exposed to biological agents](#)

2

Safe services and consumption



Identification of the infected before conducting business

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 May 2020)

- Customers are advised at the entrance and other suitable places that they must not enter the premises if they have flu-like symptoms, a high temperature or respiratory tract symptoms. Customers displaying symptoms are advised to use other service channels if possible.
- In services that take a longer time to deliver, customers are offered the possibility of measuring their temperature with a non-contact thermometer.

Reducing physical contact between people, instructing customers and maintaining temporal distance

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Introduce extended opening hours and inform customers of off-peak hours.
- Limit the maximum number of people allowed in the premises at one time.
- Introduce staggered service hours and deliver services at designated times and locations.
- Send information of your safety policy in advance to customers who have booked an appointment.
- Actively offer and market online and phone services to customers. E.g. online shopping, doctor's online appointments, online meetings and conferences, take away and delivery services, pick-up services.
- Encourage customers to use contactless/card payment and other electronic payment methods or advance payments.
- Offer customers in risk groups the opportunity to receive help with their shopping and services.
- Comply with any further regulations issued by local authorities, more information on which is available on the website of the Regional State Administrative Agencies (some contents also in English).

Reducing physical contact between people, instructing customers and maintaining physical distance

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Use primarily spatial arrangements to instruct customers to keep a minimum of two metres away from members of staff and other customers.
- If this is not possible, the cashier tills, customer service desks and tables should be fitted with plexiglass screens.
- Advise customers to wear face masks while visiting your premises unless they are exempt on health grounds.
- Ensure efficient ventilation and never circulate indoor air.
- Replace hand-held menus and price list cards with wall-mounted menus and price lists or digital screens.
- If possible, different doors should be used for entering and exiting. Keep doors open as much as possible.
- Remove items that could transmit the virus when handled by several people, such as conveyor belt dividers, magazines and brochures, price lists, water dispensers and spice containers. If it is not possible to remove these items, make sure they are cleaned and/or replaced frequently. If enhanced cleaning of these surfaces is not feasible, remind customers of good hand hygiene.
- Minimise unnecessary circulation of customers within shop premises by, for example, increasing personal service.
- Comply with any further regulations issued by local authorities, more information on which is available on the website of the [Regional State Administrative Agencies](#) (some contents also in English).

High level of hygiene in business premises and on surfaces

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Review the cleaning process, raise the level of hygiene and increase the frequency of cleaning, including during opening hours, as necessary and clearly communicate the new cleaning regime. Pay particular attention to spaces and surfaces that are frequently used and touched, such as door handles, fruit scales and queue ticket dispensers.
- Provide preferably disposable paper towels or roller towel dispensers for drying hands.
- Provide or sell protective gloves, hand sanitiser/disinfectant and face masks for customers.
- Ensure there is a sufficient number of hand-washing facilities for customers and add them as necessary.
- Comply with the official regulations and guidance issued under section 58 c of the Communicable Diseases Act (in Finnish).

Making safety measures visible

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Clearly and effectively inform consumers of your own safety policy and official guidance through the available channels (e.g. website, magazine articles, advertisements, television, radio, PA systems).
- Add visual guidance (safety distance, giving customers space in the packing area, hand hygiene and coughing etiquette, use of face masks, floor markings).
- If possible, provide customer service personnel with PPE such as plastic visors, gloves and/or face masks.
- Put extra waste bins inside and outside the premises and empty bins more often (used face masks, gloves, tissues).
- The safety of face-to-face encounters should be ensured by allowing adequate space in the packing area at tills, at receptions and service desks through floor markings indicating the sufficient safety distance in waiting rooms and customer service areas, and by installing plexiglass screens between the customer and customer service employees.

3

Safe transport



Methods: general points and challenges

- The safety measures adopted and the feasibility of new safety measures in public transport are regulated by contracts between the transport service provider and the contracting authority.
- Some of the practices compiled for this guide were found to be challenging to implement either because of the contract terms and conditions in force, traffic safety regulations and other reasons such as the shortage of spare fleet during peak hours.
- Differences between regions and different modes of transport are considerable, and some of the examples presented below may not be relevant to all operators.



Ensuring sufficient physical distancing and reducing interaction between drivers and passengers

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Examine ways of maintaining sufficient safety distances between passengers depending on the layout of the vehicle.
- Encourage passengers to use online booking and payment services, contactless payments and other electronic and digital applications.
- Make sure all instructions for passengers are clear and visible, as this will reduce unnecessary communication between passengers and drivers.
- Comply with the official regulations and guidance issued under section 58 e and f of the Communicable Diseases Act (in Finnish). If regulations concerning the maximum number of passengers have been issued, more information is available on the website of the Finnish Transport and Communication Agency.

Ensuring sufficient physical distancing between passengers

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Advise customers to wear face masks unless they are exempt on health grounds.
- Advise passengers to use all available space to help maintain sufficient safety distances.
- Advise passengers to maintain a sufficient safety distance with all other passenger and staff when boarding, while onboard and when leaving a vehicle.
- Advise customers to maintain sufficient safety distances inside transport terminals, travel centres and at stops.
- Advise customers hiring a coach to select a larger than usual vehicle to help maintain sufficient safety distances while onboard.
- Inform passengers about peak hours and advise them to travel outside these hours whenever possible.
- If a service is already full, ask passengers to wait for the next service if possible.
- Instruct ticket sales to promote less popular services, particularly for passengers who belong to a [high-risk group](#).
- Adjust system algorithms on digital booking platforms to optimise passenger seating to comply with safety measures.

Enhanced cleaning

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Introduce an enhanced cleaning regime for vehicles.
- Pay particular attention to surfaces that are frequently touched and in use.
- Put extra waste bins at stations and stops and empty bins more often (used face masks, gloves, tissues).
- Instruct drivers, transport staff and passengers about good hygiene.
- Advise passengers to take all used PPE (face masks, gloves) with them and not leave them in the vehicle.
- Make safety visible by informing customers efficiently about the cleaning regime.
- Comply with the official regulations issued under section 58 e of the Communicable Diseases Act (in Finnish).

Clear and coherent communication about safety instructions and measures for all transport users

Examples of methods and implementation (updated 19 March 2021)

- Clearly display instructions for passengers about safety on public transport in vehicles, terminals and stations as well as in digital communications.

Advise passengers to:

- Wear a face mask unless you are exempt on health grounds.
- Follow all guidance and recommendations given by the transport operator and service providers.
- Avoid travel during peak hours, if possible.
- If a public transport vehicle is already full, wait for the next service, if possible.
- Maintain sufficient safety distance to other passengers and staff onboard a vehicle and at stations.
- Avoid touching surfaces.
- Observe good hand hygiene before, during and after your journey.

- When reaching your destination, immediately wash your hands carefully with soap and water.
- Avoid all travel if you are ill; if you must travel when ill, use a face mask and gloves as instructed to minimise the risk for fellow passengers.
- If you need to cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with your sleeve or a tissue.
- Purchase tickets in advance if possible. If you purchase when boarding the vehicle, card payments are preferred.
- Avoid unnecessary communication with the driver and other staff.
- Consider using PPE if maintaining sufficient physical distance when using public transport is difficult or impossible.
- Don't reuse face masks, gloves or other PPE on public transport.



Links

- [The THL coronavirus website](#) has general information on the coronavirus, the infection situation and instructions for various target groups.
- [The THL materials bank](#) has illustrated instructions on good hand hygiene and coughing and sneezing etiquette.
- [The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health “Guidelines for workplaces to prevent coronavirus infection”](#) website contains advice for workplaces, employees and occupational health care providers.
- [The coronavirus website of the Centre for Occupational Safety](#) has tips on remote management, workload and time management and cooperation in occupational safety (mostly in Finnish).
- [The Government website](#) has the current government policy line explained. See also the websites of [different ministries](#).
- [The “Coronavirus diaries”](#) on the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health website gives examples and tips on how to manage your workplace during the coronavirus crisis (in Finnish).
- [Occupational Safety and Health Act](#) and [Communicable Diseases Act](#) on Finlex (in Finnish and Swedish)
- [Statements issued by the Data Protection Ombudsman on the coronavirus and data protection.](#)

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