

## **Covid-19 Update**

The PSA recognise that the Covid-19 pandemic represents an unprecedented and changing time for the security industry in Ireland. Throughout this period we have sought to keep you informed and to respond to developments as they occurred. In this ezine we have provided details of the business supports that are available, the help that is available for issues that have arisen from Covid-19, your obligations as an employer and **an update on our guidance on the Government's Roadmap.**

Our Board have also considered what steps we should take to support contractors financially during these times. Proposals have been forward to the Department of Justice and Equality for approval.

We are monitoring the advice from the HSE and the Department of Health as well as communicating with the Department of Justice and Equality during this time. Any information which we receive which is important for you we will pass on without delay. The guidance we issue is based followed consultation on the Government guidance.

## **Revised PSA Guidance on Government Roadmap to Reopen Society and Business (28<sup>th</sup> May 2020)**

Following representations received from licence holders on the guidance issued on the Government's *Return to Work Safely Protocol*, the PSA has, following consultation, published a revised timeline for the application of elements of the Roadmap to the security industry.

The main change in the guidance is that work on domestic premises which had been scheduled to recommence under Phase 3 of the Roadmap will now recommence on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 as part of Phase 2 of the Roadmap.

You can find the revised guidance note [here](#).

## Business supports available

- **Wage subsidy** – the Revenue Commissioners are operating a Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme. This scheme is available to employers who keep employees on the payroll throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and will refund employers up to a maximum of €410 for each qualifying employee. Full details on the scheme and how to apply are available [here](#)
- **Tax and Cashflow** – the Revenue Commissioners have introduced a range of measures to work with taxpayers to resolve their tax payment difficulties. They advise that *“with early and meaningful engagement, we can generally payment arrangements that are acceptable to both the business and Revenue.”* Revenue have published information on their website on Filing returns, paying taxes, debt management and debt warehousing and this can be found [here](#)
- **Banking** – All the major banks in Ireland have advised that they will provide their customers flexibility in the form of payment breaks, emergency working capital, Short term loans and/or deferral of fees. Contact your bank for further information.
- **Government supports** – the Government has announced a number of measures and funding supports to help Irish companies adjust to the Covid-19 pandemic and the disruption it has caused to business. The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation have published a booklet which incorporates all the supports that are available to businesses impacted by Covid-19. This booklet is available [here](#) and offers advice on how to apply for grants, loans, microfinance, recovery funds and restart funds amongst others.
- **Insurance cover** – Check with your Insurance company/broker to ensure that any interruption to your business, or a temporary business closure is covered by your policy.

## Health and Safety in the Workplace

Businesses and employees will need to follow detailed safety protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic. All employers must prepare and put systems in place before they reopen their business and workplace. You must:

- Appoint at least **one lead worker representative** to make sure safety measures are in place and being followed
- **Update business and safety plans**, including the business Covid-19 Response Plan, the occupational health and safety risk assessment and the safety statement. Include how to deal with a suspected case of Covid-19 in the safety plans and appoint a dedicated manager in charge of dealing with suspected cases.
- Develop, consult on, communicate and implement **workplace changes or policies**.
- Send out a **pre-return to work form** to employees at least 3 days before their return to work. The form will ask employees to confirm they have not had symptoms of Covid-19 in the past 14 days, have not been diagnosed or suspected of Covid-19 in the past 14 days, have not been in close contact with someone confirmed or suspected of Covid-19 in the past 14 days and are not self-isolating or cocooning.
- Provide **Covid-19 induction training** for all staff
- Put in place **temperature testing** in line with public health advice
- Provide **hand sanitisers and cleaning equipment** for work vehicles
- Have appropriate **hygiene facilities in place in the workplace**
- Provide for **physical distancing** across all work activities of at least 2 metres as much as possible.
- **Keep a log of any group work** to help with contact tracing
- **Have regular cleaning** of the workplace
- Make sure employees look after their **mental health and well-being** and are aware of any employees assistance programs

## Links to assist you with the above Health and Safety protocols:

- Covid-19 – Advice for Employers and Employees from the [Health and Safety Authority](#)

- Covid-19 Templates and Checklists prepared by the [Health and Safety Authority](#) to help employers, business owners and managers to get their business up and running again and to inform workers what they need to do to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace
- The Government have published the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) which should be used by all workplaces to adapt their workplace procedures and practices to comply fully with the Covid-19 related public health protection measures identified as necessary by the HSE
- Gov.ie have published [graphics](#) and [posters](#) for public use on Covid-19 and physical distancing.
- The National Standards Authority of Ireland have published a [Covid-19 Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide](#) which assists businesses to implement the mandatory Return to Work Safely Protocol for Employers and Workers

### Contractors due for Renewal

If your licence is due for renewal in the coming weeks and your businesses has been adversely impacted by the current situation we have revised our payment instalment plan. When renewing your licence we request that you make a minimum payment of 20%. This will be followed by four further instalments of 20% at months 3, 6, 9 and 12.

You should complete the renewal process as normal using the online renewal system.

- If you do not hold current certification for the licensing standard please add the date 01/01/2021 when prompted for your certification.
- If prompted to upload your certification certificate please upload your last certificate in PDF or JPEG formats.
- Tax Clearance Certificates are still required. If you do not have a current Tax Clearance Certificate and you are engaged with the Revenue Commissioners regarding same you should provide evidence of this to us.
- You may be required to complete the Garda vetting process.
- If you have any difficulties with your renewal please contact us at [contractors@psa.gov.ie](mailto:contractors@psa.gov.ie).

**June 2020**

**If you or a member of your staff come into contact with the COVID-19 virus you must follow the instructions issued by the HSE and other authorities in the interest of public health.**

**We accept that if your business is impacted by COVID-19, it may not be possible to meet all requirements of our standards and licensing. The PSA will not penalise any contractor where such a situation arises. We are continually looking at what measures we can take to assist you during this time. If you have any further queries please contact us on**

**[contractors@psa.gov.ie](mailto:contractors@psa.gov.ie)**