



Hit the Ground Running:

A Facilities Management
guide for the post -
lockdown workplace.

Introduction

Over the next few weeks and months, businesses across the country will begin to spring back to life as many people emerge from their home offices to return to the workplace. Chances are this won't be a sudden influx of everyone returning to work and will require a more measured and gradual process to protect people's mental and physical wellbeing during this testing time. The logistics of this process in itself will present a number of challenges for FM professionals out there, not to mention the evolution of the workplace brought about from the necessity to manage the Covid-19 outbreak.

The team at Maxwell Stephens have put together this guide to provide Facilities Management professionals an overview of the primary areas to be considered as they undertake the daunting task of preparing the workplace for repopulation in a new, post-lockdown world.

In the guide we will cover topics such as suggestions for enhanced cleaning and front-of-house protocols, utilizing new and emerging technologies to support remote working capabilities and potential amendments to normal office services. The Covid-19 pandemic may have had a significant negative impact to individuals and businesses across the world, however it has also presented a unique and unprecedented opportunity to reimagine the modern workplace, and FM professionals may need to ask themselves a number of key questions such as:

- What does the post-pandemic workplace look and feel like?
- How does the workplace experience need to change to adapt to this new normal for all stakeholders?
 - How can we promote the health and wellness of all stakeholders?
 - How can we utilize the workspace to implement social distancing measures.

We will attempt to answer these questions and more throughout this guide. We hope you find the advice useful, and as always the team at Maxwell Stephens are always on hand to support and share our FM expertise, just get in touch via info@maxwellstephens.com or call us on 0207 118 4848.



Peter Forshaw
Managing Director, Maxwell Stephens Recruitment

Getting back to work...

First things first, you're going to have to open the can of worms that is actually getting people back in to the workplace. It is worth noting that although there may have been a fair bit of apprehension when embracing the working at home protocols, in practice it has proven effective in the majority of cases. This enforced acceptance of remote working may continue to prevail after lockdown, with many businesses choosing (or requiring) to stagger their re-introduction programmes and utilizing remote working practices more in the near and long-term future.

Obviously how organisations reintroduce people back into the workplace will vary greatly depending on the nature of the business, therefore there are a variety of different options to choose from / mix and match.



A Test Run:

Introduce around 10% of a building's normal capacity - stress test the systems and processes which have been put in place in a controlled environment to ensure social distancing.



Staggered starts and finishes:

Avoid people all arriving / leaving at the same time while also reducing the need for employees to travel on public transport at peak times which supports social distancing.



Alternate days:

Different teams work different days - This is an option to enable collaboration between relevant groups but ensuring social distancing as people can spread themselves across a greater space.



Split team working:

A percentage of a team work in the office, with their counterparts working from home and then they switch. Allows for a sense of business as usual while also maintaining social distancing.



Shift patterns:

Reoccupy a space gradually. Many businesses will already work this way but it could be a useful option to introduce. Where already used, the numbers of shifts could be increased.



Using local offices or branches:

Organisations can bring their employees back into a working environment while avoiding the need to travel, e.g. bank branches or retail stores.

Space Planning

Social distancing rules are one of the factors that will have the biggest impact on the workplace going forward, particularly for those working in indoor spaces. In the majority of cases this is going to require quite a hefty office reorganisation plan. The workspace may need to be significantly recalibrated to ensure social distancing rules are adhered to and all stakeholders are kept safe.



Desking:

- People should occupy alternate desks. The 'middle' desk can be taken out of action by removing the chair / equipment and / or putting a large red cross on it.
- Desks can be moved further apart with some desks removed if there's not space.
- The floor can be reconfigured to support social distancing with surplus furniture put into storage
- Stop hot-desk policies and temporarily introducing a fixed-desk approach
- On bench desking, consider creating physical barriers, stickers / signage to indicate the social distancing rules.



People flow:

- Use signage and barriers to encourage a single direction flow around the building.
- Encourage use of the stairs to reduce pressure on the lifts. Dedicate one staircase for upwards travel and one for downwards.
- Install strict lift occupancy levels of typically 1-2 people per lift.
- Open up additional building entrances and exits to ensure there's no congestion or unnecessary queuing

Office space:

- Reduce the number of chairs in meeting rooms by half and position to ensure social distancing
- Change the room-booking system to reflect the reduced capacity spaces
- Install signage requesting people not to move the furniture and explaining how to use the space safely
- Consider changing small meeting rooms into single-desk offices



Front of House and Security

The front-of house experience will set the tone for the rest of the building. If social distancing protocols aren't successfully implemented here, then it is less likely that people will adhere to them in the rest of the workplace. Use the front-of-house area to demonstrate how seriously the organisation takes the safety and wellbeing of its occupants.



Provide welcome hand sanitiser



Ensure FOH team record all visitor details - reduce physical exchanges at reception



Provide physical barriers and reception/loading bays



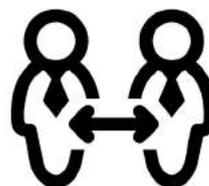
Move to no visitor passes, or single use disposables



Ensure new safe ways of working are implemented through on site direction.



Monitor space utilisation to address infection control risks



Support social distancing guidelines



Prepare for potential pre-access health screening



Remove any cloakroom facilities to avoid unnecessary contact



Remove or reduce guest hospitality in reception. Use disposable cups / bottles

Cleaning and Housekeeping

In the Covid-19 workplace, cleaning and housekeeping will be under scrutiny like never before. From a largely invisible function, cleaning is now seen as a crucial operation within an organisation to keep people safe and well. There are a wide range of considerations when establishing post lockdown cleaning procedures.



Review cleaning materials and protocols to ensure viral infection control



Conduct a thorough deep clean of the whole premises



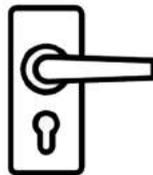
Stock up on cleaning products and consumables



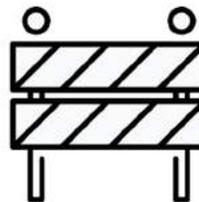
Make cleaning visible on site through continuous day-time cleaning



Deep clean all desks and chairs prior to the start of each day and visually identify desk as having been cleaned.



Focus on critical control points, e.g. handrails, door handles and work surfaces



Train for safe barrier / enhanced cleaning procedures across extended FM team



Install self-cleaning packs on every desk to allow people to wipe down their own spaces



Introduce hand-sanitisers in key points, including lifts where people will need to touch buttons



Install new closed-lid bins around the facility for easy disposal of tissues and wipes

Catering and Hospitality

Catering and hospitality areas are typically places where people congregate to chat, collaborate and eat food. For this reason it makes these areas particularly high risk environments for health and hygiene issues. It is imperative that catering and hospitality is managed carefully to reduce the risk of virus transmission.



Review HACCP and assess safe kitchen working for critical control points and social distancing



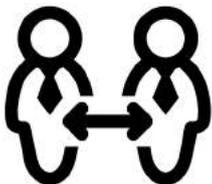
Reduce delivery frequencies and deliver to building perimeter only



Introduce lunch-time shifts to decrease the number of people in the area at any one time



Review front of house critical control points



Review and reconfigure dining operations in light of social distancing requirements



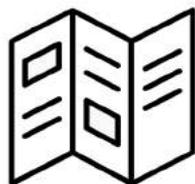
Consider desk delivery service or take out. Deploy online ordering technology



For hospitality / meetings, avoid large platters of food and opt for individual servings



Implement cashless payment systems



Consider amending / reducing menu options



Extending catering subsidy to home workers

Get some help...

Operating in the Facilities Management sector for the past several decades, we are acutely aware of just how much work is needed to prepare the workplace for the post-lockdown world. These suggestions raised in this guide only scratch the surface of what may be needed for your specific organisation and this is where it may be necessary to source outside help.

Are you understaffed or without adequate facilities management expertise at this crucial time? Maxwell Stephens can supply professional facilities interims who can fill the potential skills gaps you may be suffering for a finite length of time to help plan and organise the return to offices.

Peter Forshaw, whom has 20 years' experience in identifying the best FM talent, will personally handpick the individual for your needs. All of these interims will have been professionally interviewed and vetted and in the main will have been tested / worked on behalf of Maxwell Stephens before.

An FM Interim supplied by Maxwell Stephens will most certainly offer a great deal of value to your business. We can and will find you a tailored solution to match your specific requirements.

You can find out more about our approach [here](#) or alternatively get in touch to discuss your back to work plans and how we can support you.



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