

Information on Covid-19

Monday, September 29th, 2020

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

— How can I ensure my employees remain healthy and safe and keep operations running?

Since May 11th, the easing of lockdown restrictions, each employer must implement the preventive measures defined in the Protocol regularly updated by the Ministry of Labor in order to ensure the health and safety of employees.

This is in the best interest of both employees and companies, as the presence of employees on-site will largely depend on their faith in the company's ability to address their concerns and protect them against any virus-related risk.

Each company and establishment must lead, in order of priority, to:

- Evaluate the risks of exposure to the virus.
- Implement prevention measures aimed at eliminating risks.
- Minimize exposures that cannot be eliminated.
- Give priority to collective protection measures

Protection measures implemented within the company require a prior evaluation, job by job by the employer, to ensure their practicability and their effectiveness against the spread of the virus.

Social dialogue is key both for the implementation of the protection measures intended by the company and for the proper information of employees within each work unit.

A COVID-19 referent must be appointed in each company with more than 10 employees in order to ensure that the measures defined are implemented and that employees are informed.

Teleworking remains a solution to be favored as it plays a part in preventing the risk of Covid-19 infection and lessens overcrowding in public transport. Based on health indicators, authorities along with social partners, may encourage employers to make greater use of it.

To promote effective takeover, the employer must ensure the following actions:

Step 1: Conducting a health risk assessment in the workplace:

How? Employers shall assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present: this means identifying the work situations in which transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus may occur due to the conditions involved (particularly close contact) and assessing the risk of contagion within the company.

In concrete terms, circumstances in which employees may be exposed to the virus must be reviewed and therefore employers are to implement the necessary measures to avoid or, failing that, to limit the risk as much as possible.

It is also important that employees are informed of the prevention measures to be enacted under the risk assessment reference document. The latter must be regularly updated.

This process is carried out in conjunction with the employee representative committee (CSE) and the occupational health service.

Sub-contractors working on company premises must be informed of any protective measures taken further to the adaptation of the prevention plans, which must also be updated.

Step 2: Taking adequate preventive and protective measures

In this respect, companies must take all necessary action to ensure the protection of the health of the personnel on-site, while enabling operations to continue, based on the following recommendations:

- Physical distancing rules and barriers: handwashing at regular intervals, physical distancing of at least one meter between people (imperative health instructions).
- Wearing a face mask (except in individual office spaces)
- Adapting premises in terms of gauge per open space: (4 m² per person)
- People flow management: creating traffic plans to ensure minimum physical distance, in small and cramped areas or in open spaces.

- Individual protective equipment is to be used as a last resort when a collective protection solution cannot be properly implemented.
- Screening tests: broadcasting information health recommendations and encouraging employees to request tests in the event of symptoms.
- Establishing an ad hoc procedure for taking charge of an employee exhibiting symptoms and its close contacts in consultation with social partners.
- Taking one's temperature: recommended on an individual basis and possibility to allow for it in the company's internal bylaws, which must be transmitted to the CSE and later to the work inspection.
- Ventilating closed rooms for 15 minutes every 3 hours (or make sure there is an adequate supply of fresh air through the ventilation system)
- Deep cleaning: offices, surfaces and toilets with a product which is effective on the virus.
- Cleaning of handrails (twice a day minimum)

For more information, please visit:

<https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/actualites/l-actualite-du-ministere/article/coronavirus-questions-reponses-pour-les-entreprises-et-les-salaries>

<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus#partie7n5>

<https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/le-ministere-en-action/coronavirus-covid-19/reprise-de-l-activite/protocole-national-sante-securite-salaries>

<https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/le-ministere-en-action/coronavirus-covid-19/protoger-les-travailleurs-les-emplois-les-savoir-faire-et-les-competences/protoger-les-travailleurs/article/fiches-conseils-metiers-et-guides-pour-les-salaries-et-les-employeurs>

https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/covid_19_measures_employer_must_take.pdf