

Covid-19 – Provision of Essential Services

Guidance for Employees and Employers

28 March 2020

The Government has decided that everybody should stay at home until April 12th 2020, except for the following situations:

- to travel to and from work, or for purposes of work, only where the work is an essential health, social care or other essential service and cannot be done from home
- to shop for essential food, beverage and household goods or collect a meal
- to attend medical appointments and collect medicines and other health products
- for vital family reasons, such as providing care to children, elderly or vulnerable people
- to take brief individual physical exercise within 2km of your home, which may include children from your household, as long as you adhere to strict 2m physical distancing
- for farming purposes, i.e. food production and/or care of animals

As stated in previous guidance, all employees should work remotely from home if at all possible.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to employers and employees as to what constitutes an essential service where workers cannot work from home and have no option but to travel to work.

All workers in Essential Retail Outlets as set out in the updated list published on 27 March 2020 [LINK] are permitted to travel to work.

In addition, workers in the categories of essential services set out in the attached list are permitted to travel to work, subject to compliance with the guidance below.

If you carry out an activity that is necessary for the continued provision of an essential service by another organisation or you are part of an essential supply chain, you should continue to carry out that activity. To the maximum extent possible, that should be done remotely.

The Government also recognises that many companies in Ireland are critical to global supply chains that are responding to the Covid-19 crisis, and many companies also perform critical global roles in other aspects of medicine, as well as

security, cyber, cloud and data centre infrastructure. It is intended that these essential global roles are encompassed within this national guidance.

Employers should take the following steps:

- refer to this guidance to decide whether your organisation is providing an essential service; it is not necessary to seek official authorisation
- if you are providing an essential service, you should identify those employees (including sub-contractors etc) who are essential to the provision of that service and notify them (this can be done by category of employee or by individual; it could include all employees of the organisation)
- if you are providing an essential service, latest public health guidance should be followed at all times

Employees should take the following steps

- If your employer notifies you that you are an essential employee, or that you belong to a category of essential employees, you are permitted to travel to and from work

- When travelling to and from work, you should at all times bring with you either a work identification or a letter from your employer indicating that you are an essential employee, as well as one other form of identification

If you are self-employed, a farmer or agricultural worker, or a member of the clergy, you should carry one form of identification with you at all times.

If you are a volunteer who is working as part of the national community response, you are permitted to travel for that purpose, e.g. if you are delivering food, supplies or medicine to a person who is cocooned or vulnerable. The Local Government emergency response teams will co-ordinate that response at local level.

Business Continuity and Resilience

All organisations who provide essential services should have business continuity and resilience plans in place. This should take account of the possibility that key workers or key facilities may be impacted by Covid-19.

Non Essential Services

If you are not engaged in the provision of essential services, then you are not permitted to travel to and from work until April 12th 2020.

There will be a grace period until 6pm on Monday March 30th for people who need to make necessary arrangements to wind down their activities in an orderly way. This should however be done in a way that minimises travel and personal interaction as much as possible.

In exceptional circumstances, it is accepted that some extra time will be needed for a wind down of activity, or, it may be necessary for a site to continue to operate at a reduced level of activity e.g. in complex manufacturing processes or very large construction projects.

Review

This Guidance will be kept under ongoing review, and will be updated as required.

Services provided in the following areas	
Agriculture & Fishing	farmers, farm labourers, farm relief service workers, and others involved directly or indirectly in crop and animal production and related activities (including veterinary services), and workers involved in fishing
Manufacturing	the manufacture of food and beverage products; prepared animal feeds; work-wear apparel or footwear; pulp, paper and paperboard; wood; printing and reproduction of newspapers and other media services; coke and refined petroleum products; alumina; chemicals and chemical products; pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations; products necessary for the supply chain of essential services; computer, electronic and optical products including semi-conductors; electrical equipment, machinery and other equipment (including agricultural and forestry machinery); medical devices; and medical and dental equipment and supplies.
Repair and installation of Machinery and Equipment	the supply, repair and installation of machinery and equipment; industrial machinery and equipment for essential services
Electricity, Gas & Water	electric power generation, transmission and distribution; extraction and distribution of gas; water collection, treatment and supply; sewerage; waste collection, remediation activities and other waste management treatment and disposal activities
Construction¹	

¹ All contractors contracted by Government Departments or Public Bodies will be advised as to whether a project is deemed essential or not.

	essential health and related projects relevant to the Covid-19 crisis, and supplies necessary for such projects; repair\construction of critical road and utility infrastructure; delivery of emergency services to businesses and homes on an emergency call out basis in areas such as electrical, plumbing, glazing and roofing.
Wholesale and Retail Trade	retail services in accordance with the separate “Updated Essential Retail Outlets ² ” list; wholesale and distribution services necessary for the sale of food, beverages, fuel, medicines, medical products and devices and essential household products; takeaways and food delivery services
Transport Storage and Communication	land transport (e.g. bus, rail and taxi services); road, rail, sea and air freight; sea and air passenger services; ports and airports; warehousing and support activities for transportation including cargo-handling; postal and courier activities; network control and critical maintenance (including roads); and safety related functions
Accommodation and Food Services	hotels or similar providing essential accommodation (including homeless, direct provision and related services); food and beverage service activities in accordance with the separate “Updated Essential Retail Outlets ³ ” list or for supply to a business engaged in an essential service
Information & Communications	publishing of newspapers, journals and periodicals; video, television programme production, sound recording, radio and television broadcasting; wired and satellite and telecommunications activities; internet and cloud providers; data centres and related services.
Financial and legal activities	banking and financial services (including banks, credit unions and post offices); accountancy, legal and insurance services, necessary to support essential services and vulnerable people

² See separate “Updated Essential Retail Outlets” [\[LINK\]](#)

³ See separate “Updated Essential Retail Outlets” [\[LINK\]](#)

Professional, Scientific and Technical activities	engineering, technical testing activities and analysis, scientific research and development activities, regulation, inspection and certification services, necessary to support essential services
Rental and Leasing Activities	rental and lease of cars, light motor vehicles and trucks, necessary to support the provision of essential services.
Administrative and Support Services	where necessary to support other essential services: employment placement and human resources associated with the recruitment and deployment of workers; security activities to assist in the delivery of essential services and the securing of premises closed to the public; cleaning of buildings and industrial cleaning activities; business support activities which are necessary to support essential services included on this list; payroll and payment services necessary for the operation of businesses; data processing, hosting and related activities.
Public Administration and Defence	public administration activities necessary to support essential services and provision of social protection benefits (including Civil Service and Local Government); An Garda Siochana, Garda Staff and the Garda Reserve; public order, safety, fire service and ambulance activities; the Defence Forces; emergency call answering service; to ensure administration of justice; Prison services and Child Dentation services; cyber-security; regulatory processes and certification required to ensure supply chains, food, medicine and general process safety; operation of botanical gardens, parks, forests and nature reserves; funeral services; religious personnel; office-holders and public representatives

Human health and social work activities ⁴⁵	hospital services; paramedical and essential therapy activities; public health activities (including all those deployed to contract tracing and Covid-19 testing services); laboratory services; drug treatment & addiction services; hospice services; pharmacy services; primary care, general and specialist medical practice activities provided by public and private providers; emergency dental practice activities; blood donation service; residential care activities (including nursing care, mental health and substance abuse, elderly and persons with disabilities, children’s residential services); homecare, home help and other community services; social work and social care activities (including disability services, mental health, child protection and welfare, domestic, sexual and gender based violence, homeless services including outreach); ambulance/pre-hospital emergency care services; minor injury units; maternity services; health, social work, environmental, food safety regulatory activities; non-centre based childcare for those providing essential services.
Community\Voluntary Services	community and voluntary workers, working in a publicly commissioned service, not otherwise included on the list, deployed to assist in the delivery of essential services; volunteer services operating under the local authority emergency management framework in accordance with public health guidance

⁴ Pharmacists included on list of essential retail outlets

⁵ All public body employees will be designated by the Head of the Public Body/All private body employees will be so designated by Head of business/All sole traders can self designated by reference to this list/community and voluntary providers of services designated by the CEO of the HSE or Tusla can in turn designate staff in those sectors.