



COVID-19

early outbreak management

Laboratory and research facilities

Who should use this information?

Those (operators, owners, and managers) in control of laboratory and research facilities including labs handling biological agents (diagnostic and research), clean rooms, computer labs, engineering centres, material development labs, prototyping centres, simulators, specialist testing rooms, wet labs, wind tunnels, animal settings and similar. This information provides key steps to quickly identify and contain any potential COVID-19 outbreak. If you are concerned about other possible health issues then you should follow your existing processes.

National Restrictions began in England from 5 November 2020. [Find out about the new restrictions and what you can and cannot do.](#) For England only.

What you can do to manage a possible outbreak

Confirm

If you are informed about a case or cases, check whether they have had a test (**Box 1**). <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

If tested negative and are well, they can return to work.

If tested positive, they must isolate for 10 days from the day they were tested. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Contacts

Identify any close contacts of the case when confirmed using **Box 2**.

Remember, contact might occur in a car if car-sharing or in staffrooms on breaks. Talk to the case and make a full list. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

Check

Check your workspace. Refer to www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19. This has practical steps to take and explains how you must carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment for your organisation.

Call

Call your local PHE Health Protection Team but only if you need additional advice or support.

There are some circumstances when the PHE HPT would like you to call them (see **Box 3**). <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>

Box 1. Symptoms check list

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:



a high temperature – hot to touch on your chest or back (no need to measure your temperature)



a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours



a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means that it is different to normal

Box 2. Identifying contacts

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms. For example, a contact in the work-place can be:

- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within 1 metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - being coughed on
 - having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre
 - having physical contact, or
 - contact within 1 metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive

The only exception is if the person was trained-in and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

Box 3. When to call your local Health Protection Team

- number of cases exceeds 5 within 14 days
- you've taken the action outlined but are still seeing more cases
- you're thinking you might need to close because of the number of people affected
- somebody in your workplace has been admitted to hospital; You're getting significant interest from local media

To access more information refer to the guidance below or search the titles on GOV.UK:

- [guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#)
- [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)
- [coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)
- [working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in labs and research facilities](#)
- [health and safety executive coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest information and advice](#)