



## COVID-19 instructions for retailer undertakings

- COVID-19 is an infectious viral disease which spreads from person to person by means of the projection of aerosols, mainly though coming into close contact with infectious persons.\*
- If conditions are favourable, the virus can survive on contaminated surfaces for up to three days, but it can be destroyed through proper cleaning and disinfection.
- The risk of the spread of COVID-19 is at its highest in enclosed, crowded, and poorly ventilated rooms.
- The aim of the instructions is to provide guidelines to retail undertakings for the safe provision of their services under the circumstances of the spread of COVID-19.
- **The work of the establishment should be organised using as a basis those valid orders which have been issued by the Estonian government: [Measures and restrictions which are required in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#).**

### The cleanliness of the premises and proper ventilation

- [It must be ensured that air which is mechanically supplied and removed in the form of a ventilation system is supplied through a system which is fully functional and which has been switched on.](#)
- The premises must be regularly cleaned and disinfected by using the usual methods and cleaning materials. [The advice of the Health Board in terms of cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed.
- Frequently touched objects and surfaces (such as door handles, electronic information boards, self-service equipment, cash registers, payment terminals, shopping carts, shopping baskets, scales, etc) must be cleaned every two to four hours.
- Any waste which may have come into contact with the virus (including personal protective equipment) must be collected in plastic bags which can be sealed at the top and disposed of as mixed domestic waste.
- Any waste which may have been contaminated with the virus (eg. tissues, masks, etc) should be disposed of pursuant to the following instructions: <https://envir.ee/uudised/koroonajaatmed-tuleb-teistest-eemal-hoida>.
- [The advice of the Health Board in terms of cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed.

### Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is a biological hazard

- As of 24 November 2022, coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is deemed to be a biological hazard which is included in hazard group 3. The hazards of this group may cause severe illness in humans and are a serious threat to employee health.
- **In the case of any work which includes coming into contact with biological hazards the employer must, during the course of conducting the working environment risk analysis carry out the following actions:**
  - ✓ the type, extent, and duration of the risk of infection for the employee must be determined, and an assessment should be made of the resultant risk to the employee's health;
  - ✓ **consider where and how the employee may come into contact with the virus and map out all potential infection sites: office and production premises, non-work rooms, auditoriums, cloakrooms, etc.**
- Based on the risk analysis, the required precautions must be taken. [The precautions are introduced on the Labour Inspectorate's 'Tööelu' website.](#)





## Customers

- **The act of wearing a mask or covering one's mouth and nose in all publicly-used indoor premises is compulsory.** This requirement does not apply to children under the age of twelve or if it is not advisable for a specific individual to wear a mask or cover their mouth and nose in another manner due to their health condition or any other significant considerations. [Please see on the Health Board's website for guidance on how to wear a mask properly.](#)
- Appropriate conditions must be created in the indoor service areas and publicly used premises of commercial undertakings, as well as other services areas where services are being provided, which allow customers to **observe social distancing requirements while they are on the premises.** This requirement does not apply to families or in any situation in which the requirement cannot reasonably be observed. Signage should be posted around the cash register area to ensure that this requirement is observed.
- **Sanitising products must be made available and sanitising requirements must be observed** [pursuant to the Health Board's instructions](#) in the indoor service areas and publicly used premises of commercial undertakings, as well as other services areas where services are being provided.
- Customers should be encouraged to use the [HOIA](#) mobile phone app. The app notifies individuals who have come into close contact (lasting at least fifteen minutes within a distance of two metres) with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus.
- Hand sanitisers must be provided for the employees and customers in visible places in the sales and service areas, at least at the entry and exit points.
- Toilets must be equipped with plenty of soap and disposable towels for drying hands. From the perspective of infection prevention, it is safer to use disposable towels instead of hand dryers. [Hand-washing](#) and [sanitising](#) stations must be equipped with appropriate instructions.
- Counters with uncovered food and self-service counters should not be used if possible, as people may gather around such counters and it may be difficult to observe social distancing rules in those areas. Any unpacked food should be covered. If shared utensils are used for serving food, hand sanitiser must be provided and it must be ensured that people sanitise their hands before handling food, while also observing social distancing rules.
- If the business has an online store, customer should be encouraged to shop online. In cases which involve organising sales campaigns, measures should be taken to prevent a gathering of people. Businesses are urged to refrain from organising any large-scale on-site campaigns (such as those involving discounts for most or all of the goods). Discounts for single products or product groups are permitted (for example, two packs for the price of one).

## Employees

- The employer must make sure that all employees are aware of [the main measures which can be implemented to prevent the passing-on of respiratory diseases, the main hygiene principles](#), and [the main principles of food hygiene and food handling](#).
- It must be stressed to employees that they are not permitted to come into work or to remain at work in the case of there being even the smallest suspicion of their having been infected. A procedure must be established in order to make sure that no employee who has fallen ill remains on the business premises.
- Close contact between employees and customers must be minimised.\*





- It is advisable to wear a mask or to cover one's mouth and nose in indoor premises and in crowded places which are poorly ventilated and where social distancing from strangers is not possible. [Please see the Health Board's website for guidance on how to wear a mask properly.](#)
- Employees should be advised to use the [HOIA](#) app. The app notifies individuals who have come into close contact (lasting at least fifteen minutes within a distance of two metres) with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus.
- Employees must be able to wash their hands regularly and the employer must remind the employees when and how often they should wash their hands (see the list in the end of the instructions). The [instructions](#) which have been provided for washing hands must be followed.
- If it is not possible to wash one's hands, then hands must be sanitised with a hand antiseptic by following the relevant [instructions](#). Visibly dirty hands must always be washed.
- Based on the risk analysis, the required precautions must be taken. [The precautions are introduced on the Labour Inspectorate's 'Tööelu' website.](#)
- Collective means of protection and personal protective equipment must be issued to employees based on the results of the risk analysis for the working environment, and training must be organised to show the proper and safe use of such equipment. [Instructions can be found on the Health Board's website.](#)
- Any waste which may have been contaminated with the virus (eg. tissues or masks, etc) should be disposed of pursuant to the following instructions: <https://envir.ee/uudised/koroonajaatmed-tuleb-teistest-eemal-hoida>.
- Work clothing must be washed regularly using a procedure which is followed by all of the business employees. The clothing of any employee who has fallen ill must be washed immediately.
- Clothing or other tools and equipment which are used at work should not be taken home if possible.
- In cases which involve organising product presentations (such as those involving food, utensils for serving food, or cosmetic products which are accompanied by a high risk of cross-contamination, such as lipsticks or mascara), where possible facilities must be provided to those persons who are tasked with presenting the products and to customers so that all parties are able to sanitise their hands and all parties should be encouraged to maintain the required social distancing.

If an employee falls ill with a respiratory disease  
(such as a fever or a cough, or displaying a lack of energy, or showing other  
symptoms)

- Any employee who falls ill outside of working hours must stay at home.
- Any employee who falls ill at work must leave immediately.
- The employee must contact their family physician who will determine whether or not that person should be diagnosed with COVID-19, plus their need to be tested, and the need to sign a certificate to show their incapacity for work.
- From the perspective of slowing down the spread of COVID-19, it is important for any employee who has fallen ill to notify their employer of their COVID-19 diagnosis having been confirmed. The employer must be notified in a manner which has been agreed upon between the employee and the employer.
- If a diagnosis of COVID-19 is confirmed, the employer must identify all persons who may have come into close contact with the employee who has fallen ill at their place of work, and within the immediate period after the employee had become symptomatic or up two days before they became symptomatic.\* In the case of an asymptomatic employee, anyone who came into close contacts with the employee within two days before the employee tested positive is deemed to be amongst the employee's close contacts.\* [Further information about determining who is a close contact can be found on the Health Board's website.](#)





- Having been notified of an employee's COVID-19 diagnosis, the employer must cooperate with the Health Board's relevant regional department in order to identify the employee's work-related close contacts, and to provide them with the appropriate instructions for the further organisation of their work.\*
- Please enter the details of any work-related close contacts in the relevant table (the table is available [here](#)).
- Following your conversation with the Health Board, please send the table to the Health Board's relevant regional department (you will receive the required contact details) in an encrypted format.
- Close contacts must self-isolate for ten days, while monitoring their health condition carefully. Even though it is not compulsory to get tested, the Health Board advises close contacts to undergo SARS-CoV-2 testing after completing their ten-day self-isolation period in order to detect potential asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic cases. The duration of a close contact's self-isolation period can be calculated with the help of the [Estonian Family Physicians Association's isolation calculator](#).
- The requirement to self-isolate in one's current abode or permanent residence for ten calendar days and take the coronavirus SARS-CoV2 test is not applied under the following circumstances:
  - a) the individual has had COVID-19 within the past 180 days;
  - b) the individual is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, has obtained full protection after the last vaccine dose, and has received the last vaccine dose within the past year;
  - c) the individual has had COVID-19, has received one vaccine dose, has obtained full protection after the last vaccine dose, and has received the last vaccine dose within the past year, or the individual has been infected with COVID-19 after their first vaccine dose, has recovered from COVID-19, and has taken the SARS-CoV-2 test which confirmed their diagnosis or they have had their diagnosis confirmed in another manner within the past year.
- Any premises which may have been contaminated with the virus must be closed to third parties and should be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected, and ventilated before reopening.
- [The advice of the Health Board in terms of cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed.
- If the COVID-19 diagnosis is not confirmed for an employee who has fallen ill, all other employees may continue to carry out their duties, but must monitor their health over the following ten days.

**HANDS MUST BE WASHED:**

- before commencing work
- before and after handling food
- after handling waste
- after cleaning
- after using the toilet
- after blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing
- after eating, drinking, or smoking
- after handling cash

**\*CLOSE CONTACT IS CLASSED AS BEING:**

- direct physical contact with an individual who has been infected with COVID-19 (such as shaking hands)
- direct contact without any protection with secretions from the respiratory tract of a person who has been infected with COVID19 (such as being coughed on)
- being within a distance of up to two metres of a person who has been infected with COVID-19 for at least fifteen minutes





**Guidelines and advice are available at:**

[The Health Board's COVID-19-related publications and instructions](#)

[The advice of the Veterinary and Food Office to food business operators in connection with coronavirus](#)

[The Labour Inspectorate's advice to the employer and employee](#)

