



Agreed protocols relating to the management of protective measures for combating and containing the spread of the Covid-19 virus within the workplace.

14th March 2020



Today, Saturday 14th March 2020, the "*Agreed protocols relating to the management of protective measures for combating and containing the spread of the Covid-19 virus within the workplace.*" was signed. The Protocol was signed at the request of the President of the Council of Ministers, the Minister for Economic Affairs, the Minister for Labour and Social Policy, the Minister for Economic Development and the Minister for Health, who facilitated a consultation between the social partners to implement the measures contained within Article 1, paragraph 1, number '9' of the President of the Council of Ministers of 11th March 2020, which – concerning trade and manufacturing activities – indorses the following agreements between employers' and trade union organisations.

The Government favours, where applicable, the full implementation of these Protocols.



Premise

This document, taking into account what has already been issued by the Ministry of Health, contains guidelines shared between the Parties to help companies adopt anti-contagious safety protocols, i.e. a regulatory protocol to combat and contain the spread of the COVID 19 virus within the workplace.

The continuation of manufacturing activities can only take place under conditions that ensure adequate levels of protection for the workforce.

Therefore, all necessary working parties have agreed to the use of social safety nets (welfare benefits), during the ensuing reduction or suspension of work activities, to allow companies in all sectors to apply these measures and the consequent safeguarding of the workplace.

Along with the possibility for companies to use flexible work methods and these social benefits as additional organisational solutions, all parties agree to encourage these measures to combat and contain the spread of the virus.

The main objective here is to combine both ongoing production activities whilst guaranteeing conditions for a healthy and safe working environment. As part of this objective, the reduction or temporary suspension of business activities may also be planned.

In this context, the urgent measures that the Government intends to adopt and in particular in terms of social safety nets for the entire national territory will prove to be beneficial given the reduction in the number of people working in the workplace.

Without prejudice to the need to rapidly adopt a regulatory protocol to combat and contain the spread of the virus which includes procedures and rules of conduct, preventive dialogue with trade union representatives in the workplace is to be encouraged, and for small businesses, their regional representatives assigned to inter-confederal agreements, so that each measure adopted can be shared and made more effective by contributions and experiences from those employed, in particular RLS and RLST, taking into account the particular nature of each business and regional situations.



SHARED REGULATORY PROTOCOL TO CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF COVID - 19

The objective of this shared regulatory protocol is to provide operational guidelines aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the precautionary containment measures that have been already taken to combat the COVID-19 epidemic within non-healthcare working environments. COVID-19 represents a widespread biological risk for which equal measures must be taken for the entire population. This Protocol, therefore, contains actions that follow the logic of precaution and are in line with the requirements laid down by the legislator and the recommendations of the Health Authority.

Without prejudice to all the obligations laid down in the provisions issued for the containment of COVID-19

and on the premise that

The Prime Ministerial Decree of 11th March 2020 provides for the observance until 25th March 2020 of restrictive measures throughout the entire national territory, designed specifically to contain COVID - 19 and which recommends such measures for production activities:

- that companies make maximum use of agile working arrangements for activities that can be carried out at home or from a distance.
- paid holidays and paid leave for employees are to be encouraged, along with other instruments provided for by collective bargaining.
- activities of departments that are not essential to production are suspended.
- adopt anti-contagion safety protocols and, where it is not possible to respect interpersonal distances of one metre as the main containment measure, provide individual protective equipment.
- encourage workplace sanitation procedures, including the use of social welfare assistance for this purpose.
- for manufacturing activities only, it is recommended that movements within a site should be limited as much as possible and access to common areas should be restricted.
- agreements between employers' and trade union organisations should be encouraged for manufacturing activities.



- for all non-suspended activities, the maximum use of agile working methods is recommended.

it is agreed that

Companies adopt these regulatory measures within their workplaces, in addition to the provisions set out in the aforementioned decree and apply the additional precautionary measures listed below – which are to be integrated with other equally or more effective ones depending on the specific nature of the organisation. This should be done after consultation with the company's trade union representatives - to protect both the health of its workers and to ensure a healthy working environment.

1- INFORMATION

- Employers, through the most suitable and effective methods, must inform all workers and those entering the company premises about the provisions issued by the Authorities, by delivering and/or posting special information leaflets at their entrances and in the most visible places within the company premises.
- In particular, the information shall cover:
 - the obligation to stay at home in the event of a fever (over 37.5°) or other flu-like symptoms and to call their family doctor and the local health authority.
 - the knowledge and acceptance of the fact that they are unable to enter or remain in the building and that they must immediately declare this if, even after entry, dangerous conditions exist (symptoms of influenza, temperature, arriving from risk areas or contact with people tested positive for the virus in the previous 14 days, etc.) in which the Authority's measures require them to inform their family doctor and the Health Authority and to remain at home.
 - a commitment to respect all the instructions given by the Authorities and the employer when entering the company (in particular, to maintain a safe distance, to observe the rules of hand washing and to maintain appropriate hygiene practices).
 - the assurance to promptly and responsibly inform the employer of the presence of any flu-like symptoms during work, ensuring that they remain at an adequate distance from those present.

2- METHOD OF ENTRY INTO THE COMPANY

- Before entering the workplace, staff may be subjected to a body temperature check before entering¹. If their temperature exceeds 37.5°, no access to the workplace will be permitted. People who are in such a condition - in compliance with the recommendations given herein - will be temporarily isolated and provided with a mask. They must not proceed to the Emergency Room and/or to the infirmary but must contact their doctor as soon as possible and follow his instructions.
- The employer must inform the staff in advance, and those who intend to enter the company, of the refusal of access to those who, in the last 14 days, have had contact with people who have been tested positive for COVID-19 or have arrived from areas at risk according to the WHO guidelines².
- For these cases, reference is made to Decree-Law no. 6 of 23/02/2020, art. 1, letter h) and i).

¹ The real time detection of body temperature constitutes the processing of personal data and, therefore, must take place in accordance with the privacy regulations in force. For this purpose it is suggested to 1) detect the temperature and not record the given data. It is possible to identify the person concerned and record the exceeded temperature threshold only if it is necessary to document the reasons that prevented access to company premises; 2) provide information on the processing of personal data. Please note that the information notice may omit information already in the possession of the interested party and may also be provided verbally. With regard to the contents of the information notice and with reference to the purpose of the processing, the prevention of contagion from COVID-19 may be indicated and the implementation of the anti-contagions protection protocols pursuant to Art. 1, no. 7, letter d) of the Prime Ministerial Decree of 11th March 2020 may also be mentioned. With regard to the duration of any data storage, reference may be made to the end of the state of emergency; 3) define the appropriate security and organisational measures to protect this data. In particular, from an organisational point of view, it is necessary to identify the parties responsible for processing and provide them with the necessary instructions. In this regard, please note that the data may be processed exclusively for purposes of prevention from infection by COVID-19 and must not be disclosed or communicated to third parties outside the specific regulatory provisions (e.g. in case of request by the Health Authority for the traceability of any "close contacts" of a worker who has tested positive to COVID-19); 4) in case of temporary isolation due to high temperature, ensure procedures to ensure the confidentiality and dignity of the employee. These guarantees must also be made if the worker informs the personnel office that he or she has had, outside the company context, contact with people who have been tested positive for COVID-19 and in the case of removal of the worker who develops fever and symptoms of respiratory infection and his or her colleagues during his or her work (see below).

² If a declaration is required to be issued certifying that he/she has not been travelling in areas at epidemiological risk and that there has been no contact in the last 14 days with subjects who have tested positive for COVID-19, it is important to pay attention to the rules on the processing of personal data, as the collection of this declaration constitutes data processing. In this respect, the indications referred to in footnote 1 above applies and, specifically, it is recommended to collect only data that is necessary, adequate and relevant with respect to the prevention of infection with COVID-19. For example, if a statement on contacts with persons found to be COVID-19 positive is required, additional information about the positive person should not be requested. Or, if a statement is required on origin from epidemiological risk areas, additional information on the specifics of the location is not required.



3- METHODS OF ACCESS FOR EXTERNAL SUPPLIERS

- For the admittance of external suppliers, companies must establish entry, passage and exit procedures by using predefined routes, methods and timings to reduce the prospects for contact with personnel working in the departments/offices involved.
- Where possible, delivery drivers must remain onboard their vehicles: access to offices are not permitted for any reason. For necessary loading and unloading activities, the haulier must observe a minimum distance of one metre.
- For delivery drivers and/or other external personnel, it is necessary to locate/install dedicated toilets, prohibit the use of employees' toilets and to ensure adequate daily cleaning procedures.
- Access to visitors should be restricted as far as possible; if external visitors (cleaning, maintenance, etc.) are needed, they should comply with all the company rules, including those for access to the premises referred to in paragraph 2 above.
- Where there is a transport service organised by the company, the safety of workers must be guaranteed and respected during every journey.
- the provisions laid down in this Protocol also extends to contract companies that have either permanent or temporary premises or construction sites within their premises or industrial areas.

4- CLEANING AND SANITATION OF THE PREMISES

- the company must guarantee the daily cleaning and periodic sanitisation of the premises, workstations and communal recreational areas.
- if a person with COVID-19 has been present inside the company, the premises must be cleaned and sanitised following the provisions of Circular no. 5443 of 22nd February 2020 and issued by the Ministry of Health, as well as ventilated.
- end of shift cleaning and periodic sanitisation of keyboards, touch screens and mice with suitable detergents must be carried out both in offices and in production departments.
- the company, in compliance with the instructions issued by the Ministry of Health and in a manner deemed most appropriate, may organise particular measures/cleaning periods using “social safety nets” (also by way of exception).



5- PERSONAL HYGIENE PRECAUTIONS

- employees in the company must take every hygienic precaution, in particular concerning the washing of the hands.
- the company must provide suitable hand cleansing equipment
- frequent cleaning of hands with soap and water is recommended.

6- PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- The use of hygiene measures and personal protective equipment indicated in this Regulatory Protocol is essential and, given the current emergency, is linked to its availability on the market. For these reasons:
 - a. Masks shall be used following the guidelines set out by the World Health Organisation.
 - b. Given the emergency and in the event of supply difficulties, for the sole purpose of preventing the spread of the virus, masks of the type specified by the health authority may be used.
 - c. The preparation by the company of liquid detergent according to WHO guidelines are encouraged:
(https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Guide_to_Local_Production.pdf)
- if the job involves working at a distance of **less** than one metre between workers and other operational solutions are not possible, it will then be necessary to use masks and other protective equipment (gloves, goggles, earmuffs, overalls, etc.) under the provisions issued by the scientific and health authorities.

7- MANAGEMENT OF COMMON AREAS (CANTEEN, CHANGING ROOMS, SMOKING AREAS, DRINKS AND/OR SNACK DISPENSERS...)

- access to common areas, including company canteens, smoking areas and changing rooms must be restricted. There must be continuous ventilation of these areas, reduced time spent inside them and a safety distance of one metre between the people occupying them.
- It is necessary to arrange adequate space and sanitation of the changing rooms to provide the workers with suitable storage space for their work clothes and to guarantee adequate hygienic and sanitary conditions.



- It is also necessary to ensure periodic sanitisation and daily cleaning of these areas, using special detergents in the canteen and on the keyboards of both drink and snack dispensers.

8- ORGANISATION OF THE COMPANY (ROSTERING, TRAVEL AND SMART WORKING AS WELL AS RESTRUCTURING MANUFACTURING PROCESSES)

Regarding the Prime Ministerial Decree of 11th March 2020, paragraph 7, exclusively during the period of the emergency arising from the COVID-19 crisis, companies will be able to make use of the conditions set down in the national collective bargaining agreements and therefore favour arrangements with the company's trade union representatives to:

- order the closure of all departments other than production as well as instruct those activities that can be carried out through smart working, to do so at a distance
- the restructuring of production levels may be carried out
- ensure a rostering plan for employees working in production to reduce contact as much as possible with colleagues and to create autonomous, distinct and recognisable groups
- use smart working for all activities that can be carried out at home or remotely and in cases where “social welfare benefits” are used, also by way of exception, always assessing the possibility of ensuring that they concern the entire company structure and, if necessary, with appropriate shifts
- use, as a priority, “social welfare benefits” available under the contractual institutions (par, rol, hours banked) which are generally aimed at allowing abstention from work without loss of pay
- if the use of facilities referred to above is not sufficient, unused holiday entitlements in arrears should be used
- all national and international travel/business trips, even if they have already been agreed or organised, are to be suspended or cancelled



9- MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEESEES' ENTERING AND LEAVING

- Staggered entry/exit times are to be encouraged to avoid as much contact as possible in common areas (entrances, changing rooms, canteens etc).
- Where possible, it is necessary to dedicate an entrance and an exit door from the premises and to ensure that there are detergents labelled with appropriate instruction.

10- DOMESTIC TRAVEL, MEETINGS, INTERNAL EVENTS AND TRAINING

- Movements within the company site must be limited to the minimum necessary and in compliance with the company's instructions.
- Meetings in attendance are not permitted. If they are necessary and urgent and cannot be carried out remotely, the attendance must be reduced to a minimum and, in all cases, inter-personal distancing and adequate cleaning/sanitising of the premises must be guaranteed.
- All internal events and training activities in a classroom setting, even if previously arranged, must be suspended or cancelled; it is, however possible, if the company organisation allows it, to carry out distance learning even for those working remotely.
- Failure to complete the updating of professional and/or qualifying training within the deadlines set out for all company roles/functions in terms of health and safety in the workplace and which is caused by the ongoing emergency and therefore due to circumstances beyond the company's control does not imply the impossibility of continuing to carry out specific roles/functions. (By way of example: the emergency worker, whether fire-fighting or first aid, may continue to intervene in case of need; the forklift truck driver may continue to work as a forklift truck driver).

11- THE MANAGEMENT OF ASYMPTOMATIC PERSONS IN THE COMPANY

- if a person on the premises develops a fever and symptoms of a respiratory infection such as coughing, he must immediately report this to the personnel office and his isolation must be carried out following the provisions of the health authority and that of others present on the premises. The company must then immediately inform the relevant health authorities via the COVID-19 emergency numbers provided by the Region or the Ministry of Health.



- the company will work with the local health authorities to define any "close contacts" the person found positive with COVID-19 may have had in the company. This is to enable the authorities to apply the necessary and appropriate quarantine measures. During the investigation period, the company may ask any possible close contacts to leave the plant as a precautionary measure and as indicated by the health authority.

12- HEALTH CHECKS/COMPANY DOCTOR/RLS

- Health checks must continue to take place according to the measures set out in the Ministry of Health's instructions (so-called decalogue).
- During this period, priority should be given to preventive visits, on-demand visits and visits following return from illness.
- Periodic health checks should not be stopped since they are an additional preventive measure of a general nature: they can intercept possible cases and suspicious symptoms of contagion and the information and training that a company doctor can provide to workers to prevent the spread of contagion.
- In implementing and proposing all regulatory measures related to COVID-19, the company doctor will cooperate with both employers and RLS/RLST.
- The company doctor will notify the company of situations of particular vulnerability and existing or past illnesses of employees, while the company will safeguard their privacy whilst the doctor in charge, applies the instructions of the Health Authorities.

13- UPDATING OF THE REGULATORY PROTOCOLS

A Committee is to be set up within the company for the implementation and verification of the rules of the regulatory protocol with the participation of the companies' trade union representatives and the RLS.