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Ventilation and Air Conditioning

As part of your risk assessment, law requires all employers to make sure there is an adequate supply of fresh air in all enclosed areas of your business. Including fresh air (along with other mitigations such as hands, face and space) as you reopen, reduces the risk of transmission and helps to make your workplace/business Covid-secure.

Essential Checklist

- ☑ **Understand why fresh air/ventilation is so important.** Allowing fresh air into indoor spaces can help to remove and dilute air that contains virus particles and prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). When someone with the virus breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles containing the virus – smaller droplets can remain suspended in the air. If someone breathes these virus particles in, they can become infected.

- ☑ **Look at natural ventilation.** Allow fresh air to flow through doors, windows and clean air vents that can be partially or fully opened. Even opening the door for 10 minutes every hour will make a difference.

- ☑ **Look at mechanical ventilation.** Use fans and ducts to bring fresh air in from the outside. Is mechanical ventilation set to maximum levels and well-maintained? 6 air changes per hour (6ACH) is a good standard.

- ☑ **Think about all spaces within your workplace/businesses.** Look at ALL indoor spaces including staff rooms or toilets.

- ☑ **How many people use each area at any one time? And for how long?** The risk increases if an area is poorly ventilated and occupied by more than one person. The longer the time spent in an area the greater the risk. You should l limit the number of people in all areas of your workplace but especially small / enclosed spaces – why not use signage to show maximum number of people allowed at any one time? Encourage people to spend less time in busy areas e.g. staff rooms.

- ☑ **What tasks / activities take place in each area?** If an activity involves deeper breathing (physical exertion, shouting,) these activities should be done in areas with adequate ventilation, moved to another area (e.g. outside) or by working alone

- ☑ **Do any features of your workplace affect ventilation?** Large machinery or equipment can prevent air circulating – consider how to improve the flow of air if this is the case.

- ☑ **Do not use desk or ceiling fans in poorly ventilated areas –** it will just circulate virus particles

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☑ **Do you have a complex ventilation system?** This could be the case in some older buildings, buildings with multiple floors or where systems are designed for product manufacturing. If so, check out guidance from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), or you may need to get a ventilation engineer to provide expert advice on what system you need to reduce any potential transmission risks. https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19/emerging-from-lockdown

☑ **Talk to your team** about the importance of letting in fresh air and show them some practical ways of doing this.

Further information is available from HSE
https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm

Hospitality Businesses can use this handy infographic from BEAMA
https://www.beama.org.uk/resourceLibrary/beama-covid-19-ventilation-guidance-infographic--hospitality-.html

NB Always refer to the fire risk assessment when making changes to ventilation in any building, never prop open fire doors.

Check out our Business Resources page for useful posters and checklists- available in English and 9 other languages
www.sheffield.gov.uk/coronavirusbusinessresources

www.sheffield.gov.uk/coronavirus-business