



## SOCIAL DISTANCING POLICY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The importance of Social Distancing and complying with the guidance issued by the local Government, Public Health Agency and HSE NI cannot be understated at this critical time for our community. DPS are complying with these guidelines and managing Social Distancing as advised. Our aim is to manage our work processes to ensure adequate separation and community safety.

We are asking our employees to work together to apply the separation requirements in each of our work locations and sites. We encourage our employees and contractors, while visiting local businesses (shops etc.) to respect the Social Distancing requirements that are in force for everyone.

The ability of the company to continue to operate is key to ensuring that we can provide essential services within our business and recover economically from COVID-19.

The advice on social distancing measures which we should all take is to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Social Distancing is another level of personal and group awareness that follows good hand hygiene. Social distancing is important to minimise contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals.

This policy intends to focus on the actions we can take as a team to apply the Social Distancing recommendations.

### 2.0 COMPANY POLICY

#### 2.1 Protective Measures

Where possible, individuals at work should ideally maintain a 2-metre social distance from others to avoid coming into contact with other persons potentially carrying Coronavirus COVID-19. Preventing the spread of COVID-19 is our key priority and as such the following controls reflect best available guidance and are proven defences against the likelihood of anyone being at work who is a prospective transmitter of the virus.

### **Persons Feeling Unwell Should Stay at Home**

- The aim is to prevent anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (coughing, sneezing, high temperature or shortness of breath) from working, entering the workplace without first contacting their GP to determine their fitness for work. Once advised by your GP or the PHA's Contact Tracing Service to self-isolate you should contact your line manager immediately who will direct you through absence protocol.

### **Working from Home**

- Those who can work from home have been asked to do so and the relevant measures have been taken to facilitate these employees thus reducing headcount at workplaces. This has been done in agreement with the respective line manager.

### **Meetings**

- Non-essential meetings have been rescheduled, staggered, or cancelled. Essential meetings have been held through video conference, teleconference or through Microsoft Teams. Where unavoidable, a hierarchy of control is recommended as follows:
  1. For those working on projects, where possible hold meetings externally – open air conditions basically eliminate transmission hazards
  2. In a room with doors and windows open, maintaining 2 metres apart.

### **Canteens**

- Break periods have been staggered where possible and different groups assigned different time periods.
- Rest breaks should be staggered to maintain a 2-metre distance and queues should be managed with 2 metres between personnel as an added defence mechanism.
- Canteens and coffee docks should only be used as per Standard Operating Procedures.
- Tables/chairs can be removed from canteens/shared spaces to adhere to social distancing guidelines where necessary.
- Employees should bring their own crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. If sharing of items is necessary, these items must be thoroughly cleaned before and after use.

### Communal/Shared Work Areas

- Working patterns have been reviewed and where possible, shift arrangements have been put in place in shared working areas where there are large groups.
- Relocation of employees has been carried out to reduce the number of people in shared workspaces and create more distance between workstations.
- Welfare and shared facilities are to be cleaned more frequently.
- Smoking breaks should be staggered to avoid situations where people may congregate.

### Transport

- Non-essential travel is to be avoided where possible
- If you rely on public transport to get into work, examine the possibility of making arrangements to reduce your exposure to packed buses.
- Where it is not possible to avoid public transport, speak to your line manager about working alternative hours on a temporary basis, coming in earlier or later to avoid rush hour, or working from home if the other options are not practicable.

*Note: Avoid touching of the face and immediate hand washing are two key aspects of controlling the virus. If you can wear disposable gloves on public transport and wash your hands after disposal of same, this is another precautionary step. However – if you touch your face with the gloves that undoes the good work of wearing them. Remember, washing your hands with warm water and soap is the best defence at home, shops, work of preventing contact with the bacteria from other transport users.*

- Wherever possible workers should travel alone using their company vehicle or their own means of transport. Those travelling in vans must stay in the same groups and not change vans. The following must be implemented.

Number of Seats in the Vehicle	Seating Arrangement
2	1 driver
3	1 driver, 1 person in the far passenger seat
5	1 driver, 1 person in the far passenger seat behind the front seat



- Drivers and passengers of DPS vehicles are all responsible for ensuring that the inside of the vehicle is continuously cleaned, and employees should practice good hygiene at all times. Face coverings should be worn by staff when travelling together in company vehicles.
- Face coverings must be worn in accordance with Government guidance.

Depending on the nature of the work that you are doing e.g. Service and Repair, Contracting, Sales we are requesting that you speak directly with your relevant line manager for advice and potential further measures that may be specific to your role.

### **3.0 SOCIAL DISTANCING OUTSIDE OF WORK**

Owing to the controls in place within the workplace, your personal chances of contracting COVID-19 may be higher outside work based on the lower level of controls and education likely outside our controlled environments. Bear this in mind when out in social situations such as basic food shopping or exercising for example, in the interest of protecting yourself, your families/friends and your colleagues.

### **4.0 GOOD HYGIENE**

- Wash hands frequently - Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol- based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
- Maintain social distancing - Maintain a 2 metre (6.5 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth - Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose, or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
- Practice respiratory hygiene - Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means turning your head away from other people and covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Wash hands after disposing of the tissue with soap and water, or alcohol-based hand cleaners (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Fever, cough, and difficulty breathing - Stay at home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call-in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

## 5.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The above policy on Social Distancing is approved by the undersigned and is supported by all the levels of management within the organisation. DPS will commit the necessary information and resources as required to ensure the health and wellbeing of DPS employees. DPS employees have a huge role to play in helping to control the coronavirus outbreak by maintaining a good level of hygiene, not just in work or at home, but in any public venue they may be attending. Please ensure that the protective measures listed above are implemented at all times and if further information is required, please contact your line manager/the department manager or the HSQE Manager.

Signed:



Austin Kennedy  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2022