

# Coronavirus – Government updates public health advice for business

**‘Essential that all businesses act responsibly’ to protect public health**

**Social distancing guidance for businesses in Scotland has been [updated](#) to help provide clarity on protecting their employees in the fight against Covid-19.**

The government clarifies that any business providing an essential service must follow the rules as to social distancing. Business owners and operators of workplaces not required to close by law are asked to consider whether what they do is essential to the efforts in the fight against the virus or benefit the wellbeing of society.

The [guidance](#) also asks those employers if they can demonstrate and provide its workforce with confidence that they are consistently practising safe social distancing and complying with all other standard health and safety requirements.

If the answer to either of the above questions is no, workplaces are advised to close.

Economy Secretary Fiona Hyslop said: “We recognise that this is an extremely difficult time for businesses in Scotland and I must give my thanks to the many companies acting responsibly and taking action to protect their workers and the wider public.

“The updated [guidance](#) we expect to be published today by the UK Government does not apply in Scotland.

“The Scottish Government’s established priority is public health and fighting the virus. Workplaces that do not follow the Chief Medical Officer’s clear and consistent precautionary [advice](#) may be putting their employees, the wider public and our NHS at risk. It is essential that all businesses act responsibly to safeguard the nation’s health, well-being and economic future.

“Our updated [guidance](#) asks non-essential businesses to consider whether their employees can work from home and, where not possible, they should close on a precautionary basis until such time it is clear to all staff and unions that they can operate in a way that is safe and fully compliant with social distancing as reducing our social interactions will reduce the spread of coronavirus.

“We need essential businesses and their supply chains to continue in their work and show that they are complying with social distancing guidance. We will work with business and trades union leaders so that we can all be clear on how activity can be undertaken safely and in a way that is fully compliant with social distancing. Unless and until such guidance is in place, non-essential workplaces, including construction sites, should close.”