



COVID Health & Safety concerns at work

To all members working in theatres

Following the increase in the number of Covid cases that are sweeping the country, Bectu is receiving a large number of calls from members asking what to do if they have concerns in their workplace. This is a step-by-step guide on what you need to do.

STEP 1

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of everyone affected by their work activities. Additionally, the management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require employers to carry out a “suitable and sufficient” assessment of the health and safety risks their employees and others are exposed to at work, and put in place measures to prevent or control those risks. They must also set up procedures to be followed in the event of “serious and imminent danger to persons at work”. These procedures should enable workers to stop work and immediately proceed to a place of safety in the event that they are exposed to “serious, imminent or avoidable danger”.

Your employer should provide you with a briefing or training on the main points of the risk assessment. If you have not received this, you do not know what the latest procedure is or haven't seen an up to date risk assessment then you should write to your line manager and ask them for a copy of the risk assessment. We are advising members to do this before an incident occurs.

The guidance on testing and self-isolation can be found at:

England [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-and-support)

Northern Ireland <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

Scotland <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Wales <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

STEP 2

If there is an incident or issue in your workplace that you are concerned about, or if the procedure is not being followed then you can discuss your concerns with:

- your workplace union rep
- your workplace H&S rep or qualified COVID supervisor or marshal
- your line manager
- your HR department (if you have one)
- your full-time Bectu official

If your concerns are not resolved, then you need to put these in writing to your line manager. You can do this individually or on a group basis (if more than one person is affected) or your local rep or Bectu official can do this on your behalf. The email should:

- detail the concerns
- remind them of their duties in the risk assessment and/or associated procedures
- detail their duties under health & safety law
- ask what actions they intend to do to rectify the issues and
- when the actions will be carried out

STEP 3

If your issues are not resolved then you can:

- contact your Bectu official
- call Bectu Members Contact Centre – 0207 346 0900
- email for members queries - membership@bectu.org.uk
- contact HSE's COVID-19 enquiries team by telephone: 0300 790 6787 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm), or the on line form [Tell us about a health and safety issue - Contact HSE](#)
- make a complaint under whistleblowing procedure [I have challenged my manager about the safety risks in the workplace, but they are not doing anything about it, can I take it higher and 'whistle blow'? | Bectu](#)

STEP 4

Only in exceptional and serious circumstances should people consider refusing to work. Workers have some protections if they “stop the job” in these circumstances. Under Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 they have the right not to be subjected to a detriment by their employer for leaving or refusing to return to their workplace, or for taking steps to protect themselves in circumstances of danger they reasonably believe to be serious and imminent. Under Section 100 of the Act it is automatically unfair to dismiss employees or safety reps who withdraw to a place of safety or take other appropriate steps protect their own safety or that of others because they reasonably fear that they are in serious and imminent danger.

This should only be considered after taking further advice from a Bectu official.

Further information can be found at Bectu's COVID hub - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) hub | Bectu](#)

Thank you
The Bectu A&E Team