

WORKING FROM HOME?

These are very difficult and exceptional circumstances and you may suddenly be working from home when you are normally office based. Your employer still has a duty of care for your health and safety, here's what you need to know.



1

SAFE WORK STATION

If you're working at home you should have access to safe working conditions. If you're working on a computer think about your desk set up and posture. Employers should provide you with advice on completing a basic workstation assessment. This practical [workstation checklist](#) may help.



2

HAVE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

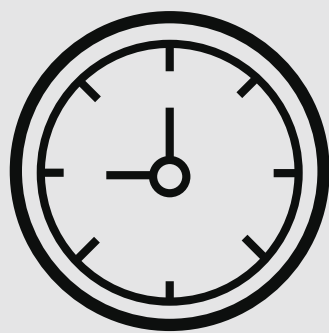
You should have access to all the relevant equipment and IT software you would normally use in your day-to-day working life. Employers should consider the cost of wifi where this is needed for the job.



3

KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED

Your employer should be clear about what is expected of you and should not place unreasonable work demands on you.



4

WORK YOUR NORMAL HOURS

Try and work your normal hours where possible and remember to take regular breaks, including breaking for lunch.



5

KEEPING IN CONTACT

Working from home can be isolating. It's important that employers set up reasonable systems to keep in touch, this could include facilitating meetings via video conferencing. You might also consider keeping in touch with colleagues via messaging services such as WhatsApp



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MENTAL HEALTH

This is a very difficult time and many people may feel anxious. Keeping a balanced routine can help manage anxiety but it is important to let your employer know if your work is contributing to anxiety or stress. The Health and Safety Executive has produced a useful resource for home workers [here](#).

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CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

If you find yourself temporarily working from home it might also mean that you are caring for children who would normally be at school or nursery or for a dependent who normally has carers.

Balancing work and caring can be difficult and stressful.

Employees who are unable to work because they have caring responsibilities resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19) can be furloughed. For example, employees that need to look after children can be furloughed but remember, the decision to furlough staff rests with the employer. For more information on eligibility see [here](#)

However, given these exceptional circumstances, we would hope that employers would support their workers with flexibility to reduce or vary their working hours or pattern to enable them to work around childcare needs, if required. If you think this is an option in your role then you should raise that with your employer. For more detailed guidance, see [here](#)

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VULNERABLE WORKERS

Employers should pay particular attention to workers from vulnerable groups - e.g. workers with certain disabilities or pregnant women. Employers should consider the suitability of the person to the work in the context of their home working space. It is essential that work tasks and working conditions do not adversely affect the health of employees with a disability, pregnant employees, and young workers.



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REMEMBER

Responsibility for health and safety at work rests with your employer whether or not that work is being done at home. Employers should consult with you to ensure that any specific risks associated with working from home are identified and eliminated.

Further information

- Your union website
- [Irish Congress of Trade Unions](#)
- Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
- Public Health Agency
- [Labour Relations Agency](#)
- [NI Direct](#)
- [Workplace Safety Guidance](#)