

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Amendment) Bill 2020

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Amendment) Bill 2020 is currently before Dáil Éireann, Second Stage and, if enacted, it will provide for a proactive health notification and surveillance. This means that a legal obligation will be placed on all employers and/ or workplace to notify the Health and Safety Authority of any occurrences of Covid-19 in their workplace.

Currently, Covid-19 falls under the immediate preliminary notification to a Medical Officer of Health only under the Infectious Diseases (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 53 of 2020).

However, under the Amendment Bill 2020, Covid-19 will be classified as an occupational illness and every employer and/or workplace, will have to have regard to the immediate, exceptional, and manifest risk posed to human life and public health by the spread of the virus, and have to report any occurrences of Covid-19 amongst worker(s) in the workplace to the Health and Safety Authority.

While we await the outcome of the Amendment Bill 2020 as it moves through Dáil Éireann, this acts as a timely reminder of the importance of health and safety in the workplace. Despite Level 5 restrictions being in place it is incumbent upon each Employer to ensure a safe place of work. The requirements to mitigate and implement preventative and control measures will once again come to the fore when restrictions are eased. Until then, Employers should ensure the focus remains on mental health support and health and safety in the remote working space such as compliance with DSE and Ergonomic Assessments.

Disclaimer – The information in this section is provided for reference purposes only to assist Employers with the government protocols and guidance and must be read in that context and should not be used for or interpreted as a legal definition of any of the information provided. Some of the information provided is per information published on the government websites at www.hpsc.ie, www.oireachtas.ie. Professional advice should always be sought before making any such decisions.

**For further information or advice, please contact the designated HR & Employment Helpdesk at thewheelhrhelpdesk@adarehrm.ie or via telephone on (01) 5394661
Monday – Friday 9.00am- 5.00pm**