

# BACK TO WORK SERIES

## THE WELCOME EXPERIENCE

As businesses begin the preparations to welcome back employees into the office, the impact of coronavirus will see the introduction of new workplace measures as we adapt to a new way of working.

Employees coming back into the office for the first time will be looking for reassurance that their organisation has adopted visible controls that puts their safety first; from the moment they step into the building, until they leave.

The key measures of social distancing and good hygiene form the basis of good practice and when enhanced by technology and other innovations, can lead to an exceptional welcome experience.

For the second part of our Back to Work series, we look at the welcome and access areas of a building, with a focus on maintaining the safety of employees and managing social distancing.

### FRONT OF HOUSE TEAM AND SECURITY

At peak times, reception areas are likely to be busy places and it's vital to ensure that front of house teams, including security personnel, are appropriately protected.

Where possible, it is recommended that employees work behind protective screens, which can be in the form of desk-fixed or hanging panels. Security teams can also be protected behind a security podium fitted with a screen to limit their exposure.

Check local government advice on PPE and issue equipment accordingly to help ensure a safe working environment for the front of house team.

Providing hand sanitising units within the reception is encouraged for those who have travelled by public transport as this may be the first opportunity for individuals to clean their hands before entering the building. It may also be the last opportunity for them to sanitise before heading off home.

In the days before their appointment, visitors and contactors should be given a set arrival time to avoid waiting and reduce queues within reception. Pre-booking visitors into the building will also allow for the reception desk to be closed or partially closed during quiet periods to conduct deep cleans of the area.

Businesses should remove any soft seating and other furniture where maintaining social distancing will not be possible and utilise as much open space as available.

Free standing signs and hand sanitiser stations can be utilised in this space; however, they should not block access through the reception or create hot spots for congestion. Space should be planned carefully, and pathways clearly marked so they are easy to follow.

It is vital that new initiatives are collaboratively planned with the front of house team and opportunities are provided for them to feed back, so continuous improvements can be made during the early period where new measures will be being trailed and assessed.

### BUILDING ACCESS AND EXITS

Social distancing measures will impact the number of people who can safely occupy a building at any one time. Despite reduced numbers it is likely there will be an increase in queues forming in reception areas, lift lobbies and staircases.

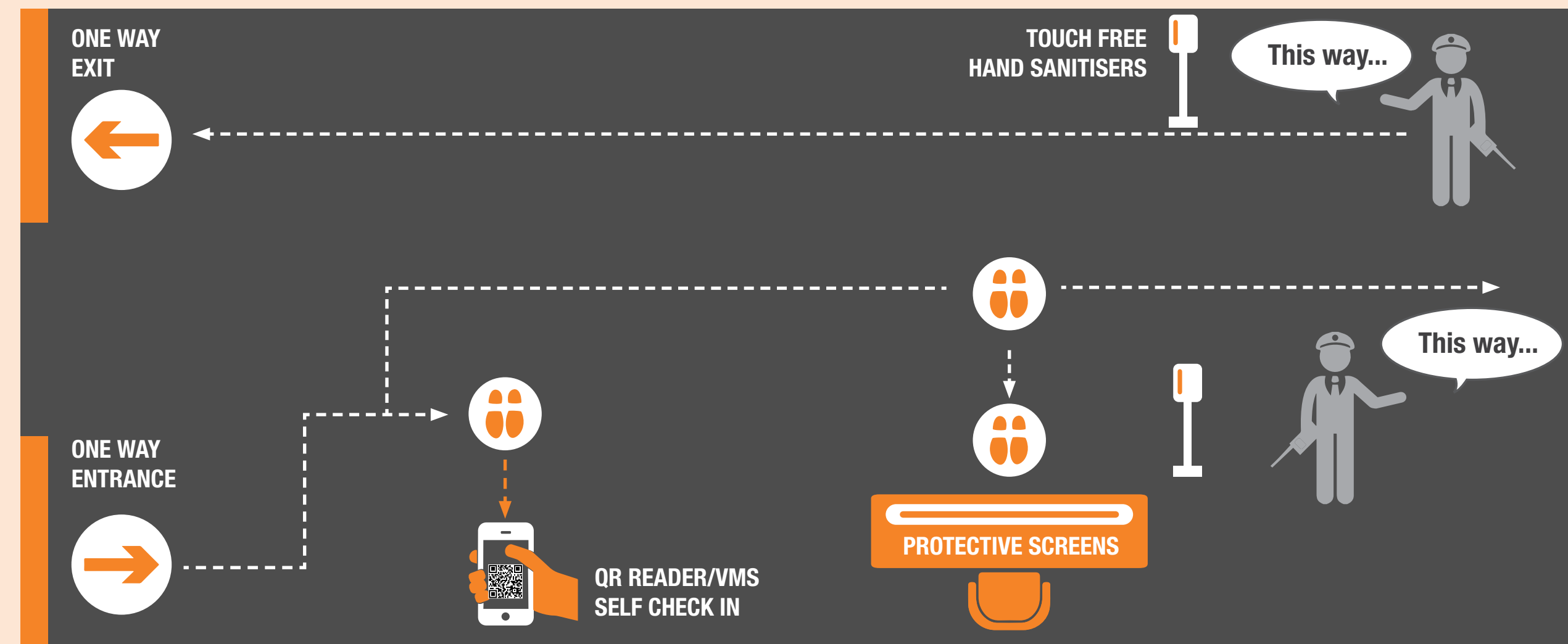
As such, a range of measures will be required to ensure employees know how to navigate these areas and keep colleagues protected. Where possible, external doors should be allocated as either entrances or exits to establish a one-way system. The doors should be clearly signposted for all building users, specifically in instances where multiple entry points have previously been in use.

Where possible, doors should be switched to automated opening or propped open to remove the risk of contaminating surfaces. Directional floor markings should be installed to indicate safe routes to navigate through the reception and lobby areas.

If you would like to speak to us about any of this guidance or have any questions about the workplace or technological solutions available during the pandemic, one of our experts will be happy to help.

Contact us at:

[response@macegroup.com](mailto:response@macegroup.com)



Consider opening turnstiles and barriers to limit touchpoints and add additional support from security guards to check access badges and guide employees and visitors.

Next page

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### LIFTS AND STAIRCASE MANAGEMENT

Lifts and staircases are likely to be prone to high volumes of people. Measures will need to be taken to support social distancing measures by reducing lift occupancies and encouraging employees to use the stairs, where social distancing will be easier to manage.

Allow priority access to lifts for less abled colleagues and encourage individuals to use the stairs for lower floors. Additionally, programming lifts to service set floors, or to operate only in one direction, will help maintain the movement of individuals.

If available, two or more staircases should be used to create a one-way system within the building, with clear signage installed to show the direction of travel.

Placing hand sanitiser in readily available locations near the stairs will reduce the contamination risk on handrails and allow them to be safely used to reduce the risk of trips.



High volume touch points such as handrails and door handles should be regularly cleaned in addition to surfaces within lifts and in lift lobbies, such as call buttons.

### INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

To support and enhance the experience for building users, technology should be implemented to improve visitor management and reduce contact with front of house staff.

Visitor management systems should be introduced to allow entry passes to be stored on smart phones. Passes can be printed via a screen which can be installed away from the reception staff.



Antiviral door plates and handles within reception areas would also improve hygiene. The overlay sits on top of existing door handles and contains a coating to reduce transmission of viruses.

For added hygiene, hand scanners can be utilised to identify the effectiveness of an individual's hand washing techniques. As well as displaying and recording the areas of the hand that have not been effectively cleaned, the device also gives real time feedback to the user.

### EMERGENCY FIRE EVACUATION

With social distancing measures in place, unplanned fire evacuations can present logistical hazards, which may confuse employees unless handled effectively.

Fire evacuation procedures will need to be updated and shared ahead of any planned evacuations, to reflect any physical or process changes to the workplace.

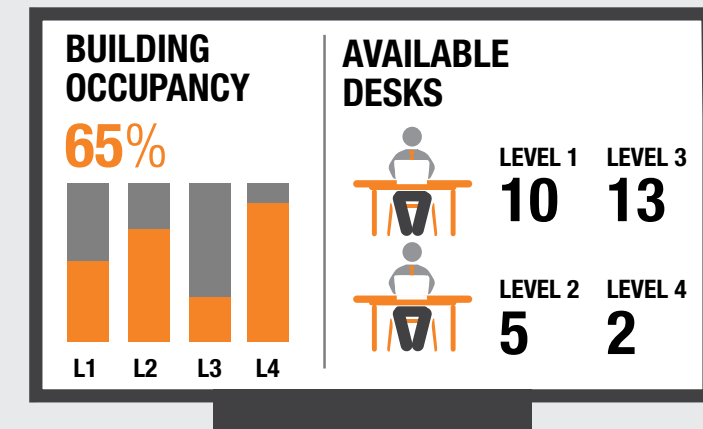
During an unplanned fire alarm, it is recommended that teams follow normal evacuation procedures for the building. Fire marshals or workplace ambassadors should be positioned within the building to oversee the evacuation safely while ensuring employees maintain reasonable distancing.

### COMMUNICATION

Clear signage and floor markings are encouraged throughout the reception and lobby areas to inform building users of new guidelines and procedures. Signage should be easy to understand, quick to digest and clearly outline new hygiene and social distancing measures.

If display monitors are installed within the reception area, these should be utilised in addition to floor signage within the lift lobby and reception area to share new guidelines or updates about the building.

Once the building reopens, communicating statistics on building occupancy and desk utilisation will help building users to plan their movements around the building and reduce the risk of overcrowding in popular areas at busy times.



Issuing a welcome pack, with a copy of the new guidelines and updated workspace plans, will help employees navigate the building easily once they return to the workplace.

Assembly points should be reviewed to check they are large enough to accommodate socially distanced building users until the 'all clear' is given. If the assembly point is too small, employees should be instructed to register with a fire marshal before continuing to walk to a safer location and return after the anticipated end of the evacuation.

Be aware that a reduced building occupancy will impact the availability of both fire marshals and first aid team members on site at any given time and that additional support may need to be appointed to fulfil the minimum requirements.