

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON SAFE COMMISSIONING, INSTALLATION, INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS DURING CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 EMERGENCY



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1.0 Introduction

This document is intended to provide practical guidance on how to safely commission, install, inspect and maintain Portable Fire Extinguishers (PFEs) during the COVID-19 emergency. It will allow business and service providers to meet the standard I.S.291:2015 during this pandemic.

It addresses risks to both workers and the public.

Statutory obligations remain in place for employers and persons in charge of workplaces during this emergency.

2.0 Scope

This document specifies requirements to implement, maintain and improve an organisation's ability to protect employees and members of the public from the transmission from one person to another through the installation, inspection and maintenance of PFEs

This document will give guidance for controls that will assist in the mitigation of the spread of COVID-19 by addressing:

1. Management of the risks
2. Provision of control measures

3.0 Legal requirements

Under Irish legislation, all organisations are obliged to implement safety procedures to reduce the possibility of uncontrolled fires. Compliance with the responsibilities under the Fire Services Act 1981 as amended in 2003, means that essential fire safety features appropriate to the use of the premises must be provided. A proactive fire safety management policy must be in place to minimise the risk of a fire occurring and to ensure the safety of persons on the premises in a fire emergency. These statutory obligations remain in place for employers and persons in charge of workplaces despite the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, Section 8 requires every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all of his or her employees.

Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health “Return to Work Safely Protocol COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers” and employees provide support for employers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Employers and employee representatives should work together to ensure that all the actions in this guidance are fully adhered to in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Note:

The Guidance Document On Safe Commissioning, Installation, Inspection And Maintenance Of Portable Fire Extinguishers During Coronavirus Covid-19 Emergency is a live document. In addition, further supports will be developed and provided where appropriate.

Disclaimer

The Fire Industry Association of Ireland has devised this guidance document with information taken for best guidance at this time. We do not accept any responsibility for any losses (direct or indirect) howsoever arising from adoption or implementation of this guidance document or any aspect of it, or for any injuries, damages, costs and/or expenses resulting from the use of the guidance document, or any aspect of it.

4.0 Objective

The objective of the Guidance Document On Safe Commissioning, Installation, Inspection And Maintenance Of Portable Fire Extinguishers During Coronavirus Covid-19 Emergency is to give general guidance aimed at the prevention of the spread of Coronavirus COVID-19 through the installation, inspection and maintenance of PFEs. It is not intended as a legal interpretation of any legislation.

Note:

Advice from a competent person should be sought for the implementation of this document

5.0 What Is Coronavirus?

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a new (novel) Coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. Current evidence suggests that the virus is significantly more infectious than the flu that circulates every winter. Viruses can be easily spread to other people, and patients are normally infectious until all the symptoms have gone. A combination of good personal hygiene and management of physical distancing can protect from infection.

6.0 Key Control Measures

Hand Hygiene

Ensure everyone is washing hands regularly and thoroughly or sanitising and sufficient facilities are provided and maintained to allow this to happen.

Physical (Social) Distancing

Ensure workers maintain two (2) metres separation insofar as possible while working when using toilets or canteens etc. Also promote social distancing when travelling to and from work (on public transport, in vans etc.), and in their daily lives, in order to limit exposure.

Cough Etiquette/Respiratory Hygiene

Ensure people cough/sneeze into sleeve or elbow, dispose of tissues safely.

Cleaning

Ensure that all frequently touched objects and surfaces are regularly cleaned as normal and/or disinfected with an anti-viral disinfectant/spray.

7.0 Employers Responsibility

In advance of returning to work the employer will

- Provide for physical distancing across all work activities
- Implement a no handshaking policy
- Prevent gatherings of employees in the workplace at the beginning and end of working hours
- Implement physical distancing during any outdoor work activity
- Provide one-way systems for access/egress routes in the workplace where practicable
- Allocate specific times for collections, appointments and deliveries
- Conduct meetings as much as possible using online remote means
- Organise employees into teams who consistently work and take breaks together
- The teams should be as small as is reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done
- Stagger canteen use
- Consider closing canteen facilities if public health measures, including social distancing, cannot be facilitated
- Keep a log of contact/group work to facilitate contact tracing
- Inform employees and others of the purpose of the log
- Display information on signs and symptoms of covid-19
- Provide up to date information on the public health advice issued by the hse and gov.ie
- Provide instruction for employees to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of covid-19 during or before work

- Establish and issue a pre-return to work form for employees to complete at least three (3) days in advance of the return to work
- Provide induction training for all employees
- Arrange for the putting in place of the necessary controls identified in the risk assessment to prevent the spread of covid-19 in the workplace
- Implement temperature testing in line with public health advice
- Minimise any direct employee contact and provide handwashing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids, such as hand sanitisers, wipes/disinfection sprays etc. That are readily accessible so employees can perform hand hygiene as soon as the work task is complete
- Place in vehicles where necessary
- Implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces
- If disinfection of an area is required, it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning
- Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as tabletops, work equipment, door handles, and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned at least twice daily
- Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas
- This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces
- Cleaning should be performed at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty provide employees with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (for example wipes/disinfection sprays products, paper towels and waste bins/bags)

8.0 Employee Responsibilities

- An employee should not attend work if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19
- They should not come to work and should restrict their movements for 14 days from symptom onset, the last five days of which should be fever-free.

Employees should;

- Inform their employer if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work.
- Make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing
- Participate in any induction training provided by the employer on their return to the workplace
- Self-isolate at home and contact their G.P. promptly for further advice if they display any signs or symptoms
- Not attending work until all symptoms have cleared following self-isolation
- Complete any temperature testing as implemented by the employer/client and in line with Public Health advice
- Ensure they are familiar with and follow hand hygiene guidance and advice

- Wash their hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub regularly and in particular:
 - After coughing and sneezing
 - Before and after eating
 - Before and after preparing food
 - If in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms
 - Before and after being on public transport
 - Before and after being in a crowd (more than five (5) people outside of their home)
 - When arriving and leaving the workplace/other sites
 - Before having a cigarette or vaping
 - When hands are dirty
 - After toilet use
- Avoid touching eyes, mouth, or nose
- Have access to facilities to support hand hygiene (for example hand sanitiser/hand wipes/hand washing facilities)
- Not share objects that touch their mouth, for example, bottles or cups
- Adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Ensure they are familiar with and follow respiratory hygiene guidance

Note:

Risk assessments should be carried out for each premises/site prior to service technicians entering the premises

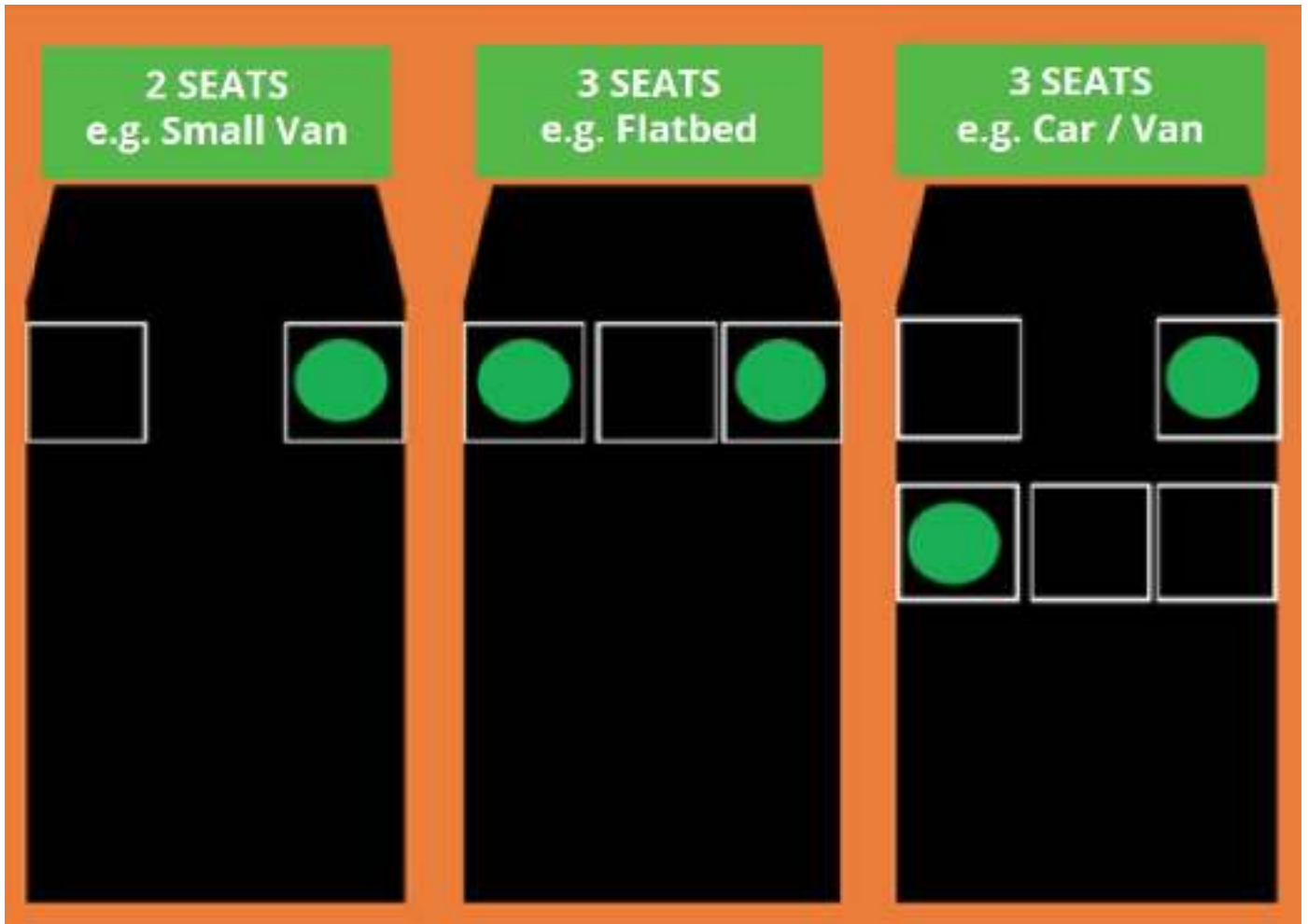
9.0 Before Arriving On Clients Site/Premises

- Ring ahead and confirm that client is prepared for the visit
- Depending on site/premises find out if Coronavirus COVID-19 is present
- If Coronavirus COVID-19 is present arrange for an alternative day to carry out the task
- Discuss with the client your controls for maintenance and inquire what controls they have in place
- Ensure that client controls are workable with the job being carried out
- Inform the service technician/s of the client's control measures and ensure they understand and adhere to the controls
- Service technicians have a responsibility to adhere to all restrictions put in place by the employer/client
- Plan the task in advance and complete as much work as possible externally to the site/premises (weighing and labelling)
- Agree on the work plan with the client
- In as much as possible try to limit times entering and leaving the site/premises to as low as possible
- Limit the number of service technicians to as low as possible to carry out the task effectively
- Service technicians should have all equipment to ensure they do not have to revisit the site/premises
- Ensure all technicians have the appropriate PPE and, in enough quantity to carry out the task safely
- Clean touchpoints on extinguishers after commissioning, installation, inspection or maintenance of PFEs

10.0 Travelling To And From Clients Site/Premises

- Where possible if there is more than one (1) service technician travelling to a client's site/premises, they should use their own vehicles
- Where this is not possible, follow the guidance in (Fig 1)
- The driver must ensure that all touchpoints on the inside of the cab have been sanitised (Fig 2)
- Occupants should sit as far apart as possible (Fig 1)
- Disposable face masks should be worn for the duration of the journey and discarded safely when at the destination
- If service technicians are working together then as far as possible, keep teams together
- This can assist in contact tracing
- When entering (and leaving) all vehicles, the driver should clean all common areas that are liable to be touched, including the external door handles, keys and other internal furnishings
- Wiping/spraying down of contact points should be done using anti-viral wipes or an anti-viral spray, or equivalent (Fig 2)
- Where possible, keep windows partially open
- Keep personal items (clothes lunchboxes etc. separate)
- Carry sufficient hand sanitiser (at least 60% alcohol) and anti-viral wipes/spray, use hand sanitiser regularly throughout your day

Fig 1. Recommended seating in vehicles



CIF Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures

- Steering Wheel
- Gearstick
- Handbrake
- Door Handles
- Radio & Infotainment Controls
- Steering Column
- Indicators
- Windscreen Wipers
- Cruise Control
- Elbow Rests
- Seat Position Controls
- Door Frame

Fig 2. TouchPoints in cabs



CIF Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures

Clean cab area within the vehicle

- Keep cab area of vehicles as clean areas
- Any potentially contaminated items should be disposed of safely (placed in a bag and sealed) and placed in the rear of the vehicle
- No potentially contaminated items should be placed in the cab of the vehicle
- Sanitise hands before entering and leaving the vehicle

11.0 Arrival At Clients Site/ Premises

- Contact the client from outside the site/premises to inform them of your arrival and inquire if there are any changes to the agreed system of work
- Ensure communication is in place and working if more than one service technician is on the site/premises (two-way radio, mobile phone etc.)
- Plan task before entering the site/premises

12.0 Servicing PFEs

- Ensure correct PPE is being used at all times
- Servicing, inspection and maintenance of PFE, **All PFE work/s shall be carried out to I.S.291:2015**
- Ensure that touched surfaces (handles, hoses, discharge horn and safety seal) are wiped down or sprayed with anti-viral disinfectant before moving to next PFE
- Ensure wipes and tags are safely discarded
- Employees should ensure that handles, hoses and cones are wiped down with sanitiser or anti-viral wipes before and after being installed, inspected or maintained
- Encourage clients to carry out the same process when installation, inspection and maintenance portable fire extinguishers are complete and as part of their inspection as per I.S.291:2015, not less than monthly

13.0 Tools And Equipment

- All tools and equipment should be properly sanitised to prevent cross-contamination
- The sharing of tools and equipment should be avoided
- Employees should have a unique marking for personal tools/tools frequently used by one person
- Shared tools should be washed/sprayed with anti-viral sanitising/cleaning agent before and after use
- Always use protective gloves when using shared tools
- Gloves alone do not protect from COVID-19

14.0 Training

- Employees must complete Coronavirus COVID-19 induction training before returning to work
- Employees must be made aware of the correct techniques to wash/sanitise hands
- Employees must be made aware of the proper procedure on the fitting and removal of disposable gloves, disposable masks and face shields

How To Put On A Face Mask

- Hands should be washed with soap and water or a hand sanitiser before putting on a mask
- Face masks should be placed over the nose and mouth, ensuring to cover from the bridge of the nose to under the chin
- Face masks should fit snugly without gaps at the side of the face, and be secured with elastics around the ears, or the back of the head

Do's When Wearing A Face Mask

- Sanitise hands immediately if the mask is touched
- Firstly wash/sanitise hands should an adjustment to the mask be needed
- Reposition and wash/sanitise hands again
- If a single-use mask becomes damp, it should be replaced and not re-used

Don'ts When Wearing A Face Mask

- Don't touch the front of the mask
- Don't move mask up or down the face, or leave sitting under the nose or mouth or on the forehead

Removal Of Face Mask

- Hands should be washed/sanitised before removing the mask
- The front of the mask should not be touched
- Employees should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose and mouth when removing their mask
- The mask should be removed by the elastic ties or ear loops and not from the front by grabbing the mask

Disposal Of A Face Mask

- Once removed, the face mask should be disposed of in a plastic bag and sealed
- The bag should be disposed of immediately in general waste in a closed bin
- Hands should be washed/sanitised with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser

15.0 Personal Protective Equipment

Gloves

- Gloves alone do not protect from COVID-19
- To avoid cross-contamination hands should be sanitised before and after using gloves
- Service Technicians should be instructed in the correct technique for putting on and taking off gloves
- Gloves should be either nitrile or latex

Disposable Face Mask

- The use of face masks may lead to a false sense of security and to an increased risk of contamination and virus transmission while wearing and removing the mask
- Therefore, a face mask should be used as an additional measure and not as a replacement for other preventive measures
- Face masks should be used when entering clients site/premises depending on the risk and footfall within the site/premises

Face Shield

Consideration should be given to the use of face shields depending on the risk within the clients site/premises and where physical distancing cannot be achieved

16.0 Servicing Multiple Sites/Premises

Refer to Sections 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15

- All tools to be washed and/or disinfected before moving onto other site/premises
- PFEs removed from one site/premises should be kept separate from other PFEs to avoid cross-infection
- All disposable PPE used in one premise should be disposed of safely, and new PPE used in the next site/premises
- All non-disposable PPE used in one premise should be treated with an anti-viral spray or laundered before being used in the next site/premises

17.0 Waste Management

Waste from clients site/premises should be immediately placed in sealed bags stored inside another waste bag in the rear of vehicles until the waste can be disposed of safely

18.0 Workshops Protocols

- Employees should be made aware of workplace protocols to be observed when test discharging and refilling PFEs
- Employees should also be made aware of amendments to Safety Statements and any additional workplace protocols that need to be implemented in the workplace
- Physical distancing should be observed

19.0 Resources

- Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended in 2003
- Licensing of Indoor Events Act 2003. (An Act To Provide for the Licensing of Indoor Events and to Amend the Fire Services Act 1981, and to Provide for Related Matters)
- I.S.291:2015
- Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Return to Work Safely Protocol COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers (Prepared by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Department of Health)
- Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures Coronavirus COVID-19 Public Health Advice Version 1

Annex Guidance Poster (A)



The poster features a yellow background with a red banner at the top containing the text 'Stay safe. Protect each other.' Below this, there are four circular icons representing key safety measures: hand washing, covering the mouth/nose, limiting contact, and maintaining a 2m distance. The bottom section lists symptoms and provides the hashtag #holdfirm with a reference to HSE.ie for more information. Logos for HSE and the Government of Ireland are at the bottom.

Coronavirus COVID-19

Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

**Stay safe.
Protect each other.**

Know the symptoms. If you have them, self-isolate and contact a GP.

Continue to:

- 

Wash
your hands well and often to avoid contamination.
- 

Cover
your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue safely.
- 

Limit
contact with others when out and about.
- 

Distance
yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell.

Symptoms of COVID-19

- > a fever (high temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- > a cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- > shortness of breath or breathing difficulties

#holdfirm


Visit [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie) for updated factual information and advice

Ireland's public health advice is guided by WHO and ECDC advice





  **Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland**

Annex Guidance Poster (B)







Coronavirus
COVID-19



Know the signs

-  High Temperature
-  Shortness of Breath
-  Breathing Difficulties
-  Cough

For 8 out of 10 people, rest and over the counter medication can help you feel better.

-  Wash
-  Cover
-  Avoid
-  Clean
-  Stop
-  Distance

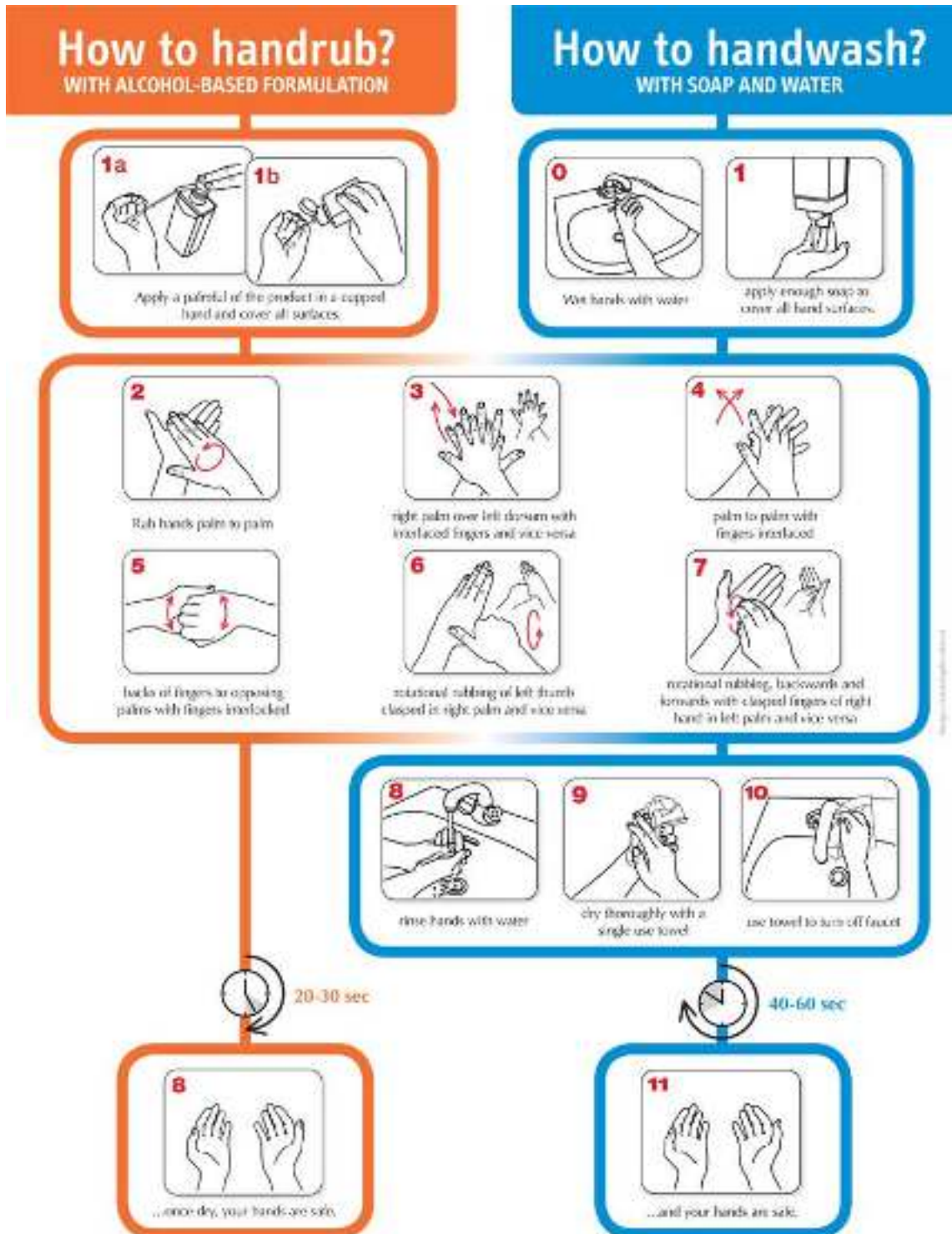
If you have symptoms, self-isolate to protect others and phone your GP. Visit hse.ie for updated factual information and advice or call 1850 24 1850.

Protection from coronavirus.
It's in our hands.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Annex 2 Hand Sanitising Technique Poster



WHO acknowledges the Hôpital Universitaire de Genève (HUG), in particular its members of the Infection Control Programme, for their active participation in developing this material.



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ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND