

LITIGATION, DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND INVESTIGATIONS

# COVID-19: Re-opening of Irish economy and society to begin on 18 May

6 May 2020

A roadmap to gradually re-open the economy and society has been announced by the Irish Government. Restrictions currently in place will be relaxed on a phased basis, beginning on 18 May and continuing through to August. The Government has cautioned, however, that restrictions may be re-introduced if there is any upsurge in COVID-19 cases.

You can view the Government's detailed roadmap [here](#). You should consult this and any further guidance that may

be published before taking any steps towards re-opening your business. Careful consideration should be given to what arrangements need to be put in place to prepare staff and premises for a safe re-opening of business at the appropriate time.

Here we provide a snapshot of when you can expect to see an easing of the current restrictions as they apply to the retail and hospitality sectors, work and travel.

RE-OPENING IN 5 PHASES

- Phase 1 – 18 May**
- Phase 2 – 8 June**
- Phase 3 – 29 June**
- Phase 4 – 20 July**
- Phase 5 – 10 August**

It is important to remember that the need to maintain physical distancing continues at each stage.

WHAT RETAIL BUSINESSES CAN OPEN AND WHEN?	<b>From 18 May:</b> Retail outlets that are primarily outdoor (e.g. garden centres, hardware stores, farmers markets) and certain other retail outlets, including retailers selling homeware; opticians; outlets providing for motor or bicycle repairs; outlets selling office products; and outlets providing electrical, ICT and phone sales and repair services.
	<b>From 8 June:</b> Small retail outlets with low staff numbers, and open marts.
	<b>From 29 June:</b> All other non-essential retail outlets with street level entrances and exits (i.e. not enclosed in shopping centres). Retailers will have to restrict the number of staff and customers per square metre so that social distancing can be maintained.
	<b>From 20 July:</b> Initial loosening of restrictions on high-risk retailers where there may be a nationwide demand for the service offered and the service offered involves person to person contact (e.g. hairdressers and barbers)
	<b>From 10 August:</b> Enclosed shopping centres; and further loosening of restrictions on high-risk retailers (see above).

WHAT BUSINESSES IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR CAN OPEN AND WHEN?	<b>From 29 June:</b> Cafés and restaurants providing food and beverages made onsite, provided they can comply with physical distancing measures and operate strict cleaning procedures.
	<b>From 20 July:</b> Hotels and other holiday accommodation (e.g. hostels, caravan parks, holiday parks) on a limited occupancy basis (or number of people per square metre). This may be increased over time where physical distancing can be maintained. Hotel bars will remain closed.
	<b>From 10 August:</b> Pubs, bars, nightclubs and casinos provided they can comply with physical distancing measures and operate strict cleaning procedures.
WHO CAN RETURN TO WORK AND WHEN?	<b>From 18 May:</b> Outdoor workers (e.g. construction workers) on a phased basis. Anyone who can work remotely should continue to do so.
	<b>From 8 June:</b> Solitary workers and workers who can maintain 2 metre distance at all times, on a phased basis. Anyone who can work remotely should continue to do so.
	<b>From 29 June:</b> Workers who have a low level of daily interaction with people and where social distancing can be maintained. Again, anyone who can work remotely should continue to do so.
	<b>From 20 July:</b> Employees who cannot work remotely. Organisations will need to consider how best to limit the number of workers interacting with one another (e.g. by introducing shift work or staggered hours). Anyone who can work remotely should continue to do so.
	<b>From 10 August:</b> All remaining employees, on a phased basis. High-risk organisations that cannot easily maintain social distancing must implement plans for how they can eventually progress towards returning the onsite return of all their staff.
HOW FAR CAN YOU TRAVEL AND WHEN?	<b>From 18 May:</b> Travel within 5 km of home is permitted, though the advice is to avoid all unnecessary journeys. (Read our previous briefing on the restrictions on movement <a href="#">here</a> ).
	<b>From 8 June:</b> Travel within 20 km of home is permitted, though the advice is to avoid all unnecessary journeys.
	<b>From 29 June:</b> No change - can travel within 20 km of home, though the advice is to avoid all unnecessary journeys.
	<b>From 20 July:</b> No restriction on travel within the State.

**SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESSES**

The Government has also [announced](#) that it is introducing a number of measures to assist businesses that are facing liquidity pressures as a result of the further extension of the shut-down period, and that will need support to re-open in the relevant phase of the Government’s roadmap. These measures include changes to the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland’s Credit

Guarantee Scheme, a new €2 billion Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund via the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund, a twelve-month warehousing of tax liabilities, a three-month waiver of commercial rates, and a €250 million Restart Fund.

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

The Roadmap provides a general plan

for the re-opening of Irish business and society. It is subject to change and will be reviewed on a regular basis. It is possible that some restrictions may be eased or lifted earlier than expected. Equally, however, there is always the possibility that restrictions might be re-imposed.

For now, it is clear that the road back to full economic activity looks set to be a long and uncertain one. We will continue to keep you updated.

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