

NHS Test & Trace App'. Guidance for TSSA members.

NHS Test and Trace App is an important way to protect our health.

Many members will have downloaded the NHS Test & Trace App which should notify them about getting tested if they have been close to someone with Covid-19. It will also notify others if they have been tested positive. Details about the app can be found at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>

The NHS guidance is clear in so much as the app should be in use at all times, including while at work, except if you:

- store your phone in a locker while you're working
- are already protected by a Perspex (or equivalent) screen*(see notes on protective screens below)

In addition, there are a number of areas in the industry where the use of a mobile phone is prohibited.

Members are reminded that the downloading and use of the app is not mandatory and your employer cannot insist that you use it.

In practical terms this means that if you choose to download and use the app, it can and should be turned on at work, other than when...

- You are in an operational area or trackside where the use of a mobile phone is restricted.
- Your phone is not on your person, such as when stored in a locker.
- You are confident that you are working behind screens that provide adequate protection.

Protective Screens

Protective screens to protect you and your colleagues from the virus should be made from Perspex or equivalent material. This is because the screen must be able to be cleaned quickly and easily on a regular basis.

As the COVID virus is transmitted as an aerosol, members need to be confident that protective screens provide adequate protection to stop the airborne transfer of the virus. Screens should separate yourself from others. To ensure that the airborne droplets cannot go round or between the screens, there should be no gaps or holes in the screen.

If members are concerned that protective screens do not offer sufficient protection, they should not hesitate to raise the issue. Members should also be confident to invoke the Worksafe (or equivalent) procedure.

As well as in office environments this also applies to screens inside shared works vehicles.

Test and Trace FAQ's

I have been told my workplace is 'certified COVID Safe/Secure' and I should turn off my app.

The terms COVID Safe and COVID Secure can be misleading. The COVID 19 virus and associated variants are a hazard. The measures put in place to enable you to attend work do not eliminate that hazard, they are control measures that if adhered to will significantly reduce the transmission of the virus. But, in line with NHS guidance, this does not mean you should turn off the app. As stated above the app should only be turned off if you're phone is stored away from your person, or you are working within or behind protective screens. Once you leave the protected area - such as when you leave your desk to move around an office or depot, the app should be turned back on.

My employer says the app should be turned off at work to prevent 'false positives'.

The test and trace app works on the principal of identifying when you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID.

Close contact is defined as when you have been less than two meters apart from someone for more than 15 minutes. If social distancing measures are in place and been observed, the app will not record a close contact or a 'false positive'.

If you have to work in close proximity to your colleagues - such as side by side on a bank of desks, protective screens should be in place to separate you from your colleagues (See notes above on protective screens).

I wear a facemask when moving around the workplace. Does this mean I should turn the app off?

No. Wearing facemasks is just one of the control measures in place to help limit the spread of the virus. The control measures put in place are all equal to the some of their parts - social distancing, protective screens, face coverings, hand washing one way systems - all work in conjunction with each other. The wearing of a mask does not mean you can ignore any of the other measures.

Can my employer insist that I download the app?

No. Although the NHS Test and Trace App is an important way to protect our health, downloading and using the app is a personal decision.

Remember: Complacency costs lives!

For the protection of yourself, your colleagues and your friends and family, please adhere to all COVID control measures. See the TSSA updated guidance on working through the pandemic by following this link:-

<https://www.tssa.org.uk/en/whats-new/news/index.cfm/tssa-updated-guidance-on-working-through-the-pandemic>

Tell us what is happening where you work:

If you are in a non-operational role, please complete the form on our website at:
<https://www.tssa.org.uk/en/campaigns/safe-at-work/index.cfm>

In the first instance, please contact your TSSA rep with any queries or concerns you may have. If you are unsure of who your rep is, please contact our Helpdesk.

TSSA Helpdesk Contact Details:

Call: 0800 328 2673. The Helpdesk is open 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-4pm on Fridays.

Or you can fill out a website form at any time

here: <https://www.tssa.org.uk/en/Your-union/about-us/contact-us/contact-the-helpdesk.cfm>

More information and guidance documents related to Coronavirus are available here: <https://www.tssa.org.uk/en/help-legal-advice/coronavirus/index.cfm>