

March 14, 2020

Joint Protocol for regulating the measures designed to combating and containing the spreading of Covid-19 in workplaces (March 14, 2020)

On Saturday, March 14, 2020, the "*Joint Protocol to regulate measures designed to combating and containing the spreading of Covid-19 in workplaces*" was signed.

The Protocol was signed upon the request of the President of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Health, who promoted the meeting between the social partners, with a view to implementing the measures included in Article 1(1)(9) of the Prime Minister's Decree of March 11, 2020, which – with specific reference to professional and production activities - recommends to find agreements between employers' and trade union organisations.

Within the scope of its competence, the government favours the full implementation of the Protocol.

Introduction

Taking into account what has been issued by the Ministry of Health, the Protocol contains guidelines shared between the Parties to make it easier for companies to adopt safety protocols, i.e. the Protocol for regulating the measures designed to containing the spreading of COVID 19 in workplaces.

The continuation of production activities can in fact take place only under conditions ensuring adequate levels of protection for workers.

Therefore, the Parties already agree on any recourse to social safety nets, with the related reduction or suspension of work activity, with a view to enabling companies in all sectors to implement these measures, thus making workplaces safe.

Along with the possibility for companies to resort to smart working and social safety nets, extraordinary organizational solutions, the Parties intend to promote measure to combat and contain the virus spreading.

A priority goal is to combine the continuation of production activities with the guarantee of healthy and safe working environments and working conditions. To this end, the reduction or temporary suspension of activities may also be envisaged.

In this regard, with a view to reducing the presence of workers in workplaces, the urgent measures the Government plans to take – particularly in the field of social safety nets throughout the country – could be useful.

Considering the need to quickly adopt a Protocol for regulating the measures designed to combating and containing the spreading of the COVID 19 virus, including procedures and rules of conduct, the preliminary exchange of views with the union representatives at the workplace shall be favoured –and with the territorial representatives in the case of small companies, as provided for in the inter-confederal agreements - so that any measure adopted can be shared and made more effective thanks to workers' experience – in particular with the contribution of Workers' Safety representatives (RLS) and Workers' Territorial Safety Representatives (RLST), taking into account the specificity of each individual production reality and of the local situations.

JOINT PROTOCOL FOR REGULATING MEASURES DESIGNED TO CONTAINING THE SPREADING OF COVID – 19

The aim of this Protocol is to provide guidelines designed to increasing the effectiveness of the precautionary measures taken to combat the spreading of the COVID-19 virus in non-healthcare environments.

COVID-19 is a generic biological risk, for which the same measures for the entire population need to be adopted. This Protocol therefore includes measures which follow the precautionary logic and implement the lawmaker's regulatory requirements and the Health Authorities' guidelines.

Without prejudice to all the obligations laid down in the provisions issued for containing the spreading of the COVID-19 virus

and whereas

the Prime Minister's Decree of March 11, 2020 provides for compliance with the specific restrictive measures taken throughout the national territory for containing the spreading of COVID – 19 until March 25, 2020 and also considering that, in relation to the production activities, these measures recommend:

- that the maximum use of smart working be made by companies for the activities that can be carried out at home or remotely;
- paid holidays and paid leaves for workers, as well as the other instruments provided for by collective bargaining, be encouraged;
- the activities of corporate departments not essential for production be suspended;
- safety protocols be adopted and, where it is not possible to ensure the interpersonal distance of one meter as the main measure for containing the virus spreading, personal protective devices be used;
- the sanitation operations in workplace be encouraged, also including the use of social safety nets to this end;
- for productive activities only, movements within sites be limited and access to common areas be restricted;
- for productive activities only, agreements between workers' and employer's organisations be fostered;
- for all the activities not suspended, the maximum use of smart working be encouraged;

it is agreed that

companies shall adopt this Protocol within their own premises, in addition to the provisions of the aforementioned Decree, as well as implement the additional precautionary measures listed below - to be supplemented with other equivalent or more incisive ones according to their own organisation specificities, after consulting the union representatives at the workplace - to protect the health of people in the company and ensure a healthy working environment.

1. INFORMATION

- Through the most suitable and effective ways, the Company shall inform all workers and whoever enters the company's premises of the Authorities' guidelines and provisions, handing over and/or posting special information leaflets at the entrance and in the most visible places of the company premises.
- In particular, information concerns

- the obligation to stay at home in case of fever (above 37.5°) or other flu symptoms and to call your doctor and health authorities;
- the awareness and acceptance of the fact that you cannot enter and stay in the company premises - and to inform in a timely manner, also after entry – of the fact that there are dangers (flu symptoms, fever, the fact of coming from risk areas or having had contacts with virus-positive people in the previous 14 days, etc.), whenever the measures taken by the Authorities require you to inform the doctor and the Health Authorities and to stay at home;
- the obligation to comply with all the provisions and measures taken by the Authorities and the employer when entering the company (in particular, keeping the safety distance; complying with the hygiene rules for washing hands and behaving in a safe manner);
- the obligation to promptly and responsibly inform the employer of any flu symptoms during the performance of the working activity, and to keep adequate distance for the safety of the people present in the company premises.

2. WAYS TO ENTER THE COMPANY PREMISES

- Before entering the workplace, the staff body temperature shall be checked. In the event it being above 37.5°, access to workplaces shall not be allowed. People in such conditions shall be temporarily isolated and equipped with masks; they shall not go to the emergency units and / or to the company infirmary, but shall contact their doctors as soon as possible and follow their instructions;
- the employer informs in advance the staff, and those who intend to enter the company premises, of the ban of access for anyone who, over the last 14 days, have had contacts with COVID-19 positive people or come from risk areas according to the WHO guidelines;
- for these cases, reference is made to Decree Law No. 6 of February 23, 2020, Article 1, subparagraphs h) and i).

3. WAYS FOR EXTERNAL SUPPLIERS TO HAVE ACCESS TO COMPANY PREMISES

- Entry, transit and exit procedures for external suppliers' access shall be identified, by means of predefined ways, paths and timing, with a view to reducing contacts with the staff operating in the departments/offices involved;
- where possible, the drivers shall remain on board of their own vehicles: access to the offices shall be allowed for no reason. For the necessary preparation of loading and unloading activities, the haulier shall strictly keep a distance of one metre;
- for suppliers/hauliers and/or other external staff dedicated toilets and sanitary facilities shall be identified/installed; the use of employees' toilets and sanitary facilities shall be prohibited and adequate daily cleaning shall be ensured;
- access to visitors shall be reduced as far as possible; should the access of external visitors (cleaning company, maintenance, etc.) be necessary, they shall comply with all company rules, including those for access to the company premises under paragraph 2 above;
- where there is a transport service organised by the company, the workers' safety shall be ensured in every transport phase;
- the rules of this Protocol shall apply to subcontractors that may organise permanent and temporary sites and yards within the sites and productive areas.

4. COMPANY CLEANING AND SANITIZATION

- The Company ensures the daily cleaning and regular sanitization of the premises, the environments, workstations and common and leisure areas;
- in the case of presence of COVID-19 positive people within the company premises, they shall be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with the provisions of the health Ministry's circular letter No. 5443 of February 22, 2020, as well as ventilated;
- end-of-shift cleaning and regular sanitisation of keyboards, touch screens, etc. shall be ensured with appropriate cleaning agents, both in offices and in productive units;
- in compliance with the Health Ministry's guidelines and in the manner deemed most appropriate, the Company it may organise special/regular cleaning interventions and operations using social safety nets.

5. PERSONAL HYGIENE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

- it is mandatory that the people operating in the company take all hygiene precautions, particularly for hands;
- the Company provides suitable hand detergents;
- frequent hand cleaning with soap and water is recommended.

6-PERSONAL PROTECTION DEVICES

- the adoption of the hygiene measures and of the personal protective devices mentioned in this Protocol is fundamental and, considering the current emergency situation, is clearly linked to their availability on the market. For these reasons:
 - a. the masks shall be used in accordance with the provisions and guidelines of the World Health Organisation;
 - b. considering the emergency situation, in the event of supply difficulties and for the sole purpose of preventing the virus spreading, masks of the same type as those recommended by the Health Authorities may be used;
 - c. the Company's preparation of detergents according to WHO guidelines shall be favoured (https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Guide_to_Local_Production.pdf);
- however, if the activity requires working at an interpersonal distance of less than one metre and no other organisational solutions are possible, masks and other protective equipment and devices (gloves, goggles, overalls, etc.) shall be used, in accordance with the provisions of scientific and health Authorities.

7. MANAGEMENT OF COMMON AREAS (CANTEEN, LOCKER ROOMS, SMOKING AREAS, DRINKS AND/OR SNACK DISPENSERS, ETC.)

- Access to the common areas, including company canteens, smoking areas and the locker rooms shall be restricted, thus envisaging their continuous ventilation, short stays within these areas and the guarantee of a 1-metre safe distance between the people inside them.
- the areas shall be organized and the locker rooms shall be sanitized so as to leave room for workers to store their work clothes and ensure them suitable sanitary conditions.
- regular sanitization and daily cleaning of the canteen premises and of the beverage and snack dispenser keyboards, with appropriate detergents, shall be ensured.

8. COMPANY ORGANIZATION (SHIFTS, TRANSFERS AND SMART WORKING, AS WELL AS REMODULATION AND REARRANGEMENT OF PRODUCTION LEVELS)

With reference to the Prime Minister's Decree of March 11, 2020, point 7, only for the COVID-19 emergency period and referring to the provisions of national agreements, thus fostering arrangements with company union representatives, companies may:

- order the closure of all departments other than production units or, in any case, of those which can operate through the use of smart working or remotely;
 - remodulate and rearrange production levels;
 - ensure a shift plan for the workers dedicated to production with a view to reducing contacts as much as possible and creating autonomous, separate and recognizable groups;
 - use smart working for all the activities that can be carried out at home or remotely; if social safety nets are used, the possibility of ensuring that they regard the whole company staff - where necessary, also with appropriate rotations - shall always be evaluated;
- a. use, as a priority, the social safety nets available in compliance with the contractual institutions and arrangements generally aimed at allowing abstention from work without loss of pay;
- in the event the use of the institutions and arrangements referred to under (c) is not sufficient, the unused holiday periods left shall be used;
 - all national and international travels/business trips shall be suspended and cancelled, even if already agreed or arranged.

9. MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES' ENTRY AND EXIT

- Staggered entry/exit times shall be encouraged to avoid, as much as possible, contacts in common areas (entrances, locker rooms, canteen);
- where possible, an entrance and an exit door from these premises shall be arranged and the presence of detergents indicated by appropriate signs shall be ensured.

10. INTERNAL MOVEMENTS, MEETINGS, INTERNAL EVENTS AND TRAINING

- Movements within the company premises shall be reduced to the minimum, in compliance with the company's instructions and guidelines;
- meetings with the presence of people shall not be permitted. Where they are necessary and urgent and cannot be organized remotely, the attendance of people shall be reduced to the minimum and, in any case, interpersonal distance and adequate cleaning/ventilation of premises shall be ensured;
- all internal events and any classroom training activities, including the compulsory ones, even if already organized, shall be suspended and cancelled; however, if the company organisation allows it, training activities can be carried out remotely, also for the employees performing smart working;
- failure to complete the updating of vocational and/or enabling training by the deadlines envisaged for all company roles/tasks/functions in the field of health and safety at the workplace, due to the ongoing emergency and hence for *force majeure*, does not imply the impossibility to continue the performance of the specific role/function (by way of example: the emergency workers, both in the fire-fighting and in the first

aid fields, can continue to intervene and operate in case of need; the forklift truck driver can continue to perform this function).

11. MANAGEMENT OF ASYMPTOMATIC PEOPLE IN THE COMPANY

- In the event of people in the company having fever and respiratory infection symptoms such as coughing, they shall report it immediately to the staff department. They shall be isolated in accordance with the Health Authorities' provisions and the same applies to the other people in the premises. The Company shall proceed immediately to notify the relevant Health Authorities and call the COVID-19 emergency phone numbers provided by the Region or the Health Ministry;
- the Company shall collaborate with the Health Authorities for the definition of any "close contacts" of people in the company who have been found positive to the COVID-19 swab. This with a view to enabling the Authorities to implement the necessary and appropriate quarantine measures. During the monitoring period, the Company may ask any possible close contacts to leave the premises – as a precautionary measure - according to the Health Authorities' guidelines.

12-HEALTH SURVEILLANCE/COMPETENT PHYSICIAN/WORKERS' SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE (RLS)

- The health surveillance shall continue in compliance with the hygiene measures contained in the Health Ministry's guidelines (the so-called "decalogo");
- in this period, priority shall be given to preventive medical check-ups, as well as examinations on request and examinations when people go back working after sick leaves;
- the regular health surveillance shall not be interrupted, because it is an additional prevention measure of a general nature because it can detect possible cases and suspicious symptoms of the infection, both for information and training that the competent doctor may provide to workers in order to prevent the spreading of the contagion;
- the competent physician shall cooperate with the employer and the RLS/RLST in supplementing and proposing all regulatory measures related to COVID-19;
- the competent physician shall report to the Company situations of particular fragility and present or past illnesses of workers and shall provide for their protection. In compliance with privacy rules, the competent physician shall apply the Health Authorities' guidelines.

13. UPDATING THE PROTOCOL

- A Committee shall be set up in the Company for the implementation and check of the Protocol rules with the participation of company union representatives and RLS.