

WORKING SAFELY IN A PANDEMIC: INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES PUBLISHED

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world of work upside down. Certainty has hung up its hat, there is no guarantee the world will return to how it was before and unpredictability is here to stay for the long term and has become the new normality. **How can organizations manage in this context, and how can employees keep themselves safe while fulfilling their obligations?**

In response to the increased risk this pandemic presents to the health, safety and well-being of people in all settings, including those working at home or in mobile settings, and workers and other interested parties in physical workplaces, the International Organisation for Standardisation (**ISO**) has published the following Publicly Available Specification (**PAS**) to help.

- (i) **ISO/PAS 45005:2020**, *Occupational health and safety management — General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic*;

ISO/PAS 45005 is generic in its applicability, but specific in terms of the guidance it provides. It gives organizations straightforward practical help, to alert them to what they need to address or implement in order to keep operating, without compromising the health and safety of their workers and others affected by their activities. This PAS can help individual workers to better understand what they can do to protect themselves, even if they are self-employed or don't have fixed work patterns or a single employer.

- (ii) **ISO/PAS 5643**, *Tourism related services – Requirements and guidelines for reducing the spread of Covid-19 in the tourism industry*

One of the hardest-hit sectors in the current pandemic is the tourism sector. It is essential that the tourism sector can reopen again, but in a safe and sustainable way. Reviving this sector is therefore imperative, but in a safe and sustainable way. It needs to be in the context of protecting the health and safety of everyone. **ISO/PAS 5643:2021**, published in May 2021, will help all providers in the sector to ensure safer services and prevent the spread of the virus. It is designed to help tourism providers implement the best measures for everyone's safety and reassure tourists of the effectiveness of what they have in place. The document has a broad scope, thus the recommendations are relevant to everything from accommodation establishments, restaurants, beaches and parks, transport companies, tour guides, spas, museums and heritage sites, the conference and events industry, to travel and tourism operators and more.

MS ISO/PAS 45005:2020 and **MS ISO/PAS 5643:2021** bring together best practice on how to manage the health and safety of employees and stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic and are intended to complement any existing national guidelines and regulations. They will help workers to better understand what they can do to protect

themselves, even if they are self-employed or don't have fixed work patterns or a single employer. These 'PAS' are flexible and it is hoped that they will help organisations including SMEs, regardless of their status or location, to adapt, survive and stay in business, no matter how their local situation changes, without having to compromise on worker safety. By being fully prepared, we should be able to save both lives and jobs.

The two PAS have been established with the help of experts around the world, including Mauritius and were drawn on national and international guidelines that already exist, harmonizing and expanding them for a comprehensive document that any country can use. Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB) is in the process of adopting the two PAS and are expected to be available as national standards in August 2021.

ISO/PAS45005:2020 and ISO/PAS 5643:2021 are available freely in readable format from MSB and [ISO Website](https://www.iso.org/covid19).

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