

Health and Safety concerns about returning to work after lockdown?

**citizens
advice**

Mole Valley

I work in retail and my company says it's starting to look at how we might reopen later in the summer. This is making me so anxious, even though I don't have any special health issues.



"I work in a retail and my company says it's planning to reopen the local branch later this summer. I'm feeling really anxious about having to return to work, even though I don't have any special health issues. I'm going to wear a mask, but not all the customers may choose to do so. I used to take the bus to work, I don't have a car and it's too far to walk or even cycle. And I'm not even sure if my kids will be back at school by then! The thought of returning to work is keeping me awake at night. Do I have to go back to work?"

It's understandable you're feeling anxious. However, the short answer to your question is yes, you do need to comply with any reasonable management request to return to work.

The key here is "reasonable." The government has published specific guidance for different businesses on the steps they can take to minimise coronavirus transmission. If you don't think they're complying, or are putting your health at risk, you should talk to them about this.

Similarly, they should listen to your concerns about using public transport. You could, for instance, ask to travel at a quieter time of day.

And the government has said that if you're unable to work because of childcare issues your employer can continue to furlough you.

We would suggest approaching this as a problem that you and your boss can solve together. But if you do get a bad reaction, you could report your employer to the Health and Safety Executive. You should also get advice about your legal rights in this situation.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf>

Contact us

Waiting times for these services may be slightly longer than usual as we adapt to our new patterns of working. Please be persistent and be patient with us!

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ADVICELINE telephone: 03 444 111 444 Monday – Friday 09.00 – 17.00	Telephone our local numbers 01306 732 302 (Dorking) Monday – Thursday 10.00 – 16.00 Friday 10.00 – 13.00
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